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Having started working in the steel industry in Britain in the 1970s, John Brocklesby then developed an academic background in the social sciences. His work is now at the intersection of complex systems theory, organisation studies, and management theory and practice. He has degrees from Coventry University (BA Hons), London School of Economics (MSc Econ), and Warwick Business School (PhD). He has published books on management science and competitive capability, and has published extensively in prestigious journals across his primary fields. He is a past Editor of the New Zealand Journal of Business and has served on the editorial board of numerous academic journals including the prestigious 'Organization Studies'.

Currently he is Professor of Management Studies and Head of the Victoria University of Wellington Management School. He has worked in a mentoring role for the US Academy of Management; he previously served as New Zealand President of the ANZAM. In 2003, 2006 and 2012 he was a member of the NZ Performance Based Research Fund Business and Economics panel in 2003, 2006, and 2012. He is currently researching the organisational law enforcement response to global crime.