



Buckingham Business School Newsletter

June 2010 Edition

A BUSINESS SCHOOL FIRST!



The final week of the Winter Term saw an exciting new venture for the Business School. Over 60 students participated in the first Business Simulation developed for both postgraduate students and final year undergraduate students. The three-day event was coordinated by Anne Hampton of the Business School and run by Derek Jones of the April Training Group.

The Business Simulation gave the students the opportunity to gain realistic business decision-making experiences through managing their own business. They competed in teams and took on management responsibility to develop and implement strategies for maximising their competitive position through new product research and development, manufacturing, distribution, marketing, employment and financial investments. The decisions were taken in a 'simulated real-world' environment of the highly competitive automotive industry. Students were also encouraged to be creative with naming their business and the different models of car that they decided to produce.

Feedback from the student teams showed that they had learnt a range of skills including risk-taking; time-management; how to make sense of financial and marketing data; sharing knowledge with each other and working with others as a team. Some students also recognised links with subjects they had been studying earlier in the term.

The judging panel included Derek Jones, (April Training), and Peter Phillips, (Chief Financial Officer for Masterlease), and Paul Tuck, Nigel Adams, Andreas Schroeder and Deba Bardhan-Correia from the Business School. The winning teams were presented with vouchers to enable them to experience an introductory session at Airkix in Milton Keynes. The two other teams also received prizes for giving the best presentations on branding for their business, and all students received certificates in recognition of their participation.

Islamic Society - Talk & Meal

*Report by Sammer Talib bin Zulkernian
(Business and Management 2009-10)*

The Islamic Society held its second event of the year on the 5th May 2010. The event focused on a lecture entitled "ISLAM The Misunderstood Religion" which was presented by our guest lecturer Dr Mohd Hilaal and his colleagues. A solicitor by profession and the proud holder of a Degree in dentistry, Dr Hilaal engages in promoting Islam as a part-time activity. He has studied Islam rigorously to enhance his own knowledge, while reaching out to others in order to enhance theirs. His colleagues mostly consisted of converted Muslims who were extensively well versed in the religion. Dr Hilaal provided leaflets and brochures about Regents Mosque in London where he participates in numerous activities to create awareness of Islam.

The lecture was held in IFLH (Chandos Building) and lasted for an hour; this was followed by a question and answer session. The session became a thrilling debate with the Vice-Chancellor himself contributing enormously to the discussion. Students and lecturers also participated in the exchange of opinions.

The talk and discussion was followed by a feast held in the staff dining hall - courtesy of the OTM. A diverse array of foods was served from different food cultures including: Malaysian, Pakistani, African and Palestinian.

The whole event was well received, and as a result, the Society is looking forward to holding similar events in the near future, with equal levels of success and enjoyment.

2010 EFMD Entrepreneurship Conference, Paris

With the theme "Entrepreneurs as Agents of Creativity in Times of Crisis" academics and practitioners from across Europe and further afield presented and debated papers on the role and operation of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial activity in the commercial world. The conference was held at Advancia, Paris, 21-23 February, and it was here that James Rowell from the Business School, with Dr Paul Lapoule from Advancia-Negocia, presented their own paper "COMPARE AGENCY: a new non-media consultancy faces the economic crisis".

The paper explores the case of two young entrepreneurs, Matthieu Marié and Thibault du Puch, setting up a new business - an agency that brings SMEs and advertising agencies together. The entrepreneurs had identified a gap in the market as part of a business studies project during their undergraduate programme. Having graduated they went about creating the business, only to be immediately faced with the additional pressures of the economic crisis. The case itself includes a videoed interview with the two business partners.

Buckingham students of the Business Enterprise (BBE) programme have already been able to explore the case - addressing the business start-up, developing their first contracts, and how they came to terms with the economic downturn. COMPARE AGENCY's perceptive approach to the crisis has enabled them to create opportunities that may have daunted other businesses of their size. The BBE students found the case offered a great insight into the development processes and issues for a new start-up business.



The case itself is soon to be published by ECCH (European Case Clearing House) as "COMPARE AGENCY - A Student Project becomes Business Reality" along with the video interview, making it available to a wider student audience.

Using Your Website

Professor Peter N Cooke of The Centre for Automotive Management (CAM) was recently interviewed for the Newsletter (BBSN).

BBSN: Tell us about the work of CAM.

PNC: One aspect of our work is to undertake a lot of highly pragmatic research on behalf of its clients. Much of the work is intended for our blue-chip clients to disseminate as quickly as possible to their clients and prospects. Those audiences include the professional and technical press and businesses that may be able to take advantage of the Buckingham work and proposed actions.

BBSN: Is it a very focussed audience that you target?

PNC: Yes it is, and that creates an interesting communication challenge – there are a dozen specialist publications – they can be contacted directly either electronically or invited to press briefings. CAM undertakes 6-8 formal press briefings a year and it is a not too idle claim that ‘it’s a poor week when CAM is not quoted somewhere in the industry press’.

BBSN: Although successful, wouldn't you say it is too focussed?

PNC: Yes, and the real challenge for us is to attract a

wider potential user of our client funded and joint branded, pragmatic research. The solution we have adopted is to write up the research – typically short 25-40 page reports – and publish them on the dedicated CAM website. www.buckingham.ac.uk/cam. We also encourage our clients to present the reports on their websites as well – preferably with links back to the CAM website.

BBSN: How successful has that been?

PNC: While we have to date put relatively little effort into promoting the website, the hit rate is very satisfying. In fourteen months it has grown to taking well over a thousand hits a month with a lot of downloads. A couple of specialist reports have attracted over 5000 hits. In the first week of March we added a further five new reports – the most widely recognised took a thousand hits in little more than a week.

BBSN: Do you believe this method could be useful for others?

PNC: Yes the message is - ‘Don’t underestimate the power of the web’ in disseminating your work. Make sure it’s attractively presented and is readable and you can quickly build up a regular audience.

BBSN: And the future for CAM?

PNC: CAM currently has a further half dozen pieces of sponsored research under way - and it plans to present them all on the website.

RESEARCH WEEK

The Business School Research Week recently took place (17 - 21 May) at the Business School. This was effectively a gathering of doctoral candidates presenting papers/progress reports on their research activities. The event began with Dr Andreas Schroeder of the Business School setting the scene for the week with a very useful talk on 'How to use theory in research practice'.

The subject researchers gave talks on: An investigation into the strategic business implications of Christian charity: **Andrew Lightbown**. A comparative study of equity risk premiums and co-movements across countries: **Wondimu Mekonnen**. Critical analysis of the dominance of IASs in Jordan as an Islamic country; A dependency perspective: **Ghada Al Tarawneh**. The impact of the US Motion Picture industry on ethical perceptions: **Jim Rogers**. The Dilution effect in Mergers and Acquisitions: **Katie Balaam**.

In addition other supporting talks were given by **Eddie Shoemith** of the Business School on 'non-parametric statistics in hypothesis testing', and by **Professor Huw Morris**, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic), of the University of Salford, on 'the Research Excellence Framework'.

Professor Jim Rafferty explained that these talks were both interesting and stimulating and "complimented the research being done by our doctoral community" who found the contributions very valuable. Commenting on the Research Week he said, "They find it a good opportunity to meet with their peers, to debate and share their research experiences".



Andrew Lightbown and Nick Fane, and back row, publisher Chris Woodhead (UoB Press)

(Re) Discovering Charity

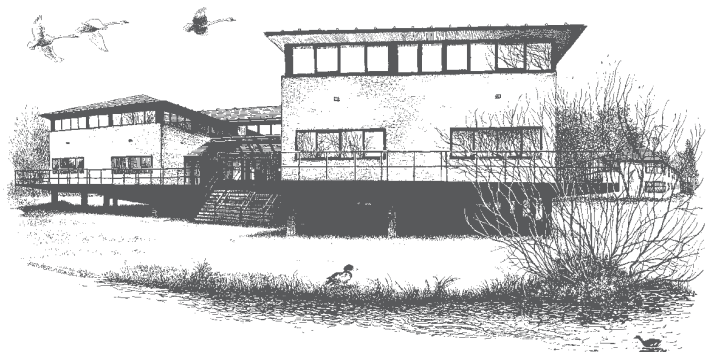
On May 4th Andrew Lightbown and Nick Fane gave a public lecture entitled “(Re) Discovering Charity”. The lecture was based on their book of the same title. Andrew is an alumnus of Buckingham Business School where he currently lectures in Business Ethics.

In the first part of the lecture Andrew discussed how charity, as an ancient religious tradition, needs to be re-discovered. Charity is defined as being: ‘To act intentionally in sympathetic response to others to promote well-being.’ He argues that charity is an effective strategy for socio-economic transformation; despite many thinkers arguing that charity is outdated and paternalistic. Several academics vociferously contend that charity leads to dependency. The speakers reject this view as evidence collected

during fieldwork in Uganda, which suggests that charity fosters hope, responsibility and enhanced socio-economic well-being.

In the second part of the lecture Nick Fane recounted several stories that testify to the economic, social and spiritual manifestations of charity.

The book “(Re) Discovering Charity” is available through the university bookshop, through Amazon, or direct from the authors. All proceeds and royalties from the book have been donated to Quicken Trust and will be used to staff and equip the Kabubbu H.I.V. clinic in Uganda.



Business Student Presentations - Cultural Fair

At the end of the Spring Term a cultural fair was organised by postgraduate students in the Business School as part of their Managing People Across Cultures course. Students were asked to showcase their own country's culture, its heritage, food, artefacts and music.

The Cultural Fair was carried out in two parts. On 7th May, students went to the Buckingham Primary School in their national costumes and gave presentations to the pupils and teachers. They were very impressed with all the costumes and items brought to the school. Pupils at the school were told about life in Ghana, India, France, Nigeria, Germany, Bulgaria, Japan, Zimbabwe and Morocco.

The following Friday students hosted their Cultural Day in the ADR foyer. The different cultural groups represented were the Indians, the French, the Ghanaians, the Nigerians (specifically the Yorubas and the Southern Nigerian tribes) and the Multi-cultural stall (comprising of the Moroccan, Bulgarian, Japanese, German and Zimbabwean). It was all about learning and seeing key aspects of these cultures. The stalls were colourful, with authentic artefacts; music played in the background and the air was filled with the aroma of wonderful spices. It was a spectacular event and students proudly showed off their cultural heritage, to familiarise the visitors about the different cultures.

“At the end of the fair we were all a bit wiser about a new culture, and how to do business, than before”, stated course leader Deba Bardhan-Correia.



MSc Service Management students present their countries

Looking Forward

2010 is becoming a great year for the Business School. Having entered the Guardian League Tables at 20th place in 2009, the recently announced 2010 results show the Business School in 2nd position. And at the top of its category in 2008 in the National Student Survey, the Business School was placed third in 2009. For the first time, in May 2010, the University appeared in The Independent League Tables (2010-11), coming 20th out of 115 universities.

The Business School has experienced considerable growth in student numbers over the last few years, with one of our core undergraduate programmes, Business and Management almost doubling its student cohort. Huge thanks to Eddie Shoemith, the Programme Director, for all his hard work in achieving this fantastic growth. Thanks also to Wondimu Mekonnen our Accounting students are now eligible for six exemptions from the professional Chartered Institute of Management Accounting examinations (with MBA students now also eligible for exemptions) and Paul Tuck for ensuring our students are eligible for seven exemptions from the foundation level ACCA examinations.

The Business School has also seen growth through diversification of its activities. 2008 saw the launch of our Centre for Automotive Management under the leadership of Professor Cooke and our first corporate students received their Professional Certificates in Automotive Management at our February 2010 Graduation Ceremony. In 2009, the Business School became an accredited Study Centre for the Chartered Institute of Marketing. This is an important step for us in continuing to develop our engagement with the local and regional business community.

The Business School is also seeking to develop through our collaborative partnerships. We have formed a strong relationship with FACO and IPC in Paris, with students coming to Buckingham to study for the MSc in Service Management. Our collaborative partners in Singapore, the Cambridge Business School, offer undergraduate and postgraduate degrees validated by Buckingham and we are working with potential partners in China and Nigeria who will deliver our International Foundation Programme.

Last, but by no means least, the Business School is actively working to increase its scholarly profile and develop a more active research community. The Business School now hosts research weeks twice a year (see the article above).

There have been some staff changes, with Pat Britten retiring last July, Mr Mahesh in December 2009, and Dr Jindrichovska returned to the Czech Republic to pursue new opportunities. Deba Bardhan-Correia has become Programme Director, MSc Service Management and Katie Balaam has become Programme Director, Undergraduate Accounting and Financial Management programmes. We welcome Dr Andreas Schroeder to the team to take over Information Systems teaching and develop his research, and Kim Pittwood as Secretary for the Centre for Automotive Management, Chartered Institute of Marketing programmes and Business Enterprise.

We are looking forward to a very successful 2010 and we will keep you updated in future editions of this newsletter.

Introducing..... Andreas Schroeder, PhD (Victoria)

Andreas joined the University of Buckingham as Lecturer in Information Systems at the beginning of 2010. He lectures and researches in the areas of information systems, knowledge management and e-commerce.

He received his PhD in Information Systems from Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand in 2008. During the last year of his PhD he moved to Hong Kong to teach and research in the Information Systems Department of City University of Hong Kong, before moving to the UK in 2009 as a researcher at the Open University.

His research interests are knowledge integration, social software and other collaborative systems. He has a particular interest in "WIKI" applications (well-known in the form of WIKIPEDIA) that bring together a consensus of opinion. He is the author of several journal publications and conference presentations on these and related topics.

