global focus

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Building new ecosystems

Interest in ecosystems is back with a vengeance report Arnoud De Meyer and Peter J Williamson

Ladies vanish
Why women always get taken off the case

Research
Management without meaning

Liberal arts
Why we still need them

Diversity?
Don't forget choice of studying

Partnership
Making HR a member of the top team

The 'me' age
It's not you; it's me

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In focus

Global Focus
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Welcome to the first issue of *Global Focus* for 2020. Our lead story from Professors Arnoud De Meyer and Peter J Williamson covers one of the topics of our time, something that is far from new but is now much discussed – the role of ecosystems in today's society.

They argue that "For those wishing to develop and lead an ecosystem to create new customer solutions, a final point to keep in mind is that a very different type of leadership is required. We realised that leaders of ecosystems must have the charisma and credibility to lead beyond their own organisation, to embrace diversity and dilemmas, while developing an overarching identity for the ecosystem."

Mention "Liberal Arts" in polite academic company and you are unlikely to attract enthusiastic interest from modern tech-savvy MBA faculty (let alone MBA students).

However, according to Professor Howard Thomas, one of the most experienced and influential management education academics, the answer to the multifaceted problems generally accepted as bedevilling management education at the moment, he argues, is nothing other than just those liberal arts subjects.

In his article (page 20) Professor Thomas writes: "Rather than focusing solely on technical and business skills, management education would welcome the humanities and social sciences at the foundation of its curriculum and the two forms of education, professional and liberal, would be melded and integrated into a holistic curriculum."

"Above all, this curriculum would not be characterised by a narrow, functional specialisation but would give management students access to the vast literature on enlightenment thinking in the humanities and to approaches about the role of history and society in the social sciences."

Professor Thomas might find some moral support in the article by another academic, Professor Dennis Tourish (page 48), who finds himself increasingly at sea in the swampy verbosity of published management research.

By contrast, Lesley Symons demonstrates that a very straightforward and simple approach to research can still provide dramatic results (page 40).

Her research is to count the male and female roles (with some adjustments) in the Case Centre's annual award-winning case papers from 2009-2018 – 105 papers in total.

Using a variant of The Bechdel Movie Test (a simple assessment of women's roles in movies (https://bechdeltest.com/) it asks if a case study has a woman in it as the protagonist who speaks to another woman about the business.

Sadly, but perhaps no surprise, only four papers out of the 105 have female protagonists speaking with other women about a business issue.

I hope you enjoy the issue.

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We are always pleased to hear your thoughts on *Global Focus*, and ideas on what you would like to see in future issues.

Please address comments and ideas to Matthew Wood at EFMD: matthew.wood@efmdglobal.org

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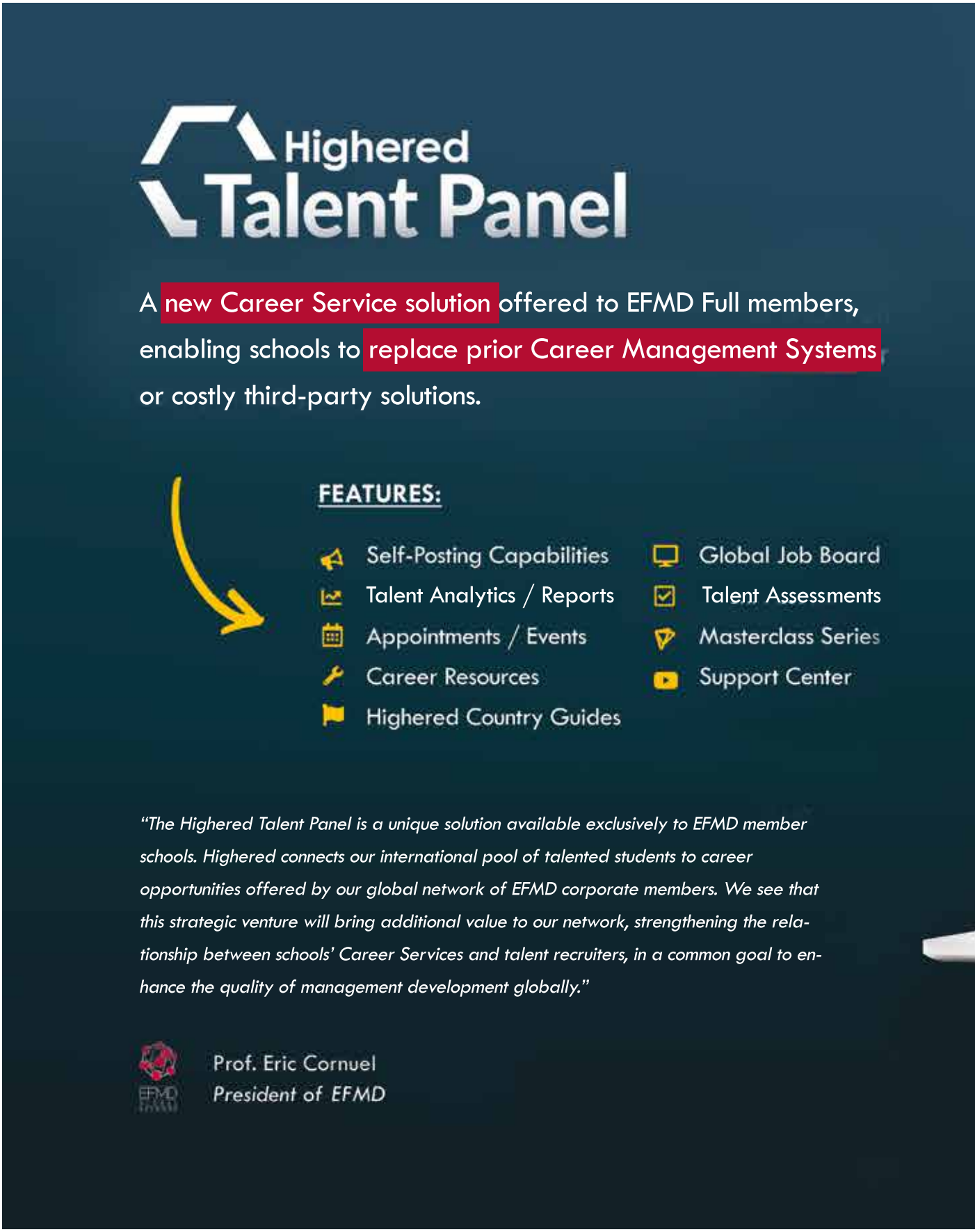
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Interest in ecosystems is back with a vengeance but, say **Arnoud De Meyer** and **Peter J Williamson**, setting them up and maintaining them is far from easy

Building new ecosystems to create customer solutions

We all know that the world in which businesses operate is changing fast. Agility and speed have become more important for an organisation than stability, predictability and control. Information and communications technologies are enabling worldwide co-ordination and interaction for even the smallest companies. We are moving into a knowledge-intensive economy where, contrary to other production factors, knowledge gains in value the more it is used.

And customers are changing too. In our mature industrial societies customers live longer and expect technology-enabled solutions. Consumer activism and government regulation are raising the bar with respect to customer protection, traceability and sustainability.

Therefore, many of our companies will have to invest in more innovation and development of new customer solutions. And once they have some of these solutions, they may have to grow at lightning speed.

What is the best way to organise to meet this innovation and growth challenge? For more than a decade we have studied the responses of leading companies all over the world and spanning many different industries.

We looked at how the Alibaba Group was able to build a massive and dominant position in e-commerce and consumer finance in China in less than 20 years. And how Amazon was able to create a market share of more than 30% in cloud services, far ahead of any of its competitors.

We looked not just at large platform-based companies. We also examined why nearly all of us are unknowing customers of ARM, a relatively small company in Cambridge in the UK that designs the IP for RISC chips that is used in all our smartphones and many other communication devices.

While all these examples were newly created companies, we also studied how the Guardian, a long-established news and media group in the UK, was able to reinvent itself and create one of the most consulted news websites in the world.

And we all know that the success of smartphones arose when Apple, a hardware producer, found a way to engage efficiently with tens of thousands of independent app developers.

We have examined how the French software developer Dassault Systemes successfully extended its Product Life Cycle Management Systems from aeronautics and automotive design into nine new industries and in the process multiplied its market capitalisation eight times in 15 years.

And we did not limit ourselves to commercial organisations. One of our in-depth case studies describes how Singapore's Building and Construction Authority deployed an ecosystem to promote productivity increases in Singapore's building sector using new materials and mass-engineered timber and prefabricated modules.

So what lies at the heart of all these examples of successful innovation and transformation? The answer is that these companies created new customer solutions through a hybrid form of organisation somewhere in between markets and hierarches.

All of them created communities and ecosystems that helped them innovate. Ecosystems are not new, of course. The Commons in medieval English towns where cattle were herded together for the whole town or the Javanese rice terraces where the farmers must co-operatively manage the flow of water over these terraces were already early forms of ecosystems.

But it was Jim Moore who in 1993 (Moore J.H., 1993, "Predators and Prey: A New Ecology of Competition", *Harvard Business Review*, May-June) renewed our understanding of how ecosystems could be relevant to new forms of competition. He described a business ecosystem as "a network of organisations and individuals that co-evolve their capabilities and roles and align their investments to create additional value and/or improve efficiency.'

Over the last few years the value of ecosystems and the role they play in innovation has gradually been accepted. In a recent publication BCG's Henderson Institute noted that the word "ecosystem" appears 13 times more often in annual reports than it did 15 years ago.

Through our in-depth case studies and discussions with many executives we quickly came to the conclusion that all organisations operate in one or multiple ecosystems – even if perhaps unconsciously.

In order to create new customer solutions, the challenge for most organisations is how to give leadership to these ecosystems to help them innovate and to create and deliver value in the face of increasing volatility and uncertainty.

In our forthcoming book (De Meyer A and PJ Williamson, 2020, *Ecosystem Edge: Sustaining Competitiveness in the Face of Disruption*, Stanford Business Press. See also: www.ecosystemedge.com) we argue that the leaders of such ecosystems can benefit from joint learning with other partners in the ecosystem and the flexibility that such a relatively loose collaboration enables.

But we did not want to stop with advocating the concept. We realised that we needed to help companies understand how they could nurture and guide the development of these ecosystems, while deriving benefits for their own growth and bottom line.

It is, of course, impossible to summarise all of this guidance here but we want to share some key ingredients for how to do it.

It all starts with discovering the value that the ecosystem can create beyond that which each of the individual partners could generate alone. When Dassault Systemes wanted to extend its PLM software into other industries it needed partners who had a deep understanding of those industries. Dassault had accumulated a huge stock of knowledge of the algorithms needed to model and simulate products or experiences but it needed this deep understanding of expertise in sectors such as fashion, mining, pharmaceuticals and city planning.

In each of these cases it built ecosystems with relevant players in these industries and with suppliers of very specialised technological knowledge.

ARM, meanwhile, built its ecosystem by drawing in chip designers and fabricators such as TSMC, original equipment manufacturers such as Apple and Samsung and application software developers. By working with these partners it was able to develop chip designs with the optimum combination of functionality, low power consumptions and cost competitiveness, enabling it to become a de facto global standard in the industry.

We also noticed that effective ecosystem leaders relentlessly pursue the goal of maximising the overall value created by the ecosystem, as opposed to trying to capture a bigger share of the potential profit pools. They understood that growing the pie was more important than how the pie was carved up. And they also promoted the discovery of new customer value through initiatives that improved the quality of interactions between partners in the ecosystem.

To kick-start such an ecosystem will require an ecosystem leader to demonstrate a real belief in the concept and that it will not squeeze it dry once it begins to thrive. As an ecosystem leader you need to build up your credibility as the nurturer and guardian of the ecosystem's health. And you need to attract new partners by communicating in simple terms the value of joining the ecosystem, clarifying the expectations of partners, providing a technological and business roadmap for newcomers to guide their investments, and lowering the barriers to entry.

Many companies we spoke to bought into the potential benefits of building an ecosystem but also asked whether it would not become a drain on their resources and whether they would be surrendering too much value and potential profit. But don't forget that the power of an ecosystem is that it can magnify the overall profit potential (the size of the pie) many times over. A smaller share of something huge will always be more attractive than capturing 100% of a peppercorn.

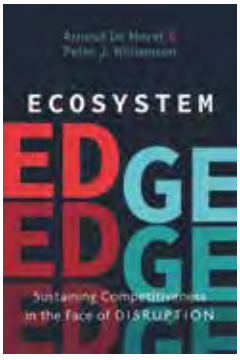
But, of course, you need to monetise your contribution to the ecosystem. You want to avoid falling into the trap that IBM's personal computer business descended into in the 1980s when, despite creating a huge ecosystem around the IBM PC together with Microsoft and Intel, it was not able to profit from it.

Therefore it is important that you identify a "keystone"-- some activity or key component of the product that you can own and control and on which the ecosystem's ability to create value for the customers depend.

Once you control such a keystone you need to set up "tollgates" to collect revenues from it. Tollgates may take the form of license fees,

13x

In a recent publication BCG's Henderson Institute noted that the word "ecosystem" appears 13 times more often in annual reports than it did 15 years ago



royalties or transaction fees, sales of value-added services or the use of data collected from the ecosystem to create new profit streams.

In the case of Alibaba, we were impressed how this company was able to let many of its partners develop profitable solutions for those who used its platform to sell their products while not encroaching on these partners' source of profits. Alibaba achieved this by focusing on their keystone: the control over the data of the hundreds of millions of customers and companies using the platform. It was this data and knowledge that enabled them to develop very large and profitable tollgate applications such as Alipay or Ant Financial.

For those wishing to develop and lead an ecosystem to create new customer solutions, a final point to keep in mind is that a very different type of leadership is required. We realised that leaders of ecosystems must have the charisma and credibility to lead beyond their own organisation, to embrace diversity and dilemmas, while developing an overarching identity for the ecosystem.

They must be able to listen to weak signals, to nudge the ecosystem to respond flexibly to uncertainty, to use soft power based on credibility and respect to influence partners, and above all to collaborate to create new value through solutions for the end customer.

Ecosystems have come back with a bang. We hope you will be prepared to implement them as an effective way to develop new customer solutions!

gf

About the Authors

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Peter J Williamson is Professor of International Management at the University of Cambridge, Judge Business School and Fellow and Director of Studies at Jesus College Cambridge, both in the UK. His research and teaching interests have focused on the impacts of globalisation of knowledge on multinational enterprises; the nature and implications of the rise of emerging market multinationals; strategies and competitive advantages of Chinese companies; cross-border M&A; and business ecosystem innovation.

Motivations: Balancing the differing needs of students

Diversity is not just about gender and nationality it is also about the reasons that students study an MBA. **Stuart Robinson** explains

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The drive for diversity is a key issue for many business schools. Most business school professionals would agree that it is important to have diversity of gender, nationality and socio-economic background in students as well as staff.

Looking out at the faces of my current MBA class, the other diversity aspect that is striking is the range of motivations for embarking on a course of study like the MBA. While colleagues and I are teaching a class, the individuals students within it can be interpreting the content and how it will serve their hopes, ambitions and plans in very different ways.

It is very rewarding for an MBA teacher to have diversity in a classroom as this serves up the alternative opinions, views and arguments that encourage breadth and depth of learning. However, it also brings with it the challenge of addressing the different motivations of students and meeting their diverse objectives.

How do you ensure that programme design caters for different motivations? You certainly can't design sessions on one-by-one student needs.

I argue that we can identify five broad categories of student motivations, each calling for different approaches to be combined in teaching. These are the Entrepreneur, Career Changer, Corporate Climber, Badge Acquirer and Lifelong Learner.

The Entrepreneur

Over the last decade, entrepreneurship has become a fundamental subject area at many schools and help with developing entrepreneurial skills is a key need of students. In recent editions of the *Tomorrows MBA study* by CarringtonCrisp and EFMD, entrepreneurship has consistently been in the top 10 of most-demanded subjects.

At Exeter we have a dedicated entrepreneurship research centre and, like many schools, we find increasing numbers of students using their MBA as a springboard for launching new ventures.

So what do these entrepreneurially inclined student need from an MBA programme?

First is the space and encouragement to experiment and put ideas into practice. For many, an MBA programme is seen as a safe environment in which to try to new business concepts and develop skills through initiatives such as start-up competitions and Dragons' Den style panels.

Second is access to mentors for support, whether that is faculty, alumni or corporate partners.

Finally, is help to turn ideas into reality and advice on how to access early-stage funding opportunities.

The Career Changer

An MBA is seen by many as the springboard to a significant career change. According to *GMAC's 2018 Alumni Perspectives Survey*, approximately one in three prospective MBAs plan to use their management education to pursue opportunities in new industries (27%) or job functions they have not worked in before (36%).

In addition to industry or career, it sometimes means just doing something utterly different.

For example, Exeter MBA alumna Sandra Norval trained as an accountant and her career had taken her into a senior environmental role in a rail operator.

But for Sandra, the MBA at Exeter supported a significant change in direction. Since graduation in 2014 she has set up her own professional coaching and business change consultancy, leading her into several senior advisory and non-executive board roles.

The fundamental nature of an MBA gives people like Sandra exposure to a host of different management disciplines. For many Career Changers some of the softer leadership skills such as influencing and working with others are particularly important.

> *To best serve the diverse needs of students, the MBA should be an integral part of the wider business school and university, partnering with other areas on research, teaching and opportunities for students. I think the best business education is one that reflects the full breadth and depth of business activity that students will encounter in the real world*

These students place an emphasis on networking and CV-building; and career support needs to be clearly linked to the content of the programme. Ultimately this group of students are focused on taking up opportunities to learn what it is like to work in different organisations and contexts. Activities such as individual consulting projects, which many business schools run, are particularly valued and can act as a catalyst for career change.

The Corporate Climber

The third group of students are those concerned with using an MBA as a means of promotion and increasing salary within their current organisation. This is especially true with part-time or executive MBA students and with full-time students fortunate enough to have an employer that is supporting their MBA.

For Corporate Climbers the focus is on acquiring knowledge, skills and behaviours that can add to their personal reputation and build up their confidence to tackle new roles.

For example, Nick Beilby, supported through his MBA by his employer, Centrax, found that he was able to use the knowledge, skills and vision he gained from his MBA at Exeter in the workplace. This, along with the opportunity to engage with other students to share ideas from their industries and perspectives, was key to accelerating his career progression in his organisation.

Measurement and accredited learning are something that this group values, which means that business schools need learning assessment systems that create impact back in the workplace. With the advent of Degree Apprenticeships in the UK, where business schools have the dual customer of individual and organisation, the Corporate Climber type of student is becoming more common.

The Badge Acquirer

For this group, a masters degree is the pinnacle of academic achievement. Having the letters "MBA" after their name is a major motivation for many students. Their thinking is that an MBA represents a "finishing school" from which they are ready to go on and pursue a variety of career goals.

Similarly to the Career Changer, Badge Acquirers may not have well-formed career goals beyond that of completing the MBA programme successfully. As with Career Changers, they will, however, place a great focus on career support and coaching that can help them prepare for life post-graduation.

This group will also attach significant importance to a business school's performance in rankings, accreditations and awards as these add credibility and perceived value to their MBA qualification.

The Lifelong Learner

Finally, there are a group of students that can be labelled Lifelong Learners, for whom an MBA is one step of many they take in continuing their professional education. In the 2019 *Tomorrow's MBA* study by CarringtonCrisp and EFMD, when asked about study motivations, prospective students placed "I had always planned to do an MBA as part of my personal development" second only to "improving earning potential".

For these students, the focus is on how they can use an MBA to expand on previous education and leaning to build for the future. They may be attracted by the intellectual avenues that MBA study can open and may value connections with the wider university beyond the business school itself. Within this group will be some that consider a PhD and an academic career as possible routes forward.

The variety of motivations that students bring to the MBA calls for careful responses from programme designers.

36%

According to GMAC's 2018 Alumni Perspectives Survey, approximately one in three prospective MBAs plan to use their management education to pursue opportunities in new industries (27%) or job functions they have not worked in before (36%)

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First, it underlines the importance of the functions and learning opportunities that sit around a core MBA curriculum. This can include entrepreneurial and new business incubation support, career services, project opportunities with external organisations and executive coaching.

To best serve the diverse needs of students, the MBA should be an integral part of the wider business school and university, partnering with other areas on research, teaching and opportunities for students. I think the best business education is one that reflects the full breadth and depth of business activity that students will encounter in the real world.

Second, it supports yet another argument about why a business school must have an engaged alumni community. The relationship with an MBA student needs to be treated as a lifetime commitment not just the one or two years of study, with alumni relations needing to be an integral part of programme design and development.

Third, corporate connections with organisations ranging from large corporates to small start-ups as well as from public sector to third sector are vital. All can be valid and valuable partners in business school programmes. MBA students want the holistic experience of learning and engaging with organisations and individuals outside the classroom. In this regard MBA programme design needs to look at how an external network of different partners can be built and maintained.

Finally, it points to the value of efforts that recognise, guide and value students as individuals. This is work that, given the limited time available in many contemporary programmes, must begin on day one and be maintained throughout the programme and after graduation.

About the Author

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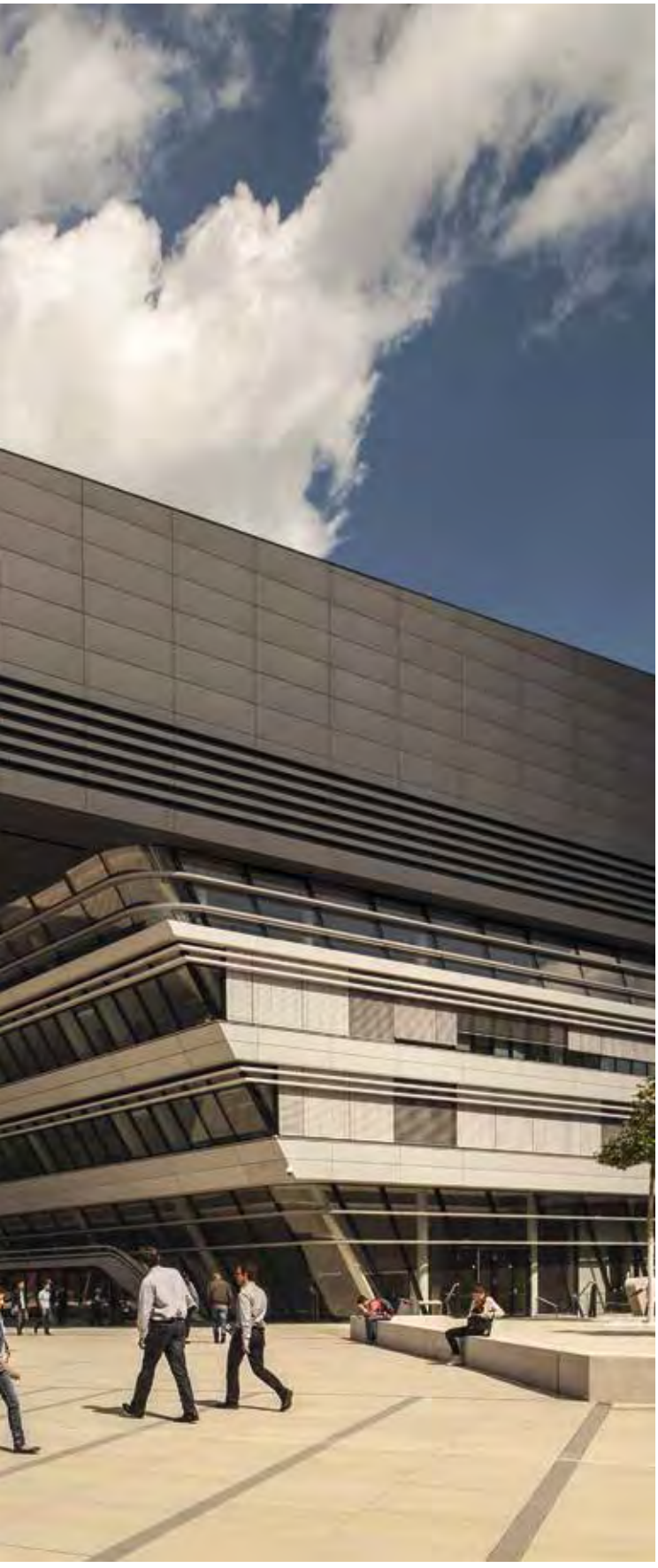
What digitalisation means for universities

Edeltraud Hanappi-Egger explains how one of Europe's leading universities is surfing the rising tide of digitalisation



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The process of digitalisation has evolved rapidly. Early on, digitalisation was often limited to converting analogue data to digital media (from vinyl records to CDs, for example).

Today, however, the discussion about digital transformation revolves around concepts such as AI (artificial intelligence), the internet of things, cryptocurrencies, big data and cloud services. The new possibilities have led to growing data volumes and higher speeds at which data-based insights are processed and disseminated.

Calls for advancing digitalisation further are gaining momentum and this also concerns universities. In Austria, for example, this development is evidenced by the fact that the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research has issued a special call focusing on digitalisation, inviting Austria's universities to participate and submit digitalisation projects.

Teachers taking on new roles

In our age of digitalisation, many innovative forms of learning, teaching and pedagogical experiences are available to educational institutions. This requires a shift from transmission-oriented teaching towards new forms of coaching and guiding students in their learning processes, based on digital learning environments.

At universities, teachers are not only important role models but also mentors. They need to focus not only on transmitting specific knowledge but also on students' personal development because studying at university is an important phase in young people's lives.

Due to the concept of research-led teaching, a university degree programme must familiarise students with current developments, research findings and expertise. This means that we need highly dedicated and qualified faculty with strong pedagogical skills in our lecture halls, or, more appropriately, our "learning" halls.

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Building a stronger feedback culture

In many educational institutions, feedback is unidirectional: student learning is graded, often accompanied by a brief evaluation report. At many universities, however, students also evaluate their professors at the end of a term, providing valuable feedback on their teaching performance.

Digitalisation also makes it possible to gather specific feedback on textbooks. When using e-books in class, teachers and publishers can collect automated feedback on passages that are hard to understand: if students need more time for a specific passage, this usually means that they have to re-read the text to be able to understand it. Based on this information, teachers could then review problematic topics in class and publishers could revise difficult passages in textbooks.

Personalised teaching

Digitalisation also opens up new possibilities for personalised teaching. In Austrian primary and secondary schools, students are usually grouped together based on age, with everyone working on the same topics, assignments and materials, regardless of the students' different skill levels.

Two examples from the US highlight the potential of digitalisation in maths classes. The first example is Carnegie Learning, an adaptive maths learning software.

In conventional classes, all the topics of the school year are covered, without regard to students' different knowledge levels.

Carnegie Learning, in contrast, selects topics and materials based on students' prior responses. This makes it possible to identify problematic areas, allowing students to continue practising until they have really mastered the material. Studies show that based on this approach students reach their maths learning targets 12% faster than in conventional classes.

The second example is Teach to One, a maths learning programme that focuses on the personal needs of each student. This system was introduced in New York City schools in 2009 under the name of School of One. Here is how it works:

Students learn maths based on eight different learning modalities, including teacher-

PHOTO COURTESY OF RAIMO RUDI RUMPLER

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> *How will digitalisation change the way we live and work? How will disruptive technologies like blockchains and cryptocurrencies affect our economies and our everyday lives? And, above all, how can we best prepare our students – tomorrow's business leaders – for the challenges posed by the digital transformation?*

23%

Algorithms determine the best learning methods to help each individual student learn successfully. For each student, the computer schedules the ideal teaching methods for the next day. Recent evaluations focusing on learning growth show that School of One/Teach to One students acquire maths skills about 23% faster than students in conventional maths classes

led instruction, small group work and online tutorials. At the end of each class, students complete a short online assessment. A system checks who needs to practise a little more, who has understood the materials and who is ready for new topics.

Algorithms determine the best learning methods to help each individual student learn successfully. For each student, the computer schedules the ideal teaching methods for the next day. Only few studies have specifically investigate the effects of this approach. However, recent evaluations focusing on learning growth show that School of One/Teach to One students acquire maths skills about 23% faster than students in conventional maths classes.

Universities in the digital age

Of course, much more research is needed to investigate which methods of personalised and technology-aided learning are effective and how they work. But the two programmes mentioned certainly highlight interesting new avenues.

At first glance, these approaches may seem utopian but a closer look quickly shows that digitalisation harbours great potential for educational institutions.

Learning processes are changing and this means that we also need new forms of teaching. Universities have to address these challenges.

One of the key questions is which kinds of knowledge and skills can be taught online, which topics require face-to-face work in the classroom and which forms of social interaction are needed. Direct student-student and student-professor interaction helps to strengthen academic discourse – after all, the goal is to critically interrogate concepts and discuss them together.

Welcome to the digital economy

Along with the process of digitalisation, the role of IT has evolved from an auxiliary function into a central element of today's business activities, leading to increasingly complex problems and challenges.

How will digitalisation change the way we live and work? How will disruptive technologies like blockchains and cryptocurrencies affect our economies and our everyday lives? And, above all, how can we best prepare our students – tomorrow's business leaders – for the challenges posed by the digital transformation?

At Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU) in Austria, we will be placing great emphasis on the digital economy in the coming years, both in teaching and research. A comprehensive perspective on this topic requires a multidisciplinary approach, which is why our teaching and research activities in this area include aspects related to business administration, business law, economics and the social sciences.

We also need to build faculty capacity and expertise in this field, from digital ecosystems to distributed ledgers and marketing in a digital economy. We are also developing a new bachelor's specialisation and a new master's programme focusing on strategy, design and implementation perspectives and the social and legal challenges facing digitalised companies.

The goal is to prepare students for their new responsibilities as future business leaders and to qualify them to thoroughly understand digital companies and apply appropriate management and decision-making models. They should be able to advance innovation based on their knowledge of information technologies and their effects on new and existing business models.

The programme will also aim to prepare students for starting their own businesses in this field. It is important to know which methods, tools and innovations can be used to plan and implement digital value creation. Practical experience gained through co-operation with innovative companies will be another key element of the programme.

Digitalisation is not everyone else's business

The effects of digitalisation concern organisations from all industries, including universities. To advance the digitalisation of universities, we need more than some IT upgrades or new e-learning services. We need university-wide digitalisation strategies that create progressive digital agendas of innovation and change. Such processes entail far-reaching changes and must therefore be proactive in nature.

WU is an innovative university where the majority of all information and data is already provided and processed in digital form. Besides WU's comprehensive online learning platform and digital course catalogue, students can also sign up for or drop courses and exams online, and prospective students interested in starting a WU programme submit their applications online.

WU researchers publish their work in an electronic repository and document their output in a research database. All WU employees have access to a digital vacation time administration system and an electronic pay slip. WU has one big advantage: its technologically advanced campus that opened in 2013.

PHOTO COURTESY OF RAIMO RUDI RUMPLER

"The effects of digitalisation concern organisations from all industries, including universities. To advance the digitalisation of universities, we need more than some IT upgrades or new e-learning services. We need university-wide digitalisation strategies that create progressive digital agendas of innovation and change. Such processes entail far-reaching changes and must therefore be proactive in nature

PHOTO COURTESY OF RAIMO RUDI RUMPLER

WU is therefore well prepared for advancing digitalisation. The next step is transforming existing processes from analogue to digital, and subsequently creating new, innovative procedures based on digital technologies. This requires evaluations and feasibility assessments.

Once the most useful innovations have been selected and prioritised based on the benefits and added value they offer for the intended target groups, the implementation starts. Transparency is crucial and it also important to ensure that the process is supported by all stakeholders in the areas of teaching, research and administration and by the students.

By their nature, universities have access to extensive in-house expertise and know-how. However, universities are well advised to work with external experts and platforms to maintain a continuous exchange of ideas and promote knowledge transfer. In this way, it is possible to generate innovation and master the digital transformation with lasting success.

Our digital strategies should aim to make good use of the opportunities offered by digital technologies without losing sight of the advantages of the analogue world. At the end of the day, the goal is to achieve greater efficiency for all target groups and to create added value.

PHOTO COURTESY OF VICTORIA JEBENS

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Apply liberally

Towards a model of liberal management education

Howard Thomas argues the case for integrating the liberal arts into management education so that the existing curricula emphasis on technological and analytical acumen is balanced with skills of critical thinking and ethical intelligence necessary for managerial judgement

My focus here is on undergraduate business programmes, even though the plea for the stronger adoption of liberal management education applies equally to postgraduate programmes in management education, including the MBA.

Undergraduate courses in business are the largest majors in both the UK and the US (and probably globally) and arguably have much more significance in the education of future managers than post-graduate programmes.

My starting point is the *Carnegie Foundation Programme Report*, written in 2011, admittedly from an US perspective, which called for a radical rethinking of undergraduate management education.

The agenda of management education has been highjacked over time, mainly in the postgraduate arena. Rakesh Khurana, an American educator at Harvard University and Harvard Business School, for example, notes that there is no longer a consensus on what constitutes a core curriculum in business. Skills of analysis (the model of logical positivism) have been prioritised. This has been at the expense of skills necessary for managerial judgement and the process of managing organisational environments of increasing challenge, complexity and ambiguity.

Indeed, there are a series of consistent weaknesses in the development of a range of managerial capabilities from creative, critical thinking to integrative problem framing and solving that would enhance both business and analytic skills.

So what is liberal management education?

What we call liberal management education in our new book (Stefano Harney and Howard Thomas, *The Liberal Arts and Management Education: A Global Agenda for Change*, Cambridge University Press, December 2019) would ground the study of the business world in an understanding of the wider world.

Rather than focusing solely on technical and business skills, management education would welcome the humanities and social sciences at the foundation of its curriculum and the two forms of education, professional and liberal, would be melded and integrated into a holistic curriculum.

Above all, this curriculum would not be characterised by a narrow, functional specialisation but would give management students access to the vast literature on enlightenment thinking in the humanities and to approaches about the role of history and society in the social sciences. Management is surrounded by paradox and ambiguity and hence requires broad-based holistic thinking and the development of important skills of synthesis, criticism, and intellectual curiosity as well as insights into analytic thinking.

Indeed, the lately canonised Cardinal Newman in his 19th century book *The Idea of a University* and elsewhere proposed that professional education should not belong in any university. He believed in a moral authority and freedom of thought, provided by a liberal education, and argued that simply acquiring knowledge without simultaneously cultivating liberal intellectual skills would result in a poor, inadequate education.

In his view, the purpose of a liberal education is to develop those critically important skills of analysis, criticism and synthesis and to use them to leverage knowledge acquisition wisely and effectively.

Thus, the goal in management education should be to provoke the development in the student of what we would call "criticality", creativity and analytical ability as well as an ethical, social and cultural ordering of the world.

In this manner, management students would then be prepared as leaders of society committed to both an ethical world and an ethical business environment.

Stories matter, so I will give you an example of an evolving liberal management education model from Asia, which draws upon my experiences as a Dean at Singapore Management University (2009 – 2015). As background, I arrived in SMU when the global financial crisis was still a festering wound with economic austerity as its signature policy element.

The only consolation for deans of management at that time was that while the financial crisis could partially be attributed to a massive systemic failure (with a narrative very similar to that of the great crash of 1929 – 39), the current failure in "Euroland" is clearly a failure of political will and leadership.

"The challenge we found in curriculum design was that to achieve sustainable inclusive growth in emerging markets such as Asia, the focus must be based on the proposition that the mission of business and the purpose of growth is to build a better society for everyone, and not just a simplistic objective of maximising shareholder wealth

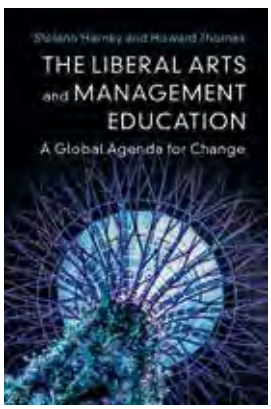
Therefore, the challenge we faced in designing an Asian management education was to evolve new forms of management education which would teach students how to avoid some of the pitfalls associated with the collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008-09 and the ongoing euro-crisis in order to help them navigate an ethical and cultural environment vastly different from that of even a decade ago.

As we attempted to rise to this challenge, a fundamental starting point was that management education cannot be divorced from the historical and cultural context within which it is taught. In Asia, therefore, it was important to discover, develop and then teach the unique historical, philosophical and cultural contexts within which Asian civilisations achieved their success as well as identifying what might lead to their decline and fall.

Thus, a management education student would be forced to go well beyond the study of business functions to also be a student of history, politics, cross-border communication and cultural exchange.

This also implied that as Asia emerged as an important economic region, mainly via the offices of the Association of South East Asian nations (ASEAN), the curriculum needed also to examine the reasons for the rise of the West, such as the role of science and the focus on the empirical method of proof. It is no accident that in contemporary Asia, every child is told to focus on science.

However, an Asian curriculum should not simply adopt US or European models of capitalism as its underlying rationale and identity. The recurring socio-ethical traditions of south-east Asia (rather like the *ubuntu* tradition and spirit in Africa) are of a communitarian, family-focused web of mutual obligations. This communitarian characteristic challenges both the rule of law and the highly individualistic, Darwinian ethos of US capitalism or the state-welfare tendencies of Euro-capitalism.



Communitarian capitalism can therefore be characterised as more stakeholder and less shareholder driven. Thus, the interests of the community of stake holders in an enterprise – the owners, employees, larger communities – would be a higher consideration than simply return on capital in a western context. These ideas have until recently have been somewhat heretical in the design of business school curricula in the West.

Hence, to really understand this communitarian ethos, which has certainly underpinned the east Asian cultural heritage, required our Asian students in management education to undergo a foundational, general educational curriculum in the fundamental philosophical, social, historical and literary traditions of Asian civilisations.

For example, in Asia, the role of government-controlled enterprises such as sovereign wealth funds and government itself as well as the strong influence of family-controlled companies are arguably greater than in the West. Therefore, in addressing the linguistic and cultural differences in Asia we designed our Asian curriculum to require a much deeper understanding of Asian traditions and social trends.

The challenge we found in curriculum design was that to achieve sustainable inclusive growth in emerging markets such as Asia, the focus must be based on the proposition that the mission of business and the purpose of growth is to build a better society for everyone, and not just a simplistic objective of maximising shareholder wealth.

So, finally, let us explain how a liberal management education model has evolved in the context of SMU. SMU admitted its first set of students in 2000 and was set up as the third national university in Singapore but with a four-year undergraduate degree unlike the three-year model favoured by the National University of Singapore (NUS) and Nanyang Technological University (NTU).

The structure of this undergraduate programme has evolved and become much more Asian in orientation over the last two decades. From its inception the undergraduate programme has been a path-breaker in undergraduate education in Singapore. Some of the highlights included small class size, interactive teaching involving project-based learning, a community service project, global exposure, study abroad and international components as well as the common curriculum, which comprises 40% of the programme.

The initial common core of the curriculum incorporated basic foundation courses such as maths and academic writing, a university core emphasising many of the skills advocated by Newman and others, a broad-based general education requirement, global and regional studies, and the importance of technology and global awareness.

In its more recent evolution, the curriculum has focused even more closely on learning outcomes and required graduate characteristics including the following: awareness of disciplinary and multi-disciplinary knowledge; developing both intellectual and creative skills; addressing interpersonal skills; promoting global citizenship; and, finally, developing personal mastery in terms of trust, integrity and independence in decision making.

Finally, SMU's core curriculum has continually evolved and now has a focus on Singapore and Asian studies embracing three pillars: Capabilities, Communities and Civilisation. This core now amounts to about a third of the programme, with further elective flexibility and the opportunity to graduate with single or double majors in the field of management. An internship, a community service project, as well as a study abroad experience are also mandated in the programme.

Hence, evolution of the core curriculum demonstrates SMU's clear commitment to broad-based, multi-disciplinary learning, critical thinking and communication skills while training students about the profession of management.

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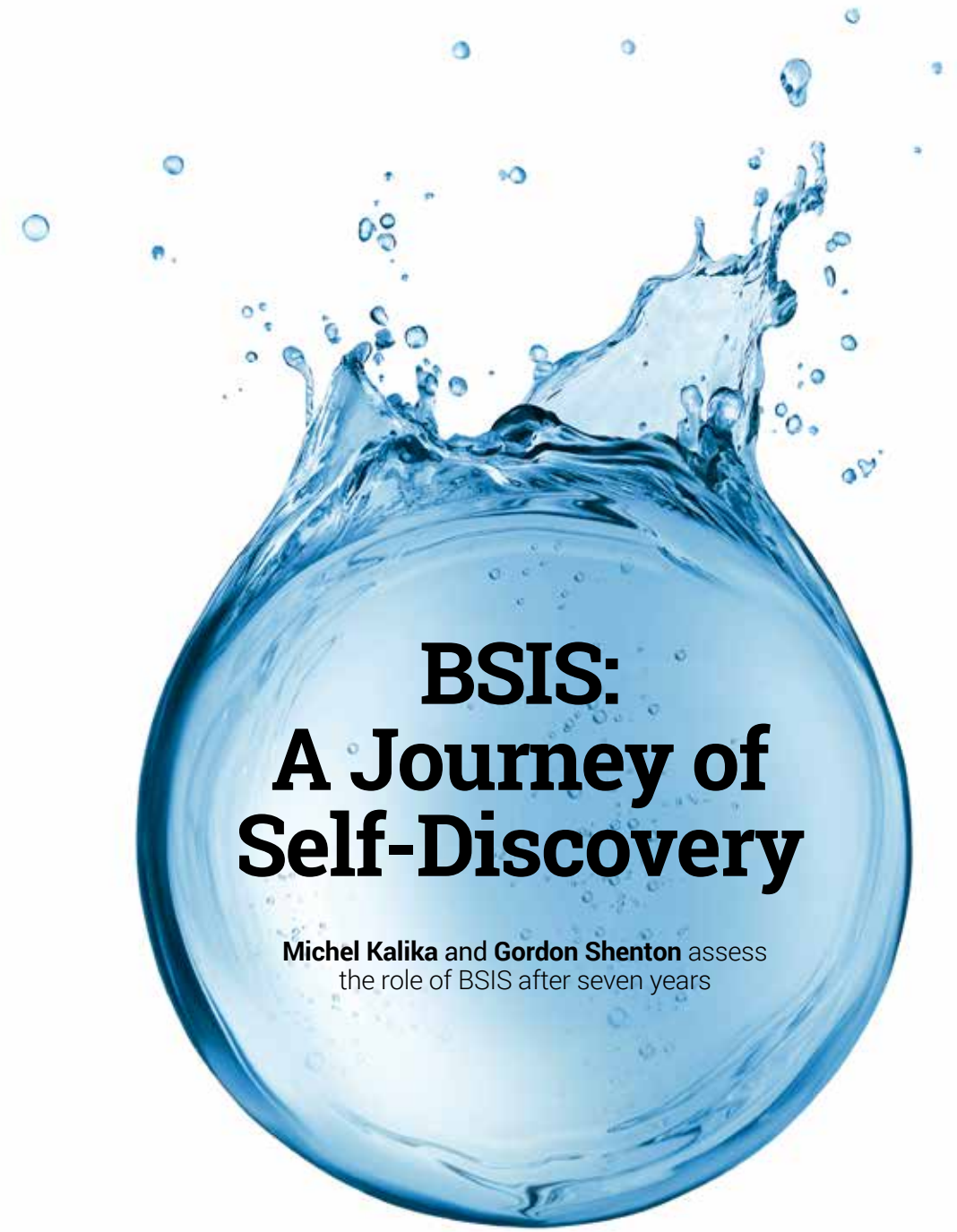


BSIS: A Journey of Self-Discovery

Michel Kalika and **Gordon Shenton** assess the role of BSIS after seven years

When BSIS (Business School Impact System) was created in 2012, the main aim was to develop a system that would allow business schools to convince their stakeholders of their impact and the extent of their usefulness to their impact zone.

At that time, the main challenge was to explain that business schools, in spite of their focus on internationalisation, research and accreditation, do continue to add value to their territories. Hence, the original purpose was to create a tool for a better operational communication with external stakeholders.

Seven years later and after having involved more than 45 business schools from 14 countries in BSIS it is time to step back and take stock of the situation. The first BSIS Symposium, which took place at HEC Liège, Belgium , in April 2019 and which brought together people from 25 Business Schools, was an opportunity to do this.

The purpose of this post-BSIS Symposium article is to suggest that beyond impact assessment there are hidden, unexpected managerial issues that are both strategic and organisational. A colleague and experienced expert commented after the BSIS visit how much he had appreciated the strategic discussions with the school's dean and staff.

Impact assessment and strategic issues

A striking feature of the reactions to the BSIS experience that were expressed during the recent symposium is the extent to which they portray the benefit of the system as a strategic tool and not simply as an effective impact-measurement tool. One school described the process as a "*journey of self-discovery*" identifying key strengths and opportunities for development in line with its historical identity. In this perspective, BSIS is seen as a clarifier of fundamental strategic purpose. "*BSIS gave direction on what the school is and where it should go*".

The first step in the process leads a school to define its impact zone: that is to say, the community or communities it is serving and in which it seeks to be a major player. This is usually a complex balance of regional, national and international aspirations that have to be interwoven. "*Regional embeddedness*" will increasingly be seen as a requirement even for the most internationally prominent institutions.

In other cases schools may seek to redefine their regional ambitions to include broader geographical areas in which they can play a leading role. We can observe a growing concern for schools to clarify their position in the "*local educational, economic and administrative ecosystems*".

The construction of a portfolio of educational programmes will require a coherent positioning in the different segments of the market. A high-quality bachelors programme will serve the aspirations of local families as their children enter the world of higher education and will allow a school to retain good students from the region.

A range of high-quality masters programmes will allow a school to serve the needs of companies in the region and to attract top-rate students from other parts of the country and from abroad.

The BSIS framework for tracking student flows in and out of its programmes will sharpen awareness of the need for "*careful strategic positioning*" aligned with the needs of the local business world and the resource capabilities of a school.

> *"The purpose of this post-BSIS Symposium article is to suggest that beyond impact assessment there are hidden, unexpected managerial issues that are both strategic and organisational. This confirms what a colleague with a long experience in accreditation told us at the end of a BSIS visit: "I never had such a strategic discussion with a dean in an accreditation visit".*

7yrs

Created in 2012 BSIS (Business School Impact System) has run for seven years...

45

in that time it has involved more than 45 busines schools...

14

...from across 14 countries

BSIS has been a powerful tool in drawing attention to the tri-partite alignment of three complementary areas: first, a school's programme offer with its masters-level specialisations; second, its research agenda with its focus on regionally relevant issues; and third, its outreach towards the specific problems of the impact zone

BSIS helps schools think through the problems linked to effective differentiation. BSIS becomes "*a way to show the distinctiveness of a school and to highlight these differences*". BSIS also plays an important role in leading schools to discover many things they were not previously aware of. The "*unintended outcomes*" often surprise everybody. Sometimes BSIS even acts as a "*game changer*" with several cases in which the name of the school and its logo have been rationalised as a result of the BSIS analysis.

Going through the BSIS process has also raised the awareness of the need for a more strategic view of a school's communications. The collection of extensive new data across a broad range of areas underpins a concern to "*work on the school's narrative and to tell* a *better story*".

BSIS has been a powerful tool in drawing attention to the tri-partite alignment of three complementary areas: first, a school's programme offer with its masters-level specialisations; second, its research agenda with its focus on regionally relevant issues; and third, its outreach towards the specific problems of the impact zone.

BSIS has been instrumental in opening up the debate on the objectives of research in order to look for "*managerial, regional and societal impact alongside the traditional academic perspective*".

Among the key questions for understanding a school's overall positioning we can also add the societal agenda, which is becoming a more and more urgent problem for many institutions as external pressure mounts . They welcome the help BSIS can bring in this highly strategic area while urging the system to do more.

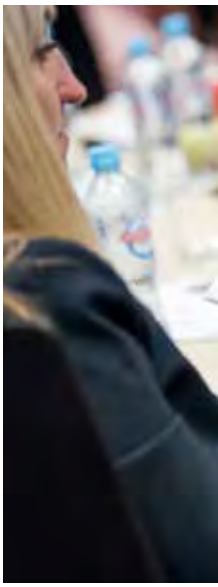
Impact assessment and organisational issues

"*Improving self-esteem*" has been mentioned as the result of an impact assessment process. Indeed, in any business school there are a lot of different activities (research, teaching, relations with companies, entrepreneurship support etc) and not all of them are valued equally in terms of perception. Nowadays, because of rankings and accreditation, business schools value academic research and A-journal publications a lot more than the other activities of the school.

This means that all those who are not concerned with these activities could feel ignored or under-valued. Because impact assessment is calculated by measuring all activities in a school that are a source of external impact, all the people in a school, whatever they are doing (teaching, applied research, partnership with companies, management of internships, communications etc.), feel proud of their school and of what they are doing. Impact assessment "*creates a sense of pride*" and "*keeps staff proud of their mission while confirming their motivation*".

"*It can be a very inclusive process if you plan it that way*". Beyond the fact that BSIS can create a lot of pride and a sense of achievement, the necessity to collect data in the different parts of the school implies communications and project co-ordination that reinforce the cohesion of the group and fosters "*improved networking relationships internally and externally*".

"*The BSIS process clearly improved the data collection*". Because impact assessment relies on data, there is obviously an impact upon schools' information systems. Moreover, even if there is



overlap with data required for accreditation, some specific data is needed because the process focuses more on external issues than internal ones. Furthermore the process generates in some schools the creation of an Impact Information System (IIS) and a KPI-based impact dashboard.

Impact assessment *can have an impact on the organisation of* a *business school.* Because it increases impact awareness and favours better relationships with stakeholders, it can generate the creation of the position of "impact manager" or reinforce the services in charge of external relations and communications.

The impact assessment process usually generates an essential change in the culture of the business schools. They have moved from an internal culture focused on standards and a number of well-ranked published articles to an impact culture that strives to take into account the outputs and externalities of schools' numerous activities.

This impact culture is reflected in the behaviour of researchers, who now communicate more systematically on social networks and on their own personal websites. They are also more likely to communicate to groups of managers through conferences or through articles in professional magazines.

Thus they take into greater consideration the impact of their research results on the world of practitioners. In the same way, those who manage relationships with organisations (consulting, missions, internships) are more likely to consider their action not only as pedagogical actions but also as a contribution of the business school to the development of companies and public authorities.

The change to an impact culture can also be encouraged by an incentive system that recognises all the ways for academics to transfer knowledge and real-life experiences into the world of managerial practice.

Conclusion

In conclusion to the feedback from the participants at the BSIS Symposium, we have to underline the very positive role of the BSIS visit, using a consultative and advisory approach that is considered by the schools to have a considerable impact upon them. Because it is a "*process*" with a positive state of mind, the internal impact is as important as the initially targeted external impact.

It is also important to highlight another unexpected effect of the impact journey, that is to say, the fact that the business schools involved in the process expressed the need for the creation of a community committed to more exchange on impact issues. That is why we decided to create a dedicated LinkedIn group and to schedule a second symposium on 4-5 May 2020 to share our experience and identify best practices in terms of impact assessment and management.

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The authors thank the participants to the first BSIS symposium for their valuable participation and Griet Houbrechts for the synthesis of the debates and conferences. The text between quotes is from the participants

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Michel Kalika and Gordon Shenton are respectively BSIS director and senior advisor at EFMD

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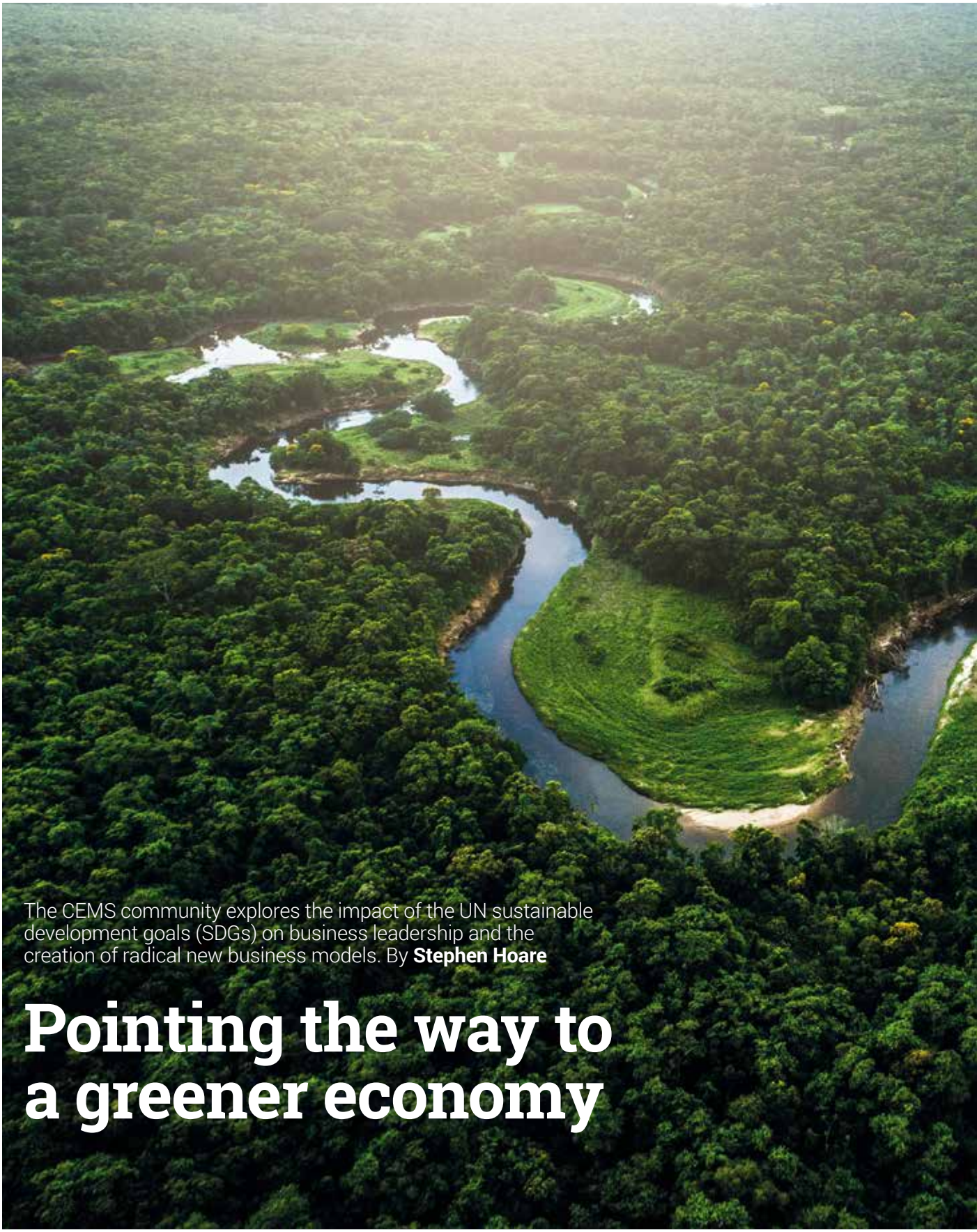

The CEMS community explores the impact of the UN sustainable development goals (SDGs) on business leadership and the creation of radical new business models. By **Stephen Hoare**

Pointing the way to a greener economy

In 2015 a UN global summit launched "Agenda 2030", with a key element being its seventeen sustainable development goals (SDGs) which, in the words of the UN Charter, "promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom". The SDGs are essentially an agenda for governments, society and business to create a fairer and more sustainable future for all world citizens. They range from the idealistic goals of "no poverty" and "zero hunger" to calls for "climate action" and "clean water and sanitation" as well as "decent work and economic growth" and "responsible consumption and production". It is not always clear how companies should respond, but solutions can be found that are relevant for many different industry sectors and markets: there is clearly no one size fits all.

For CEMS Academic Member Schools and for CEMS Corporate and Social Partners, SDGs are starting to inform research and shape the business agenda of the future. The influence of the development goals can be seen in areas such as business strategy, entrepreneurship, marketing, and human resources, where issues like sustainability, corporate social responsibility, leadership, innovation, recruitment for diversity and equality have come to the fore.

The CEMS community has been contributing to the debate by exploring the way companies respond to the challenge of implementing the UN SDGs. A group of Six Sigma quality accredited business schools including WU Vienna, ESADE, University of St. Gallen and some others recently came together to develop an online course focused on the SDGs. Called the Sigma Responsible Business Course, each school contributed its teaching and research expertise. Ninety students, many from CEMS schools, worked in small virtual teams across institutions to identify best practice examples of companies which were meeting the UN goals. Christof Mishka assistant professor in international management at Wirkshaft Universitat (WU) Vienna explains:

"The SDGs are essentially an agenda for governments, society and business to create a fairer and more sustainable future for all world citizens. They range from the idealistic goals of "no poverty" and "zero hunger" to calls for "climate action" and "clean water and sanitation" as well as "decent work and economic growth" and "responsible consumption and production"

"My involvement in teaching about the UN SDGs sprang from the course I developed in responsible leadership."

One finding of particular relevance to teaching of UN SDGs came from exposing students to cross-cultural experiences. Says Mishka, "it was interesting that corporate best practice can be interpreted so differently depending on where people are from and their cultural background." He believes that companies need to recognise cross-cultural influences and work to develop a common language and methodology to deliver on global targets.

One difficulty that is already apparent is deciding which of the UN's seventeen development goals should apply to business and in what circumstances. While individual companies might struggle with large over-arching targets, they need to find which targets are most relevant to their business. Professor Eleanor O'Higgins from University College Dublin comments: "I'm concerned that one target (climate action) is not enough and seventeen are too many especially as some goals overlap with each other." O'Higgins and professor Lazslo Zolnai of Corvinus University, co-authors of Progressive Business Models: Creating Sustainable and Pro-social Enterprise believe that capitalist economies need to embrace radical change. Says O'Higgins, "the traditional business model has to be re-thought and re-structured."

The book illustrates its theme with a series of case studies of companies that have adopted progressive business models. Examples include the Finnish wind energy co-operative Lumituuli which derives its inspiration from SDG 7 – "affordable clean energy" and the Spanish subsidiary of the German insurance company Integralia whose happy and productive workforce meets SDGs 8 and 10 – "decent work and economic growth" and "reducing inequality" and is the result of a recruitment strategy that offers opportunity to disabled people. "What these companies have in common is they are progressive enterprises that seek to serve society, nature and future generations," says O'Higgins.

Across CEMS Academic Member schools, students have been engaged in a variety of projects to study how companies and individuals are responding to the SDGs. At Nova School of Business and Economics in Lisbon students were asked to study why food and beverage producers were reluctant to draw attention to their corporate social responsibility initiatives when it came to marketing their products. Interviews were conducted with consumers and brand managers of leading companies. What emerged was a "chicken and egg situation" in which the companies felt their efforts to improve CSR would not be translated into public approval and brand awareness.

Pedro Moreira de Lemos took part in the project last year discovered a degree of cynicism among consumers who often regarded corporate claims to boost their environmental credentials as "greenwash". However efforts to address the SDGs were often genuine and effective. He comments: "One food company was cutting down waste by recovering food that could not be sold because it was out of code. Bananas that could not be presented as supermarket fresh were being recycled as ingredients for sweets or chutney where freshness and appearance were not an issue." While the company concerned believed that its initiative which met the objectives of UN SDG 12 might be seen as profit-driven, NOVA students believed its approach to "responsible consumption" would be seen as a positive if companies tailored a more relatable, informative and transparent communication strategy to consumers in order to reduce their skepticism.

A similar study was carried out at the University of St. Gallen, where students took part in a three day "boot camp" to brainstorm green marketing

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A study was carried out at the University of St. Gallen, where students took part in a three day 'boot camp' to brainstorm green marketing solutions that companies could use to promote their progress in meeting UN SDG 12. 'Our aim was to apply design thinking to raise awareness and encourage consumers to engage with the need for responsible consumption and production,' says Rotterdam School of Management student Carina Grosse-Entrup

$7tr

The United Nations estimates that $US 5-7 trillion of annual investment is needed globally in order to achieve its sustainable development goals. Radical change, progressive business models and a sustained focus is needed

solutions that companies could use to promote their progress in meeting UN SDG 12. "Our aim was to apply design thinking to raise awareness and encourage consumers to engage with the need for responsible consumption and production," says Rotterdam School of Management student Carina Grosse-Entrup. On secondment to St Gallen where she was responsible for marketing the CEMS programme, Grosse-Entrup organised student visits to Geneva-based CEMS partners including the United Nations and P&G.

Part of the "boot camp" involved teams of students conducting a market research exercise in which members of the public were quizzed about sustainability issues. The surprise finding was that half of the respondents had never heard of the UN sustainable development goals at all! Supermarket shoppers tended to look for the cheapest price rather than seeking out organic produce, fresh bread and local products like cheese, seasonal fruit and vegetables.

Changing people's buying habits could contribute to meeting SDGs by supporting local farmers, thereby cutting down on the wasteful air freight involved in importing exotic foods and the cash crops which are distorting third world economies. Buying closer to home at little extra cost would help reduce reliance on air transport.

Based on prototyping, students designed a mobile phone app which would inform consumers of sustainable choices and alternatives. Some valuable insights guided this design. Says Grosse-Entrup, "Before you can encourage sustainable buying, you have to make people aware of the choices they have. And you have to make choosing natural products very easy for people. They have to be available at the local supermarket."

Globally, one of the main barriers to eliminating poverty and hunger, promoting good health and wellbeing and upholding a universal right to clean water and sanitation is the result of corrupt business practices. For too long major economies have been exploiting the developing world and it is a major part of the UN's agenda to create a more level playing field.

CEMS Social Partner, Transparency International, campaigns for corporates to make full disclosure of the profits, tax paid and the measures undertaken in each country they trade with. The University of Louvain School of Management and Transparency International Belgium have a long term partnership in which CEMS students learn how businesses are applying UN SDG 16 ("peace, justice and strong

"Investors are starting to take transparent reporting on sustainability seriously. WU Vienna CEMS alumna Nadia Brandauer says: "If a company is managed sustainably it will do better in future in terms of financial returns. According to my company's Investor Watch, 58 per cent of our high net wealth customers believe that sustainable investment will become the standard within the next 10 years"

PHOTO COURTESY OF CARINA GROSSE ENTRUP

institutions) to their public reporting to shareholders and investors. Carlos Desmet, visiting professor in business ethics and responsible leadership, says, "corruption is the single biggest obstacle to meeting the sustainable development goals. It has a huge negative impact on the world economy."

The practice of offering money or gifts means overseas contracts are not necessarily awarded to the best performing companies and work and materials may be sub-standard. All too often, infrastructure projects in developing countries like hospitals, schools, bridges and railways are substandard." The issue is so important that the World Bank keeps a blacklist of companies found guilty of corrupt practice on its website.

This academic year, six Louvain CEMS students applied Transparency International's TRAC methodology to study fifteen of Belgium's top twenty companies as part of the school of management's business project. Students analysed how each firm's anti-corruption policy was working in practice, how transparent the reporting was in the main company and across subsidiaries and finally how companies were communicating financial results country by country.

At the end of three months, the project team requested that senior managers from each company be available at the end of the study to receive the report and discuss its findings. Twelve out of fifteen companies agreed, listening to feedback and promising to act on the findings.

Strict confidentiality was observed and the purpose of the exercise was to provide information to Transparency International in its advocacy role. Guido De Clerq of Transparency International Belgium commented: "Student fieldwork has given us some important insights. As a result, we recommend appropriate compliance policies, tougher monitoring and controls, implementing rules equally across all geographical areas and that clients, suppliers and partners undertake due diligence based on a risk profile."

Investors are starting to take transparent reporting on sustainability seriously. Meeting the UN SDGs is an essential element of one Swiss investment banks asset management business. WU Vienna CEMS alumna Nadia Brandauer works for this bank in Zurich as a request for proposal writer, a role which involves managing investment portfolios for insurance companies and pensions. Brandauer explains that clients see sustainability as more important than profitability, which can be short-lived. She says: "If a company is managed sustainably it will do better in future in terms of financial returns. According to my company's Investor Watch, 58 per cent of our high net wealth customers believe that sustainable investment will become the standard within the next ten years."

50%

Sustainable investment is now being implemented in all asset classes. Investments are rated according to environmental, social and governmental principles ESG. According to Brandauer, 25 per cent of global assets are managed sustainably (according to ESG principles), but this is set to rise to 50 per cent over the next five years

Sustainability teams working within the company's asset management division have put together funds related to specific UN SDGs such as climate change, food production, water and renewable energy. Sustainable investment is now being implemented in all asset classes. Investments are rated according to environmental, social and governmental principles ESG. According to Brandauer, 25 per cent of global assets are managed sustainably (according to ESG principles), but this is set to rise to 50 per cent over the next five years.

The United Nations estimates that $US 5-7 trillion of annual investment is needed globally in order to achieve its sustainable development goals. Radical change, progressive business models and a sustained focus is needed to help build a future where food, education, clean water and sanitation, healthcare, renewable energy and environmental stewardship are raised to a universal standard.

CASE STUDY
AT KEARNEY RECYCLING
AND THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Consumers are looking for brands which are sustainable, and millennials are especially conscious of this, "says Tei Peng global director of social impact at A T Kearney a management consultancy with branches in more than 40 countries worldwide.

A trusted corporate partner of CEMS, AT Kearney advises its clients across different industries and business sectors including governments, educational institutions and not-for-profits to understand and cope with complex social impact and sustainability challenges. As Tei Peng asserts this includes playing an active role in ensuring the UN SDGs are met. It is a long term on-going journey. "We have a policy as a firm that outlines how we make a positive impact on the communities in which we operate."

Tei Peng sees the circular economy as one of the most promising business models which can help societies achieve the UN sustainable development goals by 2035. Using recyclable components which can be easily replaced or renewed to prolong the life of a product, manufactures design products to be leased rather than purchased outright. Says Tei Peng: "The consumer is buying a service rather than an object. I see recycling and a commitment to reduce waste as the key benefits of the circular economy.

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About the Author

Stephen Hoare is a freelance writer and journalist, writing on higher education and business schools.

Kirsty Bashforth examines the three aspects, strategic, social, and political, that need to be included in helping to change or maintain the desired culture within an organisation

Three is the magic number

Culture is an oft-used word with many variations in what people are really referring to when they use it. Just like the word "performance", it can descend into a catch-all term that can lead to fuzziness, confusion and talking at cross purposes.

So getting clear how organisational culture really works starts with establishing a consistent definition of the term. I define it as the total summation of all aspects of the "way it is around here".

That includes perceptions, symbols, legacy habits, tone, practices, myths, communities, networks, assumptions, language and more – all adding up to the totality of behaviours and decisions across an organisation – and also how customers, suppliers and other stakeholders experience it.

It is not, then, simply a case of the words on a wall or website. And it is not necessarily just what we can see.

So how do you get to know what's really going on and how might we get to grips with it if we want to shift it?

First, we have to look at both the formal and the informal. (See Figure 1.)Think of this as a triangle: the point at the top being the formal aspect; the other two points below are informal.

The formal is the clear statement of intent and expectation around a culture; I call this strategic. It is what we see on the website and the positioning alongside the brand of an organisation and what we refer to in governance and publicise when we are seeking to attract talent. It is the statement of intent around culture.

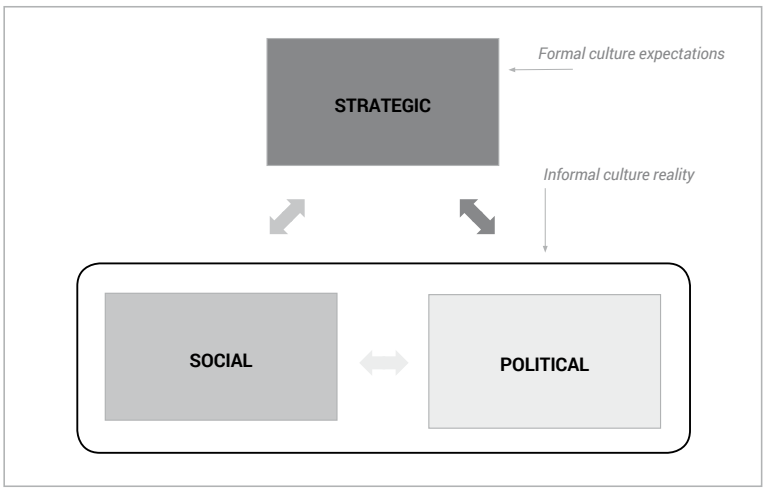

Figure 1 Align the informal with the formal

> *As human beings we have our own ways of doing things and unless we are incentivised and restricted in equal measure into a certain approach, we will carry on doing it the way we think best, whether that is the way a culture defines it or not. We do not simply do what we are told with no variation*

Of course, you want and hope the bottom two reinforce the top one – but you have to work hard on this because there is a lot to overcome that is not always obvious.

As human beings we have our own ways of doing things and unless we are incentivised and restricted in equal measure into a certain approach, we will carry on doing it the way we think best, whether that is the way a culture defines it or not. We do not simply do what we are told with no variation.

This is behavioural economics in action: faced with the same data, we make different and sometimes unpredictable choices. We all have backgrounds, contexts, ambitions, loyalties and habits. And we choose to work in ways that we know work best for us – unless we are incentivised to work in another way or prevented from our current ways of working.

We may wish that everyone simply worked to the expected culture of their organisation (the strategic, formal intent) but without oversight and overt governance of it, the informal will drive what really goes on and it may well be different from those formal expectations.

What then are those two informal parts of the culture that we may not always see but so badly need to pay attention to?

The first is the social side – the communities in which people work, the networks and old connections through which they "get stuff done", the practices and habits that are the way things

"have always worked around here". People may gravitate towards certain individuals they may have worked with previously and been successful working in a certain way for decades. It's just what works and how it is.

Particularly in organisations where long tenures are still prevalent (say manufacturing or the civil service) people have found their own ways to achieve goals, their own places to seek advice and their own "workarounds" for getting stuff done.

Inherent in those behaviours and actions are a set of cultural assumptions about what is acceptable, important and prioritised. These may well be subconscious assumptions but they are there nonetheless.

The second is the political side – how decisions are really being made when it comes to the crunch (one individual dominating a meeting, for example, or a "side-bar" conversation outside the formal process of who is supposed to be influencing whom).

Whom people choose to follow, whether they are their boss or not, casts a longer leadership shadow in behaviours and the sorts of pressures and incentives that are subtly or overtly influencing the way leadership makes decisions.

Perception matters here: a colleague may assume the way decisions are made or that certain decisions will be made and thereby second-guess the situation ("because it always seems to end up that way, no matter what they say").

All three of these angles – strategic, social, political – add up to form the way an organisation is really working. And I can pretty much guarantee that unless you have been actively overseeing the culture in your organisation, then the informal will be over-ruling the formal; or at least may mean that only aspects of your formal expectations are being followed through.

Do not just rely on one view of how this is working; try for a 360 view if you can. Remember your own view will only offer one lens. Ask colleagues, customers and suppliers about how things truly show up. And remember to hold a mirror up to leadership as well.

And never forget through all of this that the global aspect of business means behaviour is also understood and experienced differently depending where you are in the world. Always trying to understand what other geographical nuances may mean is vital.

Now, if you have got underneath the skin of this and have a decent grip on the culture that you really have in your organisation, here are some tips on how to tackle this seemingly amorphous challenge and to stop you falling into the usual traps.

- An organisational culture is only as strong a s its weakest link. While celebrating how your organisation is delivering to those expected behaviours it is important to reinforce what you are looking for: be forensic and resolute in stopping the behaviours that undermine all that good work. The sceptics will be looking out to prove that, first, the culture doesn't really matter and, second, that it can't be changed and, third, has no real consequences .Prove the sceptics wrong, follow through and make the boundary around what is unacceptable a real one.
- While alignment of the strategic, social and political are clearly what you seek, do not imagine that you will be able to engineer 100% alignment of people's minds, behaviours and decisions to the theoretical purity of your defined culture. You'll never quite get there since people are all different. But you can move towards it and work to minimise the misalignment. The aim is to bring to the surface the informal so that it is called out and observed. In that way, you'll make progress in any case as people will start to reflect on their actions.

> *All three of these angles – strategic, social, political – add up to form the way an organisation is really working. And I can pretty much guarantee that unless you have been actively overseeing the culture in your organisation, then the informal will be over-ruling the formal; or at least may mean that only aspects of your formal expectations are being followed through.*

• Culture is not static: you are not working towards an endpoint where you can say "we're done". People join and leave organisations all the time. Every person has an impact on the overall culture of the organisation because no one works totally in isolation, so they influence others. Similarly, contexts in the marketplace shift, and business strategies adjust accordingly and therefore the culture must adapt to support strategic delivery.

Remember, then, it's never enough to assume that you can see and hear all that your culture is: you need to dig into the mindsets, backgrounds, perceptions and assumptions as well. Observe the habits, the language and often what is not said. Be pragmatic, look at it from several angles and approach it as a craft – not as unmeasurable as a piece of art and never as precise as a scientific formula.

It is manageable: just have your eyes, ears and senses on alert to be able to spot what's really going on, across all three points of the triangle.

About the Author

Kirsty Bashforth is CEO of QuayFive Ltd, advising CEOs on change, organisational culture and leadership, and author of Culture Shift, A Practical Guide to Managing Organizational Culture, *Bloomsbury Business, 2019*

The Case for Women

Lesley Symons has 10 years research on gender representation in business case studies. The results are astounding

In 2014, while studying at INSEAD in France, I noticed a lack of women leaders in the case papers I was reading. As a successful businesswoman with a history in senior leadership roles in global corporations, I did not recognise myself in any of these papers. Where were the women? Where was the variety of leadership styles?

It seemed that in this context, diversity meant showing an array of male leaders from different organisations, different business schools and different cultural settings. The predominant emphasis in these case papers seemed to be on western male leaders. There was a distinct lack of women in the papers.

This disconcerting observation lead me to the subject of my master's thesis. I decided to quantify the presence of women in business school case papers and understand how they are portrayed in these cases.

And that is where it started.

A decade of progress?

As of today, I have collected 10 years of research on the Case Centre's award-winning and bestselling case papers. With over 100 cases read over this decade, I wish I could say that we are seeing meaningful change. We are not. What have I learned from this research? A lot. Though I am not sure our case writers have.

This narrative of missing women is not new. It is prevalent in print media, films, theatre and just about every strata of society. It is a topic that has been taken up by various groups such as Geena Davis' Institute on Women in Media and UN Women, for example. Women's lack of presence in the C- suite, board and on executive committees is still woefully low with targets being missed by many groups.

Business schools have made inroads over this time in the number of female student entries, with some schools at over 40% female student participation. However, once in these schools, women are not seeing themselves. Female professors and school board member numbers are generally still low, struggling to get to 30%.

The results

My research explores the Case Centre's annual award-winning case papers from 2009-2018. Each year there is a winner of nine subject categories plus an overall winner. These are the papers that each year are most widely distributed among different schools. As a cross reference we also read the three best-selling cases for each of these years. It is these papers that we have read from years 2009-2018 – 105 unique papers.

We initially started measuring the number of papers with a man or woman in them; the number of male and female protagonists and what categories these papers fell into; the author's gender and business school publisher. In the past five years we have started to count the gender of characters in each paper.

What have we learned over the 10 years and from reading these 105 papers is:

1. Few women present and few women protagonists
2. An overwhelming presence of men in papers
3. Gendered areas of work
4. Predominance of male writers

Still few women

Women's overall presence in papers

Women's overall presence in papers has improved over the 10 years of research. Women are mentioned in 70 of the 105 papers from 2009-2018.

- From 2009 – 2013 women were in 55% of papers;
- From 2014 – 2018 women were in 79% of papers;
- From 2016 – 2018 women were in of 90% of papers;

However, in 23 of these papers (22%) we deemed that women could either get missed by the reader or she was in a non-business-related role (wife of a character, for example). We judged that women are present (meaning in a prominent or business-focused role) in only 47, or 45%, of papers. Women are not in 35 (33%) of papers at all. Since we have been researching the number of characters in these papers (from 2015 – 2019) we have analysed 52 papers. There are 89 female characters across 52 papers. An average of just under two per paper.

> *First, schools need to understand how their papers present overall to students. Do they know across their programmes from a gender and diversity perspective how the cases present?*

Female protagonists in papers

Over the 10 years and 105 papers there are 12 papers with a female protagonist and at least one paper with a female lead paper every year, except for the three years 2010, 2014 and 2017, where there is no female-led papers at all. 11 of the 12 female protagonists' qualities are not described at all.

We know from the original research that two of these female-led papers were originally male protagonists and the lead name was changed - however their descriptors were not changed. This means we have ten papers or 10% of papers over the 10-year period that were originally written with a female protagonist.

Symons Test

The Bechdel Movie Test is a simple test of women in movies. It asks whether it features at *least two women, who talk to each other about something other than a man*. (https://bechdeltest.com/). In our research we re-designed this test to measure:

"does it have a woman in it, in a leader position (ie the protagonist), who speaks to another woman about the business?"

Sadly, only four papers out of the 105 papers have female protagonists speaking with other women about the business.

Overwhelming presence of men

Men are present in 103 of the 105 papers. Eighty-three of these papers have a male protagonist. In the five years we have been counting characters there are 450 male characters; an average of just under nine characters per paper. Men outnumber women characters by five to one in papers.

Of the 103 papers with a man in them there are descriptors used such as "*tough but fair… results driven … father figure*". Many papers not only have a male protagonist but also have a male founder.

Gendered areas of work

The OpEd Project (https://www.theopedproject.org/) Byline Survey Report (2012 https://theopedproject.wordpress.com/2012/05/28/the-byline-survey-2011/) found that women published in print mainly occurred in one of the four "F" areas: Food, Fashion, Furnishing and Family. Recently, the categories of health and gender have been added.

Ten of the 12 female protagonist papers fall into one of these categories. The largest sectors for the male protagonist papers are IT and telecommunications.

Predominantly male writers

It is also important to look at who is writing cases and who the main publishers are.

Across the 105 papers written there are 116 male first writers and 27 female first writers. Interestingly, those who are doing the research and the main body of writing, the secondary writers, the gender balance is much more equitable with 59 male secondary writers to 39 female writers. Sadly, the gender of the writers seems to have little impact on the gender of the protagonist. Business still seems to be seen as a male-led domain.

Of the winning schools published, Harvard is by far the most consistent and predominant , with 25 or 24% of the 105 cases published closely followed by INSEAD with 18% or 19 winning papers. Of the 12 female winning protagonist papers six, or 50%, come from Harvard.

105

Over the 10 years, and 105 Case Centre's award-winning and bestselling case papers, there are 12 papers with a female protagonist

83

Men are present in 103 of the 105 papers. Eighty-three of these papers have a male protagonist.

50%

Of the 12 female winning protagonist papers six, or 50%, come from Harvard

Where to go from here

Most recently, in collaboration with The MBA Roundtable and Forte Foundation, we have reviewed a number of business school's MBA core curricula. The stats overall are not much different than those reported in our research. However, what we have learned in doing this exercise and research is: –

• Transparency is key

First, schools need to understand how their papers present overall to students. Do they know across their programmes from a gender and diversity perspective how the cases present? Doing an audit of this is key. For until you know the numbers it is hard to start the change. Use the Symons Test as a base for measuring how women show up in papers. As we have seen from the research, having a female protagonist only in a paper is not enough.

• Change starts from the top or from the middle

All need to be behind this and part of change. It starts with the deans. It needs to be a priority school-led initiative. Acknowledge to all, faculty and students, in what you are doing?

• Start with the why?

Why is this important ; why does the school need to do this? Publish the figures and what you want to do about it. Set your goals for change.

• Engage all

Involve all in the process… including students. Be clear on the HOW you will do this… audits, competitions or highlight the school's best female-led cases and best female-led case teaching. Help faculty source the best female led case material.

• Educate

Educate all on how to teach from a gendered and diverse perspective. Educate on faculty biases and the impact it may have on others. Acknowledge those who do it well

• It's a journey

Know that this is a journey – a marathon not a sprint. This is a long-term strategy with many challenges.

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About the Author

Lesley is the founder of The Case for Women, which conducts research into the presence of women in case papers with the aim of improving their presence in business school learning tools and their overall representation within the tertiary education sector.

Symons has co-authored a winning case paper and is also a part-time coach on a variety of London Business School's programmes.

Delivering experience to achieve value

By understanding and attending to employee experience in a far more sophisticated manner than in years past, HR can expand its role among leadership as an equal member of the executive team says **Evan Metter**

As the forces of change within the workplace continue to accelerate at unprecedented speed, disruption has become the norm that CHROs and other business leaders must live with. It's not pretty but it's not going away either. Even brilliant solutions don't last as long as they used to. But, as with any challenge, after careful assessment, solutions can be found and applied.

Yes, traditional business models are being quickly swept away by digital transformation. Yes, new technologies are reshaping operations. Slimmer margins? Changing customer expectations? Fierce competition from nimble start-ups? Yes, yes and yes. Can these challenges be met with a better employee experience?

In this new reality, in which talent is key to competitive advantage, every leader needs to think differently about their role in creating and maintaining employee experiences. Human resources executives can play a critical role here, helping build operating models that use enabling technologies to create an environment in which workers are treated like critical drivers of value.

The talent picture is complex as organisations respond to workforce pressures on four main fronts:

Diversifying workforce demographics

For the first time, corporations need to manage the presence of up to five distinct generational groups in the workforce, each with its own wants, needs and motivators. These divergent requirements complicate the process of shaping company culture and delivering on the employee value proposition (EVP).

The rise of contingent labour

According to KPMG's 2018 CEO Outlook survey, almost all companies in the US (99%) use a contingent workforce in some capacity. Increasing use of contingent and "gig" workers complicates workforce planning, creating many possible ways to achieve an optimal workforce size, shape or composition.

The shift to a consumer mindset

Employees are increasingly "shopping" for jobs, seeking tailored employment experiences that align with their personal goals and values. This mindset not only changes talent attraction and hiring strategies, it also increases the need for an employment experience that delivers a sense of deeper purpose and fulfilment.

Intelligent automation in the workplace

Automation technologies already have a deep impact on talent strategies. In addition to increasing productivity and streamlining time-consuming manual work, automation impacts workflows, increases employee reskilling requirements, and creates demand for new roles and new technical specialisations.

In this evolving workplace, creating the right employee experience can help organisations attract and retain high-value employees who deliver competitive advantage. In these enhanced environments, these employees also can work more innovatively and productively.

Research shows organisations with specific employee experience programmes and strategies report up to three times higher profit growth. Part of this growth is due to lower operating margins stemming from employees being more innovative in how they work but lower employee turnover also contributes measurable savings.

Creating this new kind of employee experience demands that leaders look at operations through a customer experience lens. KPMG's 2020 Future of HR survey reveals that 75% of leading HR organisations have a strategy in place to design an EX that mirrors and supports the customer experience. This must be built on assessments and analysis not just company programmes but also the wants and needs of each employee from their career, their workplace and their employer. From there, a company can begin to shape tailored experiences for a multigenerational workforce with many different employee types.

99%

According to KPMG's 2018 CEO Outlook survey, almost all companies in the US (99%) use a contingent workforce in some capacity

75%

KPMG's 2020 Future of HR survey reveals that 75% of leading HR organisations have a strategy in place to design an EX that mirrors and supports the customer experience

Leaders cannot be limited to insights from annual performance reviews or opinion services; they need to keep a finger on the pulse of the current employee experience. What do workers want across their digital, social and environmental experiences? Is your organisation meeting those needs?

Mechanisms and technology that allow for real-time feedback and sentiment analysis can ensure that workers feel heard and allow the organisation to respond swiftly in the moments that matter.

Enhancing employee experiences means placing a greater emphasis on the structural elements that shape that work and thus shape the employees' day-to-day experiences within the organisation. Employees need to be surrounded by a platform of human-centred services that are provided or supported by HR. This means that instead of focusing on process, the HR organisation of the future will be more like a platform or service provider that meets the needs of different "internal customers" or worker groups in many different ways.

The HR dream team of the future

To deliver this, the key to it all is the expansion of HR team scope and skills. The digital transformation and analytics skillsets required to realise HR's potential as a driver of competitive advantage are not found in the traditional HR operational model.

There are some people you'll need with you in the car that you're driving. People with skills you'll require on your way to the HR operational model of the future. If you don't have them already, here's who you're going to need:

People data analyst

As we become more ensconced in the digital age, it's clear to everyone that each individual worker now brings with him or her reams of objective, subjective and third-party digital data. This ranges across everything from uploaded resumes to credit checks to buyer behaviour and more of it is available than could ever be searched for and processed. The role of People Data Analyst exists to identify, sift through, acquire, organise and communicate salient data points about individuals, groups, layers, trends and predictions ofthe behaviour, desires, and attributes of existing workers, candidates, new hires and emerging roles within a company.

People robotics capability manager

Whether full time or part time, you're going to need someone with one foot in the world of your human workforce and the other foot in the world of "What can now be accomplished through automation?" It's an ever-shifting world, keyed to the word "now".The People Robotics Capability Manager has to be consistently tuned in to the constantly advancing capabilities of automation. They have to know how many minutes of time spent daily by a human worker on a given task could be achieved in the same or less time via automation and/or robotics. This could range from testing a microchip to surveying a mountain top and everything in between.

People performance architect

With a focus on behavioural science, the People Performance Architect – again, seldom likely to be a fulltime role – is dedicated to understanding challenges to and creating solutions for optimising workforce performance. This encompasses the entire range of performance affecting metrics, including but not limited to physical environment (the workplace itself), flex time and remote work advantages and disadvantages, incentive strategy, work/life balance analysis and psychological drivers, particularly in the face of encroaching automation.

The urgency to act is growing. As CEOs pressure HR leaders to respond quickly to a fast-changing landscape, traditional tools such as annual surveys no longer provide value. New tools combining cognitive, robotic, analytic, cloud and social media technologies are the go-to resources for acquiring employee experience data in real time

Culture integrator

Company culture has become the darling of workforce shaping and not without good reason. More and more companies are discovering that a company culture that aligns to a company's performance goals and purpose attracts premium talent. As overseer of this long-ignored competitive driver, the Culture Integrator, becomes the ringleader and cheerleader for developing and sustaining a company culture of purpose, productivity and high morale.

Culture shaping starts with brainstorming and an effective manager in this role guides the process from white boarding to fruition resulting in incremental changes that drive the company steadily toward desired cultural outcomes.

With these skills you can engineer the future of not only your department but your company. Without them you run the risk sinking irrevocably into painful obsolescence.

All of these elements must come together in order to support transformation

While technology innovation is often viewed as the lever giving the most immediate results, true transformation focuses on the effects of the business strategy and its people.

KPMG recently worked with Dow, one of the world's largest science and technology companies, to undergo a major transformation within its global human resources organisation. Dow set out to provide a leading-class customer experience in the most effective way possible: by enabling a leading-class employee experience. Dow sought to shift the way it worked by redesigning the way it delivered value through HR.

Coming from a highly customised, on-premise Human Capital Management environment, Dow wanted to move its worldwide HR systems to the cloud. The transformation would have a wide impact, changing every single HR process that touches employees.

The result?

Dow now has a single, cloud-based global HR platform featuring the same processes and performance metrics for all 37,000 employeesin 63 countries. Furthermore, KPMG teamed with Dow to deliver HR function and solution centre design, experience design and engineering, analytics design, tax advice and detailed change management.

We are also working closely with ADP in its implementation of a North America payroll and global time and absence system. In sum, Dow now has a leading-class employee experience to attract and retain high performers, improve customer satisfaction and accelerate business growth.

In this digital age, with the emerging and increasingly fierce war for talent and skills, creating an employee experience that differentiates employers and actually retains talent will be critical. Traditional, task-focused workplace cultures are a significant barrier to true digital transformation. Addressing and quickly closing the employee experience gap needs to be a business priority for every leader today.

The urgency to act is growing. As CEOs pressure HR leaders to respond quickly to a fast-changing landscape, traditional tools such as annual surveys no longer provide value. New tools combining cognitive, robotic, analytic, cloud and social media technologies are the go-to resources for acquiring employee experience data in real time. By understanding and attending to employee experience in a far more sophisticated manner than in years past, HR can expand its role among leadership as an equal member of the executive team.

Instead of making transformation a goal, make it a way of business. To learn more, visit read.kpmg.us/FutureHR

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About the Author

Evan Metter is a Principal with KPMG LLP, Human Capital Advisory

'Formulaic, cautious, dull and unreadable.' **Dennis Tourish** struggles to understand management research papers

Time to right a wrong?

Many decisions in organisations are taken in spite of evidence that they do more harm than good. Consider the use of stock options as a compensation strategy. Originally intended to align the behaviours of managers with those of shareholders, unintended consequences quickly multiplied.

These included managers focusing on the short term rather than the long term, leading many of them to exaggerate earnings and even commit fraud. One study found that companies using such systems were more likely to be forced into restating their earnings than those that did not.

Mergers and acquisitions likewise fair more poorly than their authors generally hope for. A study of 947 acquisitions over almost 20 years reported that when large companies use stock to buy smaller firms they can expect 25% inferior returns in the next five years.

It is therefore no surprise that managers are increasingly urged to use "evidence" when making decisions. This sounds better than merely imitating what others do, a process that has been described as "casual benchmarking" Just because others are doing something doesn't mean that it makes sense for you to do the same.

However, advice to study "the evidence" is itself flawed. For a start, where do you find it? An obvious place might be in academic journals devoted to management. But these are written by academics for academics. They are generally unintelligible to anyone outside a small fraternity already initiated into the history, vocabulary and methods of whatever topic is being addressed.

Yet careers within academia depend on building a strong portfolio of publications within such journals. Making matters worse, we climb the greasy pole much faster if we publish many such papers, and make sensational claims about their importance. These are strong incentives to cut methodological corners, hide weaknesses in our data, use dodgy statistical analyses and claim to have discovered entirely new theories.

"I offer the example of "authentic leadership" theory (ALT). This has become something of a fad within the leadership development industry. ALT proposes that leaders who bring their "real" selves to the forefront of their interactions with others are more effective. If you are persuaded enough, or maybe just gullible, you can pay Harvard Business School $15,500 for a five-day course in how to be more authentic

I offer the example of "authentic leadership" theory (ALT). This has become something of a fad within the leadership development industry. ALT proposes that leaders who bring their "real" selves to the forefront of their interactions with others are more effective. If you are persuaded enough, or maybe just gullible, you can pay Harvard Business School $15,500 for a five-day course in how to be more authentic.

As the prominent management theorist Jeffrey Pfeffer has noted, there is a "delicious irony" in the notion that you can be trained – that is, taught -- how to change yourself to be more authentic. Yet the evidence base behind all this is fundamentally flawed. Here is one example.

A group of academics published a paper on ALT in 2016. Its main claim is as follows: "Study 1 shows experimentally that compared to a leader who advances personal interests, a leader who advances the interests of a collective is (a) perceived as offering more authentic leadership and (b) more likely to inspire followership".

Please note how flimsy this sounds. The paper is telling us, in effect, that leaders who promote the common good are more valued than those who pursue selfishness. The closer one studies the paper's methods and data the louder such misgivings begin to shriek.

Its authors report that they gathered data from 73 students. No details are given, including whether they were undergraduates or postgraduates. This is an extraordinarily small sample on which to build claims about organisations and leadership throughout the world.

The practice of using student samples to draw conclusions about relationships at work is also dubious. Few of them have much experience of the world of business. Some journals now refuse to publish papers that rely only on student samples.

Those in this study were presented with a one-page commentary article on a senior politician who had switched his support from the incumbent minister to a challenger. The first experimental condition reported the leader to have reached this position for personal reasons while the second reported that he did so because of collective interests.

Note that the first headline is a depiction of selfishness and will contaminate any responses that are obtained. Of course, the second headline is equally likely to skew responses.

All this tells us is that when people are given negative information about a leader, they will rate that leader poorly on whatever measurement of leadership that you present them with. And when they are given positive information about a leader the opposite will happen. It doesn't really tell us anything about leadership that is worth knowing and certainly doesn't provide robust support for ALT.

There is another problem with management research. It is that many of its theories offer little or no evidence to support them. A study of papers in one prestigious journal concluded than no more than 9% of the theoretical propositions they contained were ever tested. This problem is compounded by our reluctance to replicate.

A study of 18 leading business journals from 1970 to 1991 found that less than 10% of published empirical work in the accounting, economics and finance areas were replications. It was 5% or less in the management and marketing fields.

Multiple replications are even rarer. This means that management research may be suffused with false positives – that is, it makes knowledge claims that are false. We don't know what findings can be trusted and what cannot.

Even when papers are retracted because of fraud, poor analysis, plagiarism or other issues action is often far too cautious.

For example, one American accountancy professor who has now had 37 papers retracted because he invented all his data.

10%

A study of 18 leading business journals from 1970 to 1991 found that less than 10% of published empirical work in the accounting, economics and finance areas were replications. It was 5% or less in the management and marketing field

But that leaves nearly one hundred other papers by him that remain in the public domain, even though they are in all probability fatally flawed. We are left to our own instincts in deciding whether we should trust their conclusions or not.

There is yet another major problem with management research. Look at the guidelines for authors provided by any of our top journals, and the odds are that you will see a call for "theory development" in the papers that they publish.

There is no equivalent demand that authors should develop guidelines for practice, describe an interesting phenomenon for which no theory is yet available, be clearly written or address important issues. The result is a great deal of pretentious gibberish masquerading as "theory development".

Here is an example. Why didn't our author use words with which people would be more familiar? Read an extract from the abstract:

"The core hypothesis, supported by the results, is that the more similar the initially experienced level of organisational munificence is to the level

The RRBM encourages elite journals to publish more problem-centred research "oriented toward critical social and business questions that are complex and span disciplinary boundaries." For example, terrorism is a an organisational problem but it is one that we ignore. The organisational and management implications of climate change also cries out for deeper analysis but is again largely invisible in management journals

of munificence in a subsequent period, the higher an individual's job performance. This relationship between what I call 'imprint–environment fit' and performance is contingent on the individuals career stage when entering the organisation and the influence of second hand imprinting resulting from the social transmission of others' imprints."

Not quite nonsense - but not quite English either. This kind of writing has become far too common in our field. I would translate it as follows: " When managers behave well with new employees, and continue to do so, they work better, and when they behave badly the opposite happens. This is partly because already existing employees also behave either well or badly and so role model attitudes and behaviour for others".

"Imprinting" seems to mean the impact on us of our experiences with others. But since this doesn't sound sufficiently theoretical, we read instead of "imprint–environment fit".

Note also the reference to "supported by the results." This means that some hypotheses that stated the blindingly obvious were developed and, in the manner of someone hypothesising that alcohol can be bought in a bar, they were duly confirmed. The paper strives for enigma, and I suppose achieves it, since without the help of a dictionary it is hard to know what point is being made. There is a skill to this kind of writing, just as there is in playing scrabble. Whether it really advances the sum of human knowledge is a different matter.

Most papers in mainstream journals are formulaic, cautious, dull and unreadable. They tend to ignore genuinely important problems in pursuit of this or that fancy that lends itself to quick data collection and facile theorising. Management researchers have so far published very little that addresses the looming technological revolution in the world of work, organisations and management.

What is to be done about all this? My alarm is now shared by many. A network of management researchers has emerged committed to promoting more responsible research in business and management in order to help produce a better and more sustainable world (Responsible Research for Business and Management https://rrbm.network).

Among much else, our academic journals need to change. The RRBM encourages elite journals to publish more problem-centred research "oriented toward critical social and business questions that are complex and span disciplinary boundaries." For example, terrorism is a an organisational problem but it is one that we ignore. The organisational and management implications of climate change also cries out for deeper analysis but is again largely invisible in management journals.

Putting all this right means back-peddling on our fascination with theory. There is, of course, nothing wrong with papers that seek to develop theory. But it is ridiculous to insist that they should all do so.

We also need more papers that have larger and more representative samples and consider the real-world implications of what they report. We need more replications of studies that make big claims and a greater willingness to retract those that look toxic when placed under the microscope. Managers would benefit and so would our wider society.

So too would academics. We might even find that our work becomes less boring and pointless, more interesting and more widely read.

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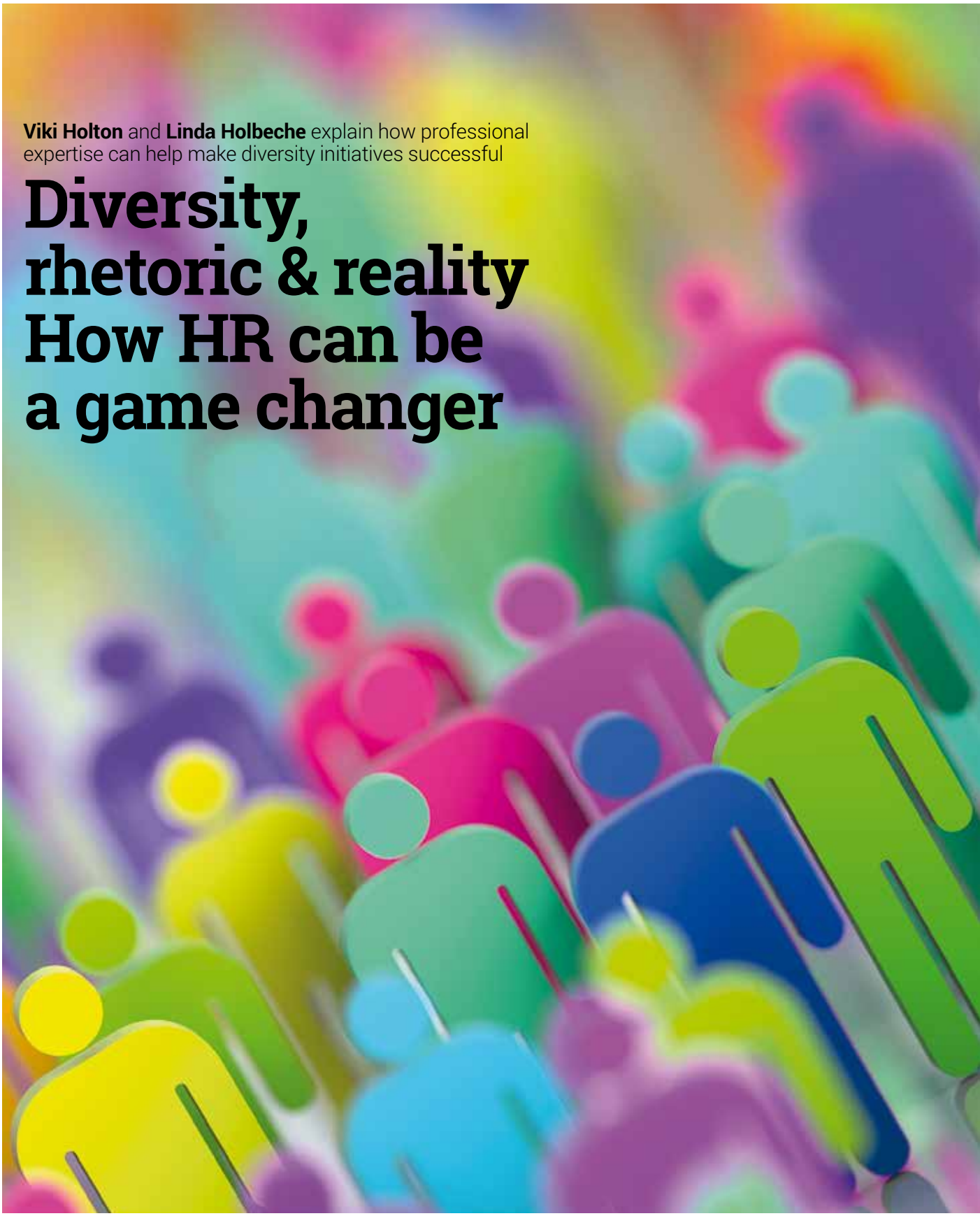

Viki Holton and **Linda Holbeche** explain how professional expertise can help make diversity initiatives successful

Diversity, rhetoric & reality How HR can be a game changer

Is diversity valued as it should be by business? How committed are companies to creating an inclusive workspace that truly welcomes and values every different diversity group?

These are key questions in today's business world. Diversity and inclusion have become more and more relevant to society and to business because of changing expectations, increasing social and political pressure as well as legislation. Increasingly, diversity impacts on customer expectations and the reputation and brand of a business, and not least what we (as society) expect from a modern employer.

It is also worth considering how different countries view diversity . You might not expect a sporting event to become a barometer for international opinion on diversity yet this is exactly what happened in 2014 with the Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, which was later dubbed by the media as the "Gay Olympics".

Readers may recall the speed of events when Russian president Vladimir Putin felt compelled to announce ahead of the Sochi Winter Olympics that gay people would be welcome. Full-page adverts to that effect were placed in various newspapers including the *New York Times* as until this point such a welcome was in doubt – not least because Russia had just introduced legislation to ban homosexual "propaganda."

In the weeks leading up to Sochi, public pressure and a social media brouhaha created a perfect storm questioning Russia's commitment with many people lobbying major Olympic sponsoring firms to get actively involved and put pressure on Russia to change its approach. It is difficult to think of another diversity issue played out on the international stage in such a way and creating such a social media storm.

Customers also expect companies to be ethical and fair employers, including across their supply chain. Just consider the market backlash against Nike's supply chain crisis in 2005, when shocking working conditions including child workers were revealed in some of its supply companies.

In the workplace, we are also seeing diversity issues being put increasingly under a public microscope. One example were staff protests at Google in 2019 with demonstrations outside and inside their offices over diversity issues. These occurred internationally and highlighted employee concerns over recent diversity events, challenging Google as to whether it was truly fulfilling its public commitment to diversity.

Again, it is difficult to think of another situation where employees have so publicly challenged their employer over diversity issues. It seems that we are now not only in a society that puts a high value on diversity but also a more transparent workplace where new generations of employees have much higher expectations of companies.

In all this debate and discussion over diversity, the role of Human Resources departments (HR) is a crucial one where they can be a game changer. When HR "leans in" to champion diversity this turns rhetoric into reality.

We believe that there is considerable room for HR to create stronger and more rigorous diversity action. Finding ways to support, advise and encourage more firms to go beyond legal requirements and move towards creating diversity-friendly workplaces which are a better fit for the 21st century should be an HR priority.

Let's look first at two company examples that have put the spotlight on some of the critical issues that are important to progressing diversity action and understanding within an organisation.

Diversity in action

Both the initiatives briefly outlined below are great examples of innovative and creative diversity in action. Carefully designed to deliver long-term results, each programme aims to alter attitudes and behaviour in the workplace and to provide the best support and encouragement for those in minority groups.

Ensuring at the same time, that those in the majority (or in the leadership team) understand the work experience of those from diverse backgrounds (for example because of sexual orientation) or groups where discrimination has happened over a number of years (such as for gender and race).

Walk a mile in my shoes

This is a mentoring scheme to transfer diversity knowledge and work experience between senior leaders and employees from a range of diverse backgrounds. But the senior leader is not the mentor (as might be expected); instead it is the person with a diversity background.

Considered by the company to be both innovative and imaginative, it was also seen as risky but an important step forward to transfer learning between these two rather distant groups and thereby help to build inclusive leadership skills and knowledge. It was so successful that a second mentoring programme was quickly established with a new wave of senior leaders being mentored.

Integrating diversity into leadership

This initiative is a leadership "twin" as it runs alongside the company's flagship leadership programme, providing minority ethnic participants with key skills, experiences and structured support and encouragement to specifically address diversity issues.

Rather than a separate leadership programme, this initiative aims at providing diversity employees – who have won their place on merit – with support, coaching and, if required, an added injection of confidence or cultural knowledge to ensure they can take on a more senior leadership role .

Both initiatives were designed to create an inclusive environment, a level playing field, rather than one that would make the participants feel that they were being offered remedial training or support. The support that is offered is carefully tailored to ensure their life experiences and current workplace needs are respected.

It is an important distinction. People in different and varied diversity groups often say that they do not wish to be targeted for "special" treatment or to be labelled as needing "extra" support.

Such an approach may seem patronising and instead creates resentment and an unwillingness to participate as people may not wish to be singled out in this way. Some companies unfortunately only discover this after introducing a well-meant initiative.

As one person said after a cool response to a well-meant diversity event, "It was not a partnership and we were hardly consulted about what we would find useful in such a network or whether we wished to be publicly identified in this way. Some of us did, some certainly did not. Not everybody felt comfortable with that".

Improving diversity in the workplace is no easy task. Creating an inclusive, welcoming and bias-free environment may require a shift in organisation culture. Both initiatives described were tailor-made with consultation and discussions to engage all stakeholders across the business.

As one of those involved in the design process explained, "there was no point in anything other than tailor-made approaches for diversity. What would work in our organisation has to 'fit' the business needs. Otherwise, there will be no buy-in from the individuals we are seeking to help nor from our managers as to why they need to support and promote diversity".

> *Creating diversity initiatives that encourage and support different groups of employees who may feel marginalised and isolated is a "Cinderella" area in some sectors where HR policy and practice can transform a workplace into one where inclusion and diversity thrive*

The way forward

So how can HR – and business schools – make a real difference to furthering the diversity agenda, not just because it is the "right thing" to do but because it can make a real difference to business results?

Creating diversity initiatives that encourage and support different groups of employees who may feel marginalised and isolated is a "Cinderella" area in some sectors where HR policy and practice can transform a workplace into one where inclusion and diversity thrive.

Increasingly, many large employers understand the need for this in recruitment, describing themselves as having an outstandingly positive career space where everyone is welcome and all will thrive. However, this welcome does not extend far and is diluted once someone joins the company. While this may partly be because social attitudes are slower and harder to change, there is much more that HR can do to address that lack of diversity within.

Invariably, in such pace-setter companies as those in the initiatives above there is a talented HR team that provides leadership and insight and understands how best to embed diversity throughout the business.

Every leadership process and practice including executive education, informal development, key assignments that count for so much in promotion and succession planning needs close examination, to be shaped through the lens of diversity.

The opportunities to take part in executive education and leadership development are also critical parts of the diversity jigsaw and this is where business schools can take on a stronger leadership role helping their clients to step up to the diversity challenge. True, some business schools are already on-message but this is not happening everywhere. In some instances, the strong "partnership" between business schools and companies is more evident in executive development than in diversity.

An HR director said recently, "one of my favourite quotes is 'diversity is being invited to the party, inclusion is being invited to dance'". When every HR director and every business school can say the same then diversity will have come a lot further on its journey towards being mainstream, a standard way that almost everyone will clearly understand and appreciate.

We look forward to that time!

gf

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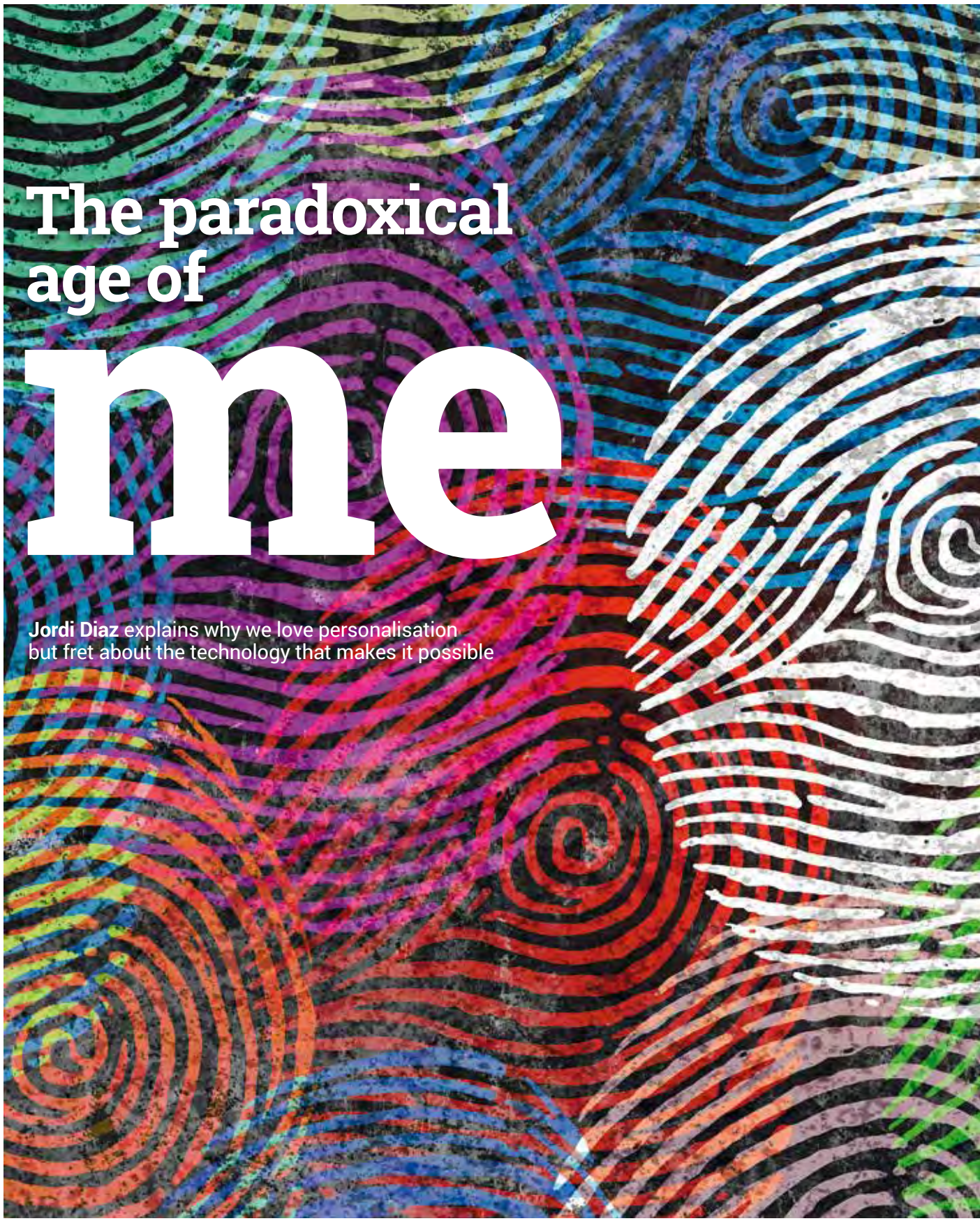

The paradoxical age of me

Jordi Diaz explains why we love personalisation but fret about the technology that makes it possible

"Personalisation" has become one of the principle keys to corporate success in a world of increasing consumer power. In times when the companies that go furthest are those who offer existing and potential clients access to previously exclusive products, it is interesting to note the increasing relevance of personalisation.

And it is not just millennials or centennials -- the newest consumer force to enter the market -- who seek out personalisation. It is something that more and more consumers require. They expect to have their needs anticipated across different platforms, receiving messages such as "customers who viewed this item also viewed…" or "recommendations for you (this "you" substituted by your name).

On the 23rd of October 2000, Google transformed the world of advertising by launching its Google Ads. A page in history today, it remains one of the main examples of personalisation in the digital era. Advertising became dynamic and users began to enjoy tailor-made responses to their specific needs, effectively side-lining generic classifieds and Yellow Pages.

While some people are put off by pop-up ads on their screens in response to the question they just wrote in a search engine, others think "fantastic! That's just the ad I was looking for!"

To analyse a recent example, the interest in personalisation has even reached the world of alcoholic beverages, where beer has seen a 10% decline in consumption in favour of alternatives such as wine and liquors.

This decline could have been worse if it wasn't for the rise in craft beers, which in the US have seen an increase of 500% over the last decade. The attraction here, again, is the sensation of personalisation that these new-style beers offer. It's not just the flavours that hint at personalisation but also the knowledge that behind these brands there is usually a small team, maybe a family business, creating this product locally.

"

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The doubt lies in what will happen when these small local producers fall in to the hands of big players in the industry. For now, most people prefer not to dwell on that and just celebrate the fact that they have their favourite beer available when they want it.

On the personal development scene, we find another good example of personalisation: Personal development doesn't get much more personalised than a one-to-one coaching programme. In this process, you, the client, are the protagonist and the coach, through a series of guided questions, will help you to reach your creative, professional or personal potential.

The coaching industry is firmly establishing itself. According to the regulating body, the International Coach Federation, there are more than 50,000 certified coaches and countless centres throughout the world busy preparing thousands of future professionals.

But coaching does not end in professional development; life-coaching, sports coaching, nutrition coaching, relationship coaching are just a few among many other alternatives. A coach for everyone!

In the world of education, Minerva University is leading the way with its proposals for a higher education with personalised elements. Almost five years ago, in San Francisco, Minerva put in place a model for groups of a maximum of 20 students to one professor. They are predestined for success in a sector where most university lecture halls have closer to 100 students than 20.

With just 20 students in a class, the professor knows all of them by name and can see if they are coming to class well prepared and motivated. If they are not, the professor can change the dynamics of the class and put in place any number of improvements that will be attractive to any candidate in search of personalisation. My university, where they know me best!

In an era of personalisation, could we see an academic institution that follows the student instead of the student attending the school? A school that -- based on all your available data -- approaches you with an academic system and an extracurricular programme that really meets your needs.

A place where you do not go as a candidate but a place that comes to you as the best alternative. A system in which each student has a life-long Artificial Intelligence (AI) companion to help them learn the skills they need at any given moment and to re-learn it as the world changes at accelerating speed. A tool that helps you to stay relevant and that is as easy to use as any of the wearables that we use today to track our sleep, steps or calories.

In the current complex environment, organisations globally train their people on average 35 hours per year. For some this time would probably be enough to keep them just current with their job demands but it will never be enough to prepare them for future projects. The fourth industrial revolution brings a new context in which professionals need to assume their own responsibility for their learning.

Microsoft leader Satya Nadella has transformed the organisation from a know-it-all

> *We have to assume that learning is like physical sports and having healthy eating habits. We have to learn, unlearn and learn again. Long-lasting successful professionals will have to use the many options available, MOOCs, credentials, micro-masters, executive education programmes or the recently created SPOCs (small private online courses) from business schools or other academic sources*

into learning-it-all culture. Leaders in today's environment will have to be curious, willing to learn constantly, and assume that they have to take responsibility and ownership of their own learning.

To explore the point a little deeper, let's take the example of physical exercise. Neuroscientists have demonstrated that practising sports three times a week for a minimum of 30 minutes is not only good for our body but is also good for our brain.

We have to assume that learning is like physical sports and having healthy eating habits. We have to learn, unlearn and learn again. Long-lasting successful professionals will have to use the many options available, MOOCs, credentials, micro-masters, executive education programmes or the recently created SPOCs (small private online courses) from business schools or other academic sources.

However, this fever for personalisation comes at a cost or, better said, at a big cost. How are companies, organisations or even universities going to personalise what I want without getting, literally, under my skin?

My location, my questions to Google, my health records, my banking details and my social media posts are just some of the many points of information that I produce. A huge business, according to the Interactive Advertising Bureau, in which US companies alone are estimated to have spent over $19 billion in 2018 acquiring and analysing consumer data.

Today, technology allows us unprecedented client insights. In turn, clients expect these insights to lead to a unique and personalised experience where a key world is "anticipation".

The paradox is that clients expect extreme personalisation but at the same time they are also expecting maximum respect. Companies and universities that do not find the right mix of personalisation without invasion are at risk of either being irrelevant or offensive.

Welcome to the paradoxical age of "me".

50k

The coaching industry is firmly establishing itself. According to the regulating body, the International Coach Federation, there are more than 50,000 certified coaches throughout the world

$19bn

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Upcoming events

Global Focus
Iss.1 Vol.14 | 2020

February 2020

Event
EiP 2019 Winners webinar – Oracle & IESE Business School & University of Michigan, Ross School of Business
Dates / Venue
10 Feb /
online event
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Event
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Dates / Venue
13-14 Feb /
Milan, Italy
Host
SDA Bocconi School of Management

Event
EiP 2019 Winners webinar – Siam Comercial Bank (SCB) & IMD
Dates / Venue
20 Feb /
online event
Host
EFMD

Event
Smart Data Management; "Transforming data into strategic value for your business school"
Dates / Venue
24-25 Feb /
Singapore
Host
INSEAD

March 2020

Event
2020 EFMD – HUMANE Winter School
Dates / Venue
15-20 Mar /
Barcelona, Spain
Host
UPF Universitat Pompeu Fabra Barcelona

Event
Executive Academy Asia Stream
Dates / Venue
23-27 Mar /
Shanghai, China
Host
CEIBS

Event
Sharing Best Practice Workshop
Dates / Venue
27 Mar /
Düsseldorf, Germany
Host
METRO

April 2020

Event
2020 EFMD MBA Conference
Dates / Venue
19-21 Apr /
St.Gallen, Switzerland
Host
University of St. Gallen

Event
Admissions Institute forNew Professionals (AINP) Europe 2020
Dates / Venue
20-22 Apr /
London, UK
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GMAC in collaboration with EFMD

Event
2020 EFMD Marcom, External and Alumni Relations Conference
Dates / Venue
21-23 Apr /
Breukelen, Netherlands
Host
Nyenrode Business Universiteit

May 2020

Event
2020 BSIS Symposium
Dates / Venue
4-5 May /
Nice, France
Host
IAE Nice

Event
2020 EFMD Doctoral Programmes Conference
Dates / Venue
4-6 May /
Vienna, Austria
Host
WU Wirtschafts Universität Wien - Vienna University of Economics and Business

Event
Career Professionals Development Institute
Dates / Venue
4-6 May /
Barcelona, Spain
Host
EADA Business School Barcelona

June 2020

Event
2020 EFMD Annual Conference
Dates / Venue
7-9 June /
Lyon, France
Host
EM Lyon

October 2020

Event
Sharing Best Practice Workshop
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22-23 Oct /
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