



University of
Strathclyde
Business
School

PIONEER



DOES WORK MAKE YOU SICK? ORGANISATIONS AND HEALTH

TO EAST EUROPE AND BACK PRE-EXPERIENCE MASTERS
NATURAL RESOURCE MARKETING CREATIVE DIRECTOR'S DAY

MBM quality confirmed

► We were right behind the Association of MBAs' idea to accredit pre-experience masters programmes and made our application as soon as the announcement was made. We were delighted when we heard that our own Masters in Business and Management has been accredited in the first tranche of programmes.

With our MBA programme continuously accredited since the 1960s, it is excellent news that the MBM can also claim this assurance of quality – one of just 13 to be accredited by AMBA. We've always believed in the quality of our programmes, but it's nice to be backed up by an independent organisation like AMBA.

In the same month, the MBM was placed in the inaugural *Financial Times* ranking of pre-experience masters in general management programmes – just 25 programmes were ranked. In addition, our MBA programme was placed in the *Economist Intelligence Unit's* ranking of full-time programmes.

Staying with the good news theme, part-time MBA student Stephen Koeplinger is one of four shortlisted for the Student of the Year competition run by AMBA and *The Independent*. This is the second time in three years that one of our students has reached the finals. Undoubtedly he will be up against stiff competition, and we wish him good luck.

Professor Colin Eden, Director, University of Strathclyde Graduate School of Business.



AIM to succeed

A MID-TERM PROGRESS REPORT ON THE ADVANCED INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT RESEARCH

► Founded in 2002, the Advanced Institute of Management Research (AIM) has a remit to 'significantly increase the contribution of and future capacity for world-class UK research on management'. Seventeen academics were chosen to be AIM fellows. In effect, their time is 'bought' by the Department of Trade and Industry, the UK's Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) to address the role management plays in improving the productivity of UK plc's. Professors Chris Huxham and Gerry Johnson were two of these fellows. Now, more than halfway through their fellowships, they speak of their experiences.



Gerry: I'm involved in two research projects; one primarily here with research fellow Shameen Prashantham where we're looking at strategic workshops, away days, and what makes for a result.

In another project we're trying to identify the most successful firms in the UK over a long period of time, compared to international competitors. Who are the consistently high performers who have also undergone major strategic change? Most organisations change because of a downturn and we're trying to identify those that have effected major changes without doing so as a result of a downturn.



Chris: I've been progressing my work on collaboration. The first output has been my book, *Managing to Collaborate*, co-written with Siv Vangen. I've also been looking at learning in collaboration with my research fellow Paul Hibbert.

We're investigating the attitudes collaborators have to learning; it's important to have a sense of what the possibilities are in terms of being conscious of your own attitude to learning and what other partners might be thinking. With AIM associates Nic Beech and David Simms, I've been doing work on 'story-telling' as one way in which management presentations are transferred. We've been looking at situations where people are making public lectures describing managerial experiences. We've found when people make these presentations they tell a partial story. What they tell is only picked up in a partial way. Listeners pick up nuggets and translate these into something that's useful for them. We think this is useful to know as either a presenter or a listener.

Gerry: I'm also involved in producing a book, *The Exceptional Manager*. It's taken up a lot of time, not least because just trying to get all 17 of us talking in common ways is difficult, but this was important as it's to be pitched at business executives, MBA students, and so on. The primary question is why UK productivity isn't as high as it should be. In the book we ask, how is that a function of management? The book poses this question rather than answers it. What we have in this country is 20 years of management, post-Thatcher, with a focus on cost-cutting and efficiency, and what we need to understand is that's just a threshold. We've got to realise that in itself isn't enough. Managers have to better at innovating, adding value. The book looks at what the exceptional manager needs to do to go beyond pure efficiency and cost-cutting.

Chris: It's not just about doing some research. If it doesn't all lead to something greater than that for business management in the UK, then it hasn't really achieved anything.

Gerry: If the fellowships had been just about money to do a project, the whole thing would have moved faster but we wouldn't have had the benefit of making links and helping other people. Doing research fast is not the sole purpose of the AIM fellowships.

Chris: There's now discussion on 'phase two'. I'd like to see the AIM initiative continue. It's been a good start but it's not really enough to embed the capacity-building effort AIM is charged with creating.

Gerry: It won't be a neat cut-off point for everyone so AIM will have to look into that. From AIM's point of view I hope there will be funding to carry on with capacity building. We have a serious problem with management academic research. Over the next 10 to 15 years, a significant percentage of academics in management will retire and there are not that many coming along to take their place. Those that are coming in are mainly from outside the UK, so AIM will have to help with developing these people and increasing the number of able scholars in the UK. They've just announced nine fellowships for younger fellows mid-career to help them with their careers and to develop their expertise so that's a start.

Chris: The effort put into capacity building has been particularly important. It's beginning to lead to a position where it will leave a legacy. There is a history of very poor funding of management so AIM has been important as it's the first time a big chunk of money has been invested. We aim to demonstrate that that was a valuable thing to do and will continue to be a valuable thing in the future.

www.aimresearch.org



Jeanette Purcell: pleased with positive response

School leads the way in PEMM courses

► USGSB has proved its pioneering credentials yet again. The Strathclyde MBM has become one of the first pre-experience masters in general management (PEMM) to be awarded accreditation by the Association of MBAs.

Student of Year nominee named

PROFESSOR COLIN EDEN WISHES STEPHEN LUCK IN AWARDS

► Part-time MBA student Stephen Koeplinger has two reasons to dust off his dinner suit in November. Not only is he graduating, but he is on the shortlist for the annual Student of the Year award run by AMBA and *The Independent* newspaper.

Stephen was nominated and put forward as USGSB's representative earlier this year. After an interview in London with the judging panel, Stephen found out he was one of the four MBA students in the final.

So, as well as graduating on November 4, Stephen will be travelling to London with his wife Helen for the November 10 awards ceremony, which is part of the annual AMBA gala dinner.

"I'm really looking forward to going to the awards ceremony," he says. "I'm amazed I've come this far but, having done so, I think I'm in with as good a chance as any of the others. I could tell the panel was genuinely interested in what I had to say and it was one of the best interviews I've ever had – it was an honour just to have time with those people."

Stephen gave up a job as a consultant engineer to work as a teacher in Glasgow. He has now given up that job to concentrate on work he's involved in with the charity, Youth Charter. He had previously set up his own social enterprise initiative, entitled 4SEA, but has now decided to pursue the same aims under the blanket of Youth Charter.

AMBA decided to widen its accreditation portfolio in response to demand from business schools and corporate groups in a bid to provide a guarantee of quality for these programmes.

AMBA chief executive Jeanette Purcell said: "I'm extremely pleased with the positive response we've received to this important step for the association. The widening of our accreditation service represents a logical extension of our role as the international benchmark for excellence in graduate management education. We continue to focus solely on masters programme accreditation and, importantly, we've restricted this service to business schools that have already achieved MBA accreditation by the association."

Professor Colin Eden is delighted that the Strathclyde MBM is formally recognised as among the best of its genre.

"We are already very proud to be among the minority of world business schools to be awarded triple accreditation status with AMBA, EQUIS and AACSB," he said.

"To be able to extend this assurance into our pre-experience programmes is indeed an achievement."

More good news came from the *Financial Times* with its first ranking of pre-experience masters in general management programmes. The Strathclyde MBM was one of five programmes offered by UK schools to be ranked in the top 25 European programmes in the September ranking.



Five-times world karate champion Geoff Thompson MBE is the founder and chairman of Youth Charter. Stephen approached him with his ideas and was persuaded by Geoff to bring his enthusiasm to work with his charity.

Stephen is now working on setting up a girls' football tournament in October under the Youth Charter's Soccerwise programme. Soccerwise has been developed in association with Manchester United and Unicef.

The winner of the Student of the Year award will win £1,000, but all finalists will receive a cash prize and membership of AMBA.

and...

WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?

► A book taking a new look at the hot topic of leadership is due out in February. Written by USGSB visiting professor and programme director for the MBA in leadership, Roger Gill, *Theory and Practice of Leadership* is the result of six years' research into what is common among the theories and models of leadership.

While steadily growing, the academic and practitioner literature on the subject has been fragmented so far and the book aims to provide a comprehensive and critical review of leadership theory and practice.

Primarily drawing on research and practice in the US, UK and Europe, where most leadership research and development has been carried out, the book also takes a global and cross-cultural approach, with examples and cases worldwide.

Theory and Practice of Leadership will be published in February 2006 by Sage.

BEECH APPOINTED TO AIM

► Professor Nic Beech has been appointed an AIM associate after being nominated by Professor Chris Huxham. Although not funded by the ESRC, associates work closely with the nominating AIM fellow for a one-year period.

20-YEAR REUNION

► The full-time class from 1986/87 are organising a reunion for 2006. They are keen for all classmates to get in touch and anticipate up to 40 people attending on the weekend of November 25. Details will be posted on the website www.StrathclydeMBA.co.uk as arrangements are finalised.

The reunion will take place at Ross Priory, with a dinner on the agenda for the Saturday night. Contacts are: Michael at Michael@StrathclydeMBA.co.uk, Maureen Berry at Maureen@StrathclydeMBA.co.uk or Peter Hardy at peter@StrathclydeMBA.co.uk

ECONOMIST RANKING

► September saw the annual ranking of full time MBA programmes by the Economist Intelligence Unit. Strathclyde's MBA was positioned 47th out of the 100 international schools ranked, and was 13th out of the 24 UK schools listed.

ORGANISATIONS AND HEALTH

PROFESSOR ROBERT MACINTOSH TELLS *PIONEER* OF HIS WORK WITH COLLEAGUES IN THE NEW GLASGOW CENTRE FOR POPULATION HEALTH RESEARCH CENTRE, STUDYING THE ORGANISATIONAL DIMENSIONS OF HEALTH

The University of Strathclyde Graduate School of Business is proud of its position in the heart of Glasgow. The city has experienced major transformation in the past 20 years, adjusting to the demise of traditional heavy industry through a programme of economic and social regeneration. Hi-tech, bio-tech and knowledge-intensive work represent both the present and the future of the city; yet there remains one persistent problem – health.

Social dimension

For most of us, health is something that is attributable to us as individuals and something we would speak to our GP about. Recently, however, some more radical views have begun to emerge which suggest that our health is at least partly socially created. The idea that our health isn't governed solely by biology but is also influenced by who we are with, what we do and where we do it may not seem too radical. However, the implication is that this social dimension to the creation of health and ill-health might relate to the organisational circumstances in which

CLOSE TO HOME

Glasgow's health record is appalling when compared to that of other similar cities in the UK and beyond, but this is not being taken lying down. The Scottish Executive has helped create the Glasgow Centre for Population Health in an effort to bring some new thinking to bear on this persistent problem.

our social interactions take place.

That's why GCPH has assembled a team of medics and management researchers to collaborate on new ways of tackling the problem. The idea that the way our organisations work can affect our health is something that's been known for some time, but typically the research focus has been on the negative side of the equation. Small forests of paper have been devoted to well-worn arguments about workplace stress and health outcomes for individual workers.

An extreme interpretation would be that Health and Safety legislation only guards against doing real harm to colleagues and employees. However, little is known about the ways in which health is created in organisational settings and what can be done to improve health outcomes.

Healthy attitudes

The notion of organisational health appears periodically in print. Warren Bennis, the American management guru, wrote on the subject in 1962, essentially arguing that purely financial measures of performance were inadequate ways of assessing the health of an organisation. In some pioneering work, he tried to apply mental health models to organisations to think through what a healthy organisation might look like.

Since then, others have taken up the challenge and there are now a number of models and survey-based diagnostic devices which claim to assess whether an organisation is healthy in much the same way that a clinician might assess the health of a patient, for example, the Organisational Health Report Index or the Healthy Work Organisation Model.

The development of standard survey instruments might imply greater clarity about the definition of what organisational health

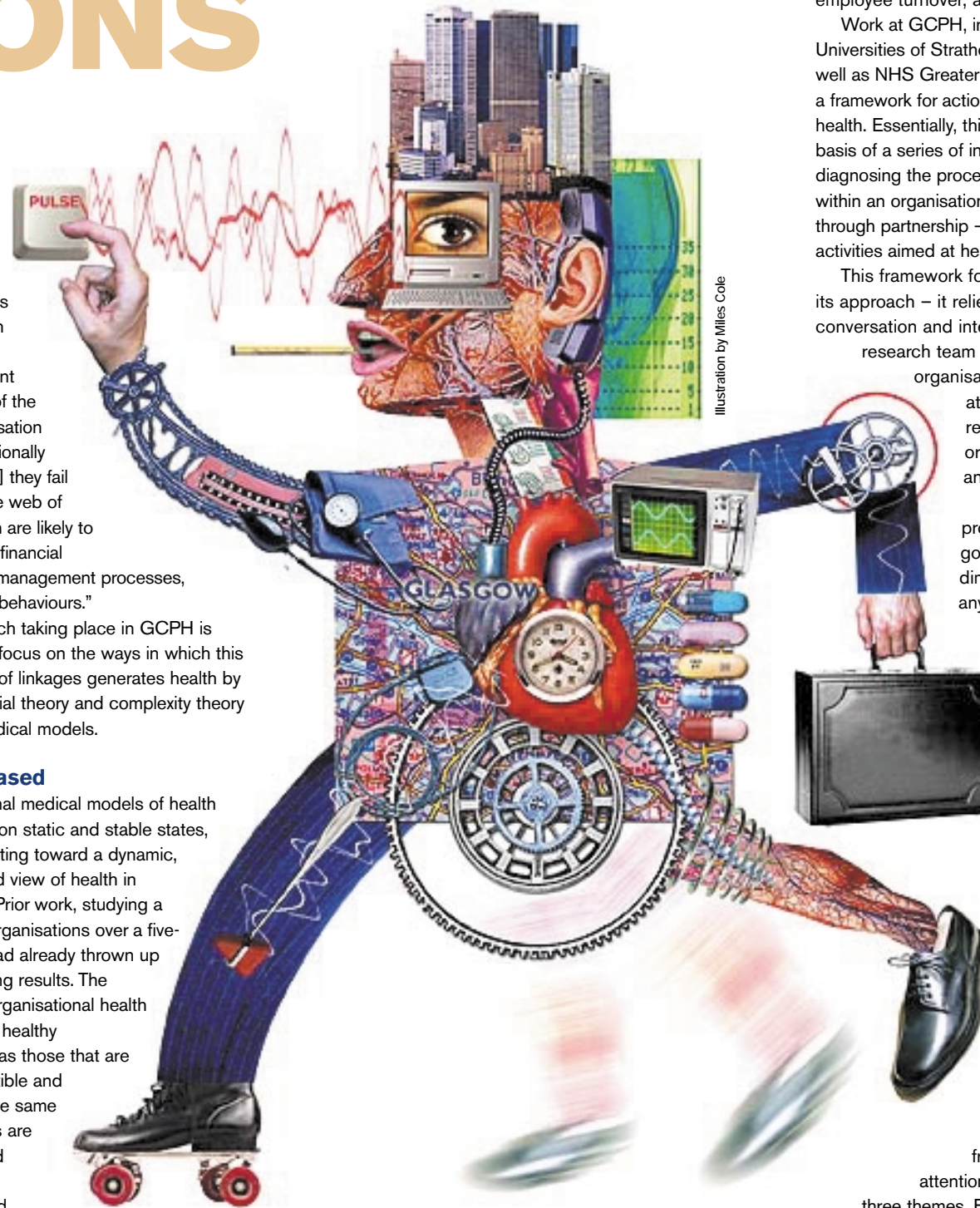
means, but as the researchers Marie McHugh and Chris Brotherton point out: "Models of the healthy organisation appear exceptionally general...[and] they fail to highlight the web of linkages which are likely to exist between financial performance, management processes, functions and behaviours."

The research taking place in GCPH is attempting to focus on the ways in which this complex web of linkages generates health by looking to social theory and complexity theory as well as medical models.

Process-based

While traditional medical models of health tend to focus on static and stable states, GCPH is pointing toward a dynamic, process-based view of health in organisation. Prior work, studying a range of 25 organisations over a five-year period, had already thrown up some surprising results. The literature on organisational health often portrays healthy organisations as those that are innovative, flexible and dynamic. These same characteristics are also supposed to provide a stimulating and healthy environment for those that work there. However, our study found at least some evidence of firms achieving great organisational outcomes at the expense of health outcomes for individuals.

Contrary to the advice available in the literature, managers who appeared to achieve organisational behaviours consistent with 'thriving on the edge of chaos' did so by using practices such as rapid job rotation to avoid inertia and comfort zones developing,



high-stress environment and significant employee turnover, among other side-effects.

Work at GCPH, involving staff from the Universities of Strathclyde and Glasgow, as well as NHS Greater Glasgow, has produced a framework for action on organisation and health. Essentially, this framework forms the basis of a series of interventions aimed at diagnosing the processes of health production within an organisation, then developing – through partnership – a series of experimental activities aimed at health improvement.

This framework for action isn't formulaic in its approach – it relies on a high level of conversation and interaction between the research team at GCPH and the host organisations. The focus of attention is the relationship between organisational experiences and health outcomes.

Clearly, efficiency, profitability and governance are important dimensions to consider for any business or

organisation in any sector. The framework for action on organisation and health looks beyond these performance outcomes to examine, and experimentally engage with, the deeper organisational processes that produce outcomes of many types.

Participation

In terms of organisational processes, the framework pays particular attention to the interaction of three themes. First, process of participation in the organisation. Organisational life would grind to a halt without standard processes, forms, systems or agreed strategies. The GCPH framework suggests that our roles in creating the theories, rules and strategies by which we live our lives may have a telling impact on how included or excluded we tend to feel. As such, healthy participation in organisational life is bound up with participation in the processes that create the symbolic dimensions of the organisation, and vice versa.

high-performance demands such as extremely aggressive growth rates, and, most significantly of all, circulating organisational fictions.

The use of rumour and counter-rumour to destabilise the organisation was a deliberate policy which appeared in some circumstances to produce outstanding performance – but which also produced a

ENTERING PHASE TWO

Professor Robert MacIntosh is professor of management and director of teaching and learning at USGSB.

The research at GCPH is moving into its second phase and potential research partners for empirical and experimental work are now being sought. Anyone interested in becoming involved should contact Professor MacIntosh on Robert@gsb.strath.ac.uk. Further details on the activities at GCPH can be found at www.gcpH.co.uk.

The second theme relates to this first one, and might be described as the effect of 'the way we do things round here'. Think about your own experience of joining a new organisation and it's easy to see why knowing, or not knowing, 'how things are done' can affect the quality of your interactions with colleagues. The shared repertoire binds us together and familiarity with it enhances not only our ability to practice effectively, but also our general sense of belonging within a group or groups.

The third focus of attention is on the presence or absence of any sense of joint enterprise. Our engagement in the social activity of organising depends in part on our acknowledgement of some sense of collective purpose to give meaning to our togetherness. In an organisational context, this pre-supposes the existence of some joint enterprise. It may be grand and all-encompassing or much more local in its nature, but it must be the basis of our engagement with others.

Issue for future

Managing for health in organisations could become a significant issue in the future. Governance arrangements today tend to ensure that we take care of the big housekeeping issues, like our financial situation, but they don't make a big deal of whether our organisations or our colleagues are healthy. Managing the health dimension of organisational life may be the next big challenge for managers.

Many company annual reports open with some variant of the over-used sentiment that "our people are our most valuable asset" – managing for health might actually imply that you mean it.

QUESTION TIME



JIM COCHRANE, CEO, EURASIAN NATURAL RESOURCES MARKETING

What were you up to before the MBA?

I was a mining engineer for Gencor subsidiary Impala Platinum in South Africa. I'd been promoted relatively quickly and was responsible for underground workings employing 1,500 people. Mining in South Africa is very specialised technically and I feared that if I didn't broaden my horizons my career opportunities could be limited. During my time there I also had a spell as technical assistant to the operations director which developed my interest in marketing and finance.

What did you think of the MBA?

Although I found the knowledge I gained in accounting, marketing and strategy incredibly interesting, the most important factor during the year was that I was given a framework and logic I could apply to the thinking I'd done and the questions I'd asked myself over the six years I'd been working.

What have you been doing since graduation?

I was sponsored by Gencor and, on leaving, I moved to the Netherlands to work for Billiton, which had just been bought by Gencor from Shell. I had a variety of corporate roles in planning, corporate finance and marketing. In 1999 I was appointed marketing director for the company's Chrome Division. In 2001, I left Billiton and after a number of corporate evolutions I'm now CEO of Eurasian Natural Resources Marketing, based in Zurich. We have a global customer base and a multi-billion dollar turnover. I have no doubt my MBA was key to my career progression.

Any memorable moments?

My year, Ghabhar, just celebrated its 10-year reunion in Glasgow, with many old friends from all over the world reunited. The camaraderie will be my enduring memory of the MBA (as will George Burt's flip flops!).



Anthony is drawn back

ANTHONY KEATING FOLLOWED HIS MBA WITH INTERNATIONAL CONSULTANCY - NOW HE RETURNS TO STRATHCLYDE

► Sitting in his office at the top of Livingstone Tower with its stunning views across Glasgow, Anthony Keating is adamant that the Hunter Centre at Strathclyde is the only entrepreneurship centre for which he would have left the corporate world.

Not for the views the Hunter Centre commands, but for the fact that the eponymous Sir Tom Hunter has put his money where his mouth is in terms of generating entrepreneurial thinking. And the fact that Anthony has a local connection – he did his MBA at Strathclyde – helped convince him to make the move.

"The Hunter Centre is unique because of its association with private equity in the form of Tom Hunter; an association with a man who has a forceful agenda for change, with the mission to go out and change the entrepreneurial culture and performance of a nation," said Anthony.

Anthony believed the MBA would help him flesh out his experiences and get a wider business perspective: "It would enable me to understand what managers' training would be telling them, as a lot of managers did MBAs, and also it would give me a whole set of new skills. I'm enormously grateful for what the MBA gave me."

After gaining the qualification, Anthony worked

for British Aerospace, a job that took him round the world.

"I was working in the Soviet Union not long after the Berlin Wall had collapsed," he said. "I was behind the Iron Curtain at a time when they were going through massive change. Europe had asked major companies to assist in the restructuring process and we were looking at manufacturing, defence and trying to restructure the military manufacturing business of the Soviet Union into civilian companies. We were helping to get these countries back on their feet. Politically, it was critically important because you don't want a political superpower dissolving into chaos."

Anthony was then headhunted by a British specialist consultancy in London, the Portland Group, world leaders in the business development of aerospace and involved in major projects around the world.

He spent three years in Athens as principal in-country business planning and strategy advisor to the international joint venture between the Greek state and leading German companies. The green field development of the new Athens airport was, at the time, largest public-private sector joint venture in Europe and had a project value of DM4.1 billion.

"It's hard to say how rare a project like this is," said Anthony. "You could work in aerospace all your life and never get to be involved in something like this. It was the construction of a whole new international airport from a green field site and there were some 300-400 companies having to work together to do so."

The Portland Group was then bought by the Macquarie Bank, because of its interest in the aerospace sector. Anthony was part of the founding team that built a €1 billion international investment business in 18 months.

After leaving the bank two years ago, Anthony started to set up a private equity fund to acquire turnaround businesses which were either under-performing or on the verge of collapse. Some companies he was looking into were in Scotland.

"Scotland was back in my mind," he said. "One day at home in Kent, reading the *Sunday Times*, I saw a job ad for Strathclyde. It must have been a Celtic force at work as I wasn't looking for a job at the time, but the name caught my eye, and I found the post held real interest for me."

Having been in the post of executive director since April, he says his role is to take the centre through its second phase of life. "The centre is five years in and it's achieved significant status, it's established its teaching and it's got an international reputation. It's established its research credibility and the question is, what is the next step?"

"The main themes are to deepen the centre's engagement with students throughout Strathclyde and to get entrepreneurialism embedded throughout the university."

His other task will be to engage the Hunter Centre with the corporate world, something he is undoubtedly qualified to do.

Ginny witnesses extraordinary Ukrainian election at close quarters

MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT GINNY MACDONALD TAKES INTERNATIONAL OBSERVER ROLE

► MBA alumnus Ginny MacDonald has always been interested in the world at large. She is president of MacDonald Management Consulting International Ltd, a company focused on international assignments and global networking.

The Canadian has worked and studied in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and France, and was a campaign manager in elections in Ontario, Canada, so it's no surprise that politics and the international scene eventually combined to give her the experience of a lifetime.

The 2004 elections in Ukraine will go down in history. With the chicanery and intrigue involved, they precipitated a political crisis. Allegations of fraud and intimidation quickly followed the initial win by Viktor Yanukovich, who was backed by the outgoing president. Supporters of his opponent, Viktor Yushchenko, regarded as a pro-Western liberal reformer, took to the streets in huge numbers in a peaceful uprising, dubbed the Orange Revolution due to Yushchenko's party colours. The Supreme Court ordered an election rerun and when the new vote was carried out, international observers deemed it much fairer than the original one.

Ginny was one of the international observers at the new elections.

"The Ukraine always held a sense of mystery for me. Being accepted as a volunteer Canadian observer to the Ukrainian election in December 2004 was a long shot. Out of 4,000 Canadians who were willing to give up Christmas, only 400 of them would be chosen through the organisation Canadem."

The selection process wasn't completed until December 19, which was the same day Ginny had to fly to Ottawa to start pre-election briefings.

"More than half of our observers spoke Ukrainian or Russian. Our two-day briefings covered the politics, the culture, the previous election experiences in Ukraine, the security issues and the request for patience in mobilising such a force so quickly. There were also addresses from the Ukrainian ambassador to Canada, the past prime minister of Canada, who was leading the delegation, and the Canadian International Development Office, which was responsible



"I was deployed to Zaporizhzhya, which involved taking an overnight train on Christmas Eve deep into Yanukovich's territory. The local police chief welcomed us, informing us we would find his city extremely safe and that they had had no problems with the last election – that was too pat to be believable!"

Ginny and the other 16 members of her team inspected the polls, checking registration lists and procedures. At one poll, the chairperson told them there had been no irregularities, aggression or intimidation during the previous elections, but he then allowed official party members inside the polling station. After much debate, they managed to move all but one outside the room.

At another poll they found several problems such as a poor use of space causing inability to observe properly, and 'extreme guidance' at registration or in the polling booths. Reflecting on her experiences, Ginny says: "My greatest concern was that the country would expect a western democratic society with resulting economic boom and higher standards of living as soon as the western-leaning candidate Yushchenko came into power."

"These concerns have manifested themselves in Yushchenko's personally chosen team, with accusations of corruption, slowing economic growth and the dismissal from his government team of a number of the driving personalities of the Orange Revolution."

for the funding of the delegation."

Canadian observers totalled around 1,200 from different groups. Canadem was one of the higher profile groups and the Ukrainian Council of Canadians was another.

"By the end of the trip, we knew enough about moving loads of people and how long it can take! Tempers held, but of course that was one of the unwritten qualities that were required for the position of foreign election observer."

On arriving in Kiev, Ginny could clearly see the support for Viktor Yushchenko: "Orange was everywhere, but we were to remain unbiased. This was something we managed to do, even with so many of our delegates having recent Ukrainian roots.

fuzzy words

GET DEFUZZED IN OUR SIXTH STROLL THROUGH THE JARGON ALPHABET

insourcing: The process of looking inside the company to find someone with the needed skills to perform a certain job. This happens a lot in an economic slow-down. "The budget's tight, we'd better insource this one."

smotherage: A form of media overkill. When a news organisation covers an event with multiple reporters, producing stories on every conceivable angle and providing perspectives that few people are even interested in.

subject creep: The tendency for an email list or newsgroup discussion to veer wildly off-topic while the subject line remains steadfastly the same.

360-degree feedback/review: The latest in performance evaluations. The 'victim' is assessed by everyone that has regular contact with him/her: managers, subordinates, colleagues and customers.

If you have any news or comments, contact Audrey Chisholm, Press & Publications Executive, University of Strathclyde Graduate School of Business, 199 Cathedral Street, Glasgow, G4 0QU, or email audrey@gsb.strath.ac.uk

A life in the day of... Ian Moore



► Born in Leicestershire, Ian studied a natural science degree at St Andrews, which led him, somewhat incongruously, to a career in marketing. Working with companies such as Cadbury-Schweppes and Lloyds Bank brought him back to Scotland where he began his distance-learning MBA in 1986.

Graduating in 1990 he set up his own firm, The Blue-Chip Marketing Consultancy Ltd, in Edinburgh the same month. This grew to three offices, in Edinburgh, Manchester and London, and in 1999 was bought by its management in two separate management buy-outs.

Ian describes himself as a "semi-freelance advertising and marketing consultant and writer". He acts as creative director for Blue-Chip Marketing, has written a book, writes regular marketing articles, and has just finished a year-long stint as part-time marketing director for a Scottish internet company. Here he gives an insight into a 'typical' day:

7.30am

Mainly I work from home. This means I'm master of my own time, but it's quite a challenge to cram in everything I want to do each day. Then there can be added problems if, say, England are doing well in the Test cricket!

From about 7.30 through to 10am, I always concentrate on writing. This could be an article, some advertising copy or a document for a client, and I like this time to be interruption-free.

9.30am

Like most people, I begin to get interrupted about now. By this I mean emails and phone calls. As far as Blue-Chip is concerned, I'm effectively on call round the clock so it might be a query about redemption rates for offers or whether I have a sample of a promotion from 1992. If someone's writing a presentation for a client, I might get this via email and then I'd phone back to discuss any comments I might have.

Unexpected contacts can come from all directions. Recently, *The Grocer* called me to ask what I thought Sainsbury's

should do with their Jamie Oliver advertising. I said I thought their problem had more to do with customer perception of price competitiveness, not their advertising.

As the morning gradually becomes disjointed, I move on to tasks I can skip in and out of more easily. At the moment, I'm an examiner for the Institute of Sales Promotion's Diploma so I have a daily quota of papers to mark.

On my publisher's orders I'm also promoting my book, which means writing to organisations like the Institute of Directors and the Chartered Institute of Marketing. Fortunately, I've already had some positive reviews.

12.30am

Lunch generally is a sandwich at the computer. I very rarely do business lunches and those I attend will usually be a working lunch. If I've really had my head down writing, I'll take the opportunity to go for a walk. I live just a few minutes from the Water of Leith and a walk there is great for clearing the head.

Supermarket cafes are also a regular lunchtime haunt. Despite what I've said about interruptions, I don't mind background noise (this may stem from having five kids), so I'll often take a document with me to review. It means I get the chance to look round the store too – much of my work relates to fast-moving consumer goods companies, so it's essential to keep up to speed with what's going on. Recently, for instance, I've been writing about in-store TV, which is on test in some Tesco and Sainsbury's branches.

1.30pm

At the moment I'm researching ideas I've had as a follow-up to my first book. For this I go to the National Library of Scotland, which can get you just about anything you want, and I like to go here just after lunch.

3pm

I then head for the nearby Blue-Chip office where I spend the rest of the afternoon in my capacity as creative director. Blue-Chip's clients include Baxters, Caledonian Brewery, CR Smith, Highland Spring, Reebok, the SRU, Warburtons and Vimto.

These are great brands to work on, with firms that are constantly innovating.

Here, I might be working on creative development with a small team where a client has given us a brief and a creative solution is needed, perhaps for an ad or an offer launch, or I might hold a larger-scale brainstorming session, where we look for an array of random ideas which could open up some productive channels. I also might be involved in reviewing an upcoming presentation for a client to make sure the brief has been answered and we've given it our best shot.

6pm

Kid things take over, ranging from delivery, to Highland dancing and soccer training – I coach under-sevens at Inverleith Spartans, where my son plays.

9pm

Some free time. If I'm lucky, I get to see the end of the second half of a football match on Sky.

10pm

If necessary I'll work again before I go to bed. I like to be organised for the next morning rather than spend half an hour of good writing time sorting out admin. And I usually check my emails – just one last time – before heading for bed.