



# PIONEER

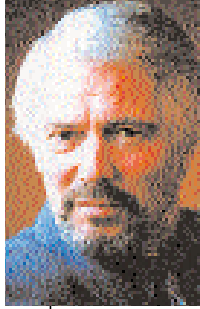


## BEAUTIFUL FRIENDSHIPS

HOW TO MAKE COLLABORATION WORK

## Powerful new links

► The past few months have seen us set up new partnerships in Switzerland and the United Arab Emirates.



In the UAE it was a move from the British Council as our partners to the Higher Colleges of Technology's Centre for Excellence in Research and Technology (HCT-CERT). The Colleges

are the highest quality degree-awarding establishment in the UAE, with the minister of higher education as the chancellor.

We are privileged to have such a link with the Higher Colleges. Abu Dhabi will become the fourth Gulf centre for the MBA in October.

While we changed partners in Switzerland, it was to a new organisation but an 'old' – or, rather, familiar – face. We are delighted to be working once again with Dr Rohith Gerald Delilkhan who, with Dr Claudia Schmid-Schoenbein, heads the Swiss Management Forum. Dr Delilkhan was formerly in charge of the MBA in Switzerland with our previous partner.

The Strathclyde MBA is now taught at the Zurich Airport Conference Centre. There's an SMF office exclusively dedicated to the Strathclyde MBA programme and the conference centre is run by a Strathclyde MBA alumnus.

We have been present in Switzerland since 1995 and we look forward to a long, rewarding relationship with the SMF.

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

## Foresight specialists look forward to more Strathclyde events



► The second international conference on organisational foresight took place at USGSB in August. Thirty-five academics and practitioners from around the world, with interest in organisational foresight, scenario planning and other future-oriented thinking activities, gathered for three days to listen to, debate and discuss with, and learn from their peers in the field.

Professor Susan Hart, acting dean of the business faculty, began the proceedings with a welcome from Strathclyde University and USGSB, and host Dr George Burt welcomed delegates to the conference.

The first keynote speaker was Scott Armstrong of The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, with his presentation, 'How to Use Experts to Forecast Decisions in Organisational Conflicts'.

Scott explored with delegates the issues and ways of improving decisions in organisations.

The following day brought Jaap Leemhuis, founder and head of GBN Europe, a leading scenario, strategy and foresight consultancy, with the second keynote speech, 'A Personal View of The Introduction and Early Days of Scenario Planning in Shell'.

Jaap explored the development of scenario planning in the energy multinational, including many of the lessons learned in the early, pioneering days.

Dr Burt presented a paper – written with current and former colleagues Ron Bradfield, George Wright, George Cairns and Kees van der Heijden – on *Looking Back and Looking Deep for Anticipatory Organisational Learning*.

Two more papers followed later from the

same working group: *The Origins and Evolution of Modern-Day Scenario Planning Techniques*, and *Scenario Planning Interventions in Organisations: An Analysis of The Causes of Success and Failure*. A gala dinner was held on the Friday night at St Mungo's Museum of Religious Life and the event concluded on the Saturday with three more papers.

Dr Burt said: "We're delighted with the success of this second Strathclyde international conference. It builds on the success of the inaugural conference in 2002 and enhances our reputation in this area of interest. The standard of paper was very high, presentations were insightful and, despite the hard work involved, I've been



DR GEORGE BURT  
DISCUSSED WAYS  
TO DIG DEEPER

convinced by this year's delegates that a third conference is in order so the planning starts here!"

The next step is the invitation from the internationally respected journal *Futures* to host a special edition of papers presented at the conference, so the papers will be subject to full peer review. This follows what happened after the first conference, indicating Strathclyde's continuing reputation in the field of organisational foresight.

● More about the conference is on the website at:

[www.gsb.strath.ac.uk/worldclass/foresight/2004](http://www.gsb.strath.ac.uk/worldclass/foresight/2004)

## Global good neighbours

**Shima Barakat calls for a more coherent approach to corporate greening**

► Corporate environmentalism – or corporate ‘greening’ – is a fashionable topic at the moment. My work with large, international companies operating in the UK shows that corporate environmental orientation, is a complex, ‘underground’ phenomenon that struggles with tensions, ambiguities and contradictions.

There seems to be little shared among employees when it

comes to the environment, except a fragmented and individual experience. There are differences in perceptions, opinions and even emotions among employees of each company. It is clear there is little shared experience, practically no shared values.

No structures and systems seem to address employee understanding and practice of environmental issues. Few forums exist.

There is no common value, certainly not a corporate value, for individuals to draw on to make sense of environmental issues; people deal with environmental concepts in any way they can.



SHIMA BARAKAT ENCOURAGES UNDERSTANDING

My research contributes to the understanding of corporate environmental orientation, enabling practice and theory to rethink how to facilitate corporate environmentalism.

## and...

### GLOBE-TROTTING

Professors Chris Huxham and Gerry Johnson were keynote speakers in the Advanced Institute of Management (AIM) symposium at the US Academy of Management conference in New Orleans in August, which emphasised links between AIM's research and management practice. Gerry was also a keynote speaker in a symposium on research being developed on ‘micro strategy and strategising’, which looks at strategic outcomes in terms of day-to-day practices of managers in organisations. (See [www.aomonline.org](http://www.aomonline.org)) Gerry also presented some of his AIM work at the Strategic Management Society conference in Puerto Rico. This project has involved 15 of our MBA students and is concerned with identifying the exceptional businesses in the UK over the past 20 years that have maintained high levels of performance and undergone major strategic change. (See [www.smsweb.org](http://www.smsweb.org))

### RESEARCH FUNDING

Dr Robert MacIntosh has won an £18,500 award from Glasgow Centre for Population Health, running from August 2004 for 12 months. His research will explore managerial and strategic issues in health provision and draws upon complexity theory.

### JUST PUBLISHED

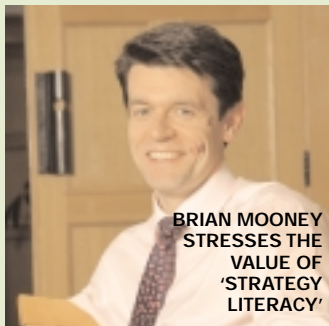
Professor Fran Ackermann and Professor Colin Eden with Ian Brown, an MBA alumnus, have a new book out entitled, *The Practice of Making Strategy*. Published by Sage, it includes chapters on getting started with a management team, developing a goals system, developing and testing a business model and achieving closure. The book is a partner to the authors' successful book *Making Strategy*, also published by Sage, and is intended for MBA graduates and practitioners.

## Do you have a cunning plan?

► Good strategy produces more competitive companies and a more successful economy – but how good are business people at strategy?

That was the question Genesis Consulting and USGSB set out to answer with the inaugural National Business and Strategy Challenge 2004 at the business school in October.

Teams of alumni and their colleagues were invited to compete to answer strategy challenges presented by an expert panel, which included Professor Colin Eden from USGSB, and representatives from Genesis Consulting – who are among



BRIAN MOONEY STRESSES THE VALUE OF 'STRATEGY LITERACY'

Scotland's leading business strategy consultants – and the corporate world.

Brian Mooney of Genesis Consulting says: “The idea arose

during discussion at Genesis about the relevance of strategy to clients these days – does it matter and is it seen to matter?”

“We decided to approach USGSB with the idea of a ‘strategy challenge’ as, being the pre-eminent business school in Scotland, USGSB would also have a vested interest, like Genesis, in the competitive success of Scottish companies and the national economy. And we saw the faculty as leaders in the field of trying to understand how strategy is made and actually

practised in the field of business as opposed to theoretical strategists.

“We saw this as an accessible way of approaching a difficult but



GENESIS MD ALISTAIR GRAY

important question: how good are Scottish companies at strategy? This is something we should be able to answer – it's not a trick question.

“The answer has very serious implications in terms of quality of life and opportunities in Scotland. The challenge enables us to ask the question and get an answer without getting bogged down in definitional debates.”

The aim of the challenge is to encourage business people to think about strategy more seriously.

“We wanted people to realise that ‘strategy literacy’ is important in business – as important as other value drivers like productivity, innovation or change ability,” says Brian.

A similar challenge for non-alumni is on the cards for January.

For more information about Genesis Consulting in Scotland, visit [www.genesisconsult.com](http://www.genesisconsult.com)

TO ANSWER THE QUESTION BELOW, AND WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT IT, CHRIS HUXHAM AND SIV VANGEN HAVE COME UP WITH SEVEN PERSPECTIVES ON COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT.

**C**ommon wisdom is that collaboration should work – the number of organisations that do collaborate would seem to be proof of that. Of the top 500 global businesses in 2001, each had 60 major alliances (source: PricewaterhouseCoopers).

But there is no escaping the fact that the whole process can be a frustrating one. To gain 'collaborative advantage', something has to be achieved through the process of collaboration that could not have been achieved by any of the organisations acting alone.

Recently, UMIST and Manchester University joined forces to create the University of Manchester, a powerful new institution that can rival Oxbridge and London's dominance in research, thus achieving something they were unlikely to achieve on their own – an example of 'collaborative advantage'.

There is a flipside however – 'collaborative inertia.' This unfortunately is what most people will experience in the collaborative experience. Inertia is the unwanted result of trying to achieve advantage, where output is negligible, output is slow or just a very hard grind.

So if 'advantage' is the goal, why is inertia so often the outcome? There are a number of reasons where participants get bogged down and are unaware of why, and thus unable to do anything to get matters moving forward.

### **We must have common aims but we cannot agree on them**

A clear set of aims for a partnership is the best starting point but the variety of different agendas brought to the table by individuals can make reaching agreement difficult.

Although organisations bring different resources and expertise together – which would seem to be the way to create certain collaborative advantage – organisations have different reasons for being involved and this can lead to conflicts of interest. Individuals too

will have different expectations, so it's not really a surprise that reaching agreement can be difficult.

Spending some time finding out what each partner's expectations and aspirations are should help. Clarity of purpose should be a good starting point, though be aware that open discussions could unearth irreconcilable differences, leading the way to a whole new set of problems! Ultimately, getting started on some action without fully agreeing the aims is sometimes the only practical way forward.

### **Power is not all in the purse strings**

When working collaboratively, it would be a mistake to assume that those holding the purse strings have all the power. The same individual won't have the same degree of power throughout the collaborative process – it shifts continuously. Something as seemingly simple as naming the collaboration is a point of power, for example; the name is likely to influence what the partnership does and its future direction. Those who choose who to involve have power and those who take the role of choosing when and where to meet also have power.

So while it may seem important to keep a check on whoever is holding the purse strings, that isn't the only area where power operates and it can be advantageous to understand and explore the points of power. You should ask yourself however, is doing so a manipulative way of working and against the spirit of collaborative working?

### **Trust versus suspicion**

Trust is a common issue raised by collaborative partners. Trust between partners is the ideal, but it is more



# COLLABORATION:



often the case that suspicion is the starting point.

Often this is because participants do not choose their partners – government policy may dictate partners or a company may choose to partner with someone they don't particularly want to in order to stop a competitor entering the market.

Trust building is, therefore, important. Partners will formulate their expectations about the future of the collaboration based on the reputation of the partner or on formal contracts, but trust still needs to be built on.

To make any progress, participants have to trust each other enough at the beginning to allow them to take a risk to start the process. If this is completed successfully, trust can be built and provides a stronger basis of trust for more ambitious projects in the future.

### Too many partners!

For those in partnership with relatively few groups, it may seem incomprehensible that a member of one venture may be unsure of fellow partners. However unlikely this seems, it is very often the case where there is a large number of partner organisations. This is down to the sheer scale of networking activities – many organisations are involved in multiple alliances. One major electronics manufacturer, for example, is involved in around 400 strategic alliances. Clearly, no individual manager is likely to know which partner organisations are involved, and the public sector - where partnerships and inter-agency initiatives are on the increase - is particularly affected by this.

Obviously, it will be difficult to agree on aims to build mutual understanding when not everyone knows who their partners are.

However, learning how to progress without getting bogged down in the complexity of the partnership is the way to deal with it – a careful approach to nurturing relationships must be an essential aspect of this.

### Everything keeps changing

Group members must realise they are not dealing with a static organisation but a continually fluctuating body. Policy changes in organisations or changes in government policy may see a shift in the relevance of the collaboration to its members while new members may join or current ones leave.

All organisations are subject to change, but collaborative organisations are sensitive to changes in each of the partner organisations and therefore may change very quickly.

The trust already established could be shattered if, for example, a key individual leaves. Nurturing and trust building must continue to ensure those still in the partnership can progress, not regress.

### Leadership is not always in the hands of members

Leadership in a collaborative venture should be strong given the pitfalls involved, but traditional hierarchies don't exist in such settings. Leadership is more about the mechanisms that lead to outcomes of the collaboration and is not just about people, but about the structures and processes which lead the agenda.

External stakeholders such as customers or local public figures can also direct the territory of an alliance.

Collaborations can easily move out of the control of their membership and recognising the inevitability of this and working round it is part of the response required.

### Leadership activities continually meet with dilemmas and difficulties

Research into collaboration throws up two kinds of leadership activities – the 'spirit of collaboration' and 'towards collaborative thuggery.'

Those who engage in the former take a lead in moving a collaboration forward and are generally engaged in activities which are highly facilitative. There are also those – and they may be the same people at different times – who engage in the latter behaviour. They will try to manipulate agendas and play the politics to get what they want. On the face of it, this sort of activity is much less collaborative.

**Continued on page 7**

# BOON OR BANE?

QUESTION TIME



**GRAEME BOYLE, CEO, A HALF MV SQUARED**

You graduated in 1991 – what were you doing before the MBA and after?

Before the MBA I was a very focused and successful sales consultant, and, although there was no dramatic sea-change post-MBA, my perspective on business and career moved to a higher level. Eventually, this resulted in my directorship with a German multinational. Since then, the MBA has proved invaluable in setting up and growing my own company, A Half MV Squared Ltd.

What did the MBA mean to you?

I studied for the MBA at a time when many people's lives change – around the time of the big 3-0 – and the MBA was part of that process of change. The single most useful MBA resource has been the friendships that were formed and continue to this day, proving the old adage of 'it's not what you know but who you know' to be right!

What have you been up to since graduation?

I moved up and then off the corporate ladder. I'm now CEO of my own international technology and business development consultancy and am involved with corporate and academic spin-outs in the UK and California.

Any high or low spots in that time you can tell us about?

The high spots have been personal ones – marrying Karen and the birth of our daughter, Jessica. However, my career is still an important factor and it brings both highs – winning new clients and getting my first article in *Scotland on Sunday* – and lows – the 6am flights to London and losing that 'dead cert' bid.

# MBA students work on international consultants' projects

► Receiving a book profiling the full-time MBA class of 2004, MBA alumnus Kevin Thistlethwaite of Mott MacDonald was impressed with what he saw and contacted USGSB to arrange a presentation to the class.

Mott MacDonald, a professional services company, employs 8,000 consultants in 50 countries. Its heritage is in the civil engineering industry, but in recent years its services have expanded to include specialist education, health, energy, information, communications and management consultancy.

Kevin (MBA More) has been appointed to lead a new Business Improvement team, delivering advice to public and private sector clients.

"Employing high quality individuals in the team was my highest priority," he says. "Naturally, I knew the Strathclyde

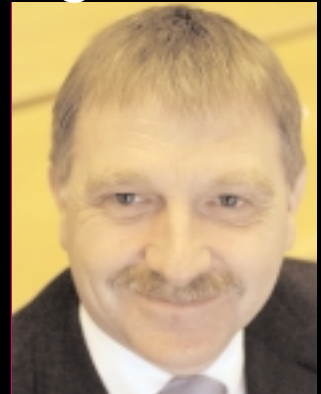
MBA provided a first-class foundation for management consultants and the student profiles book provided an excellent starting point."

An evening presentation was arranged to generate interest in joining the new team, and enabled Kevin to meet informally with potential candidates as well as positioning the Mott MacDonald brand with potential clients.

Mott MacDonald received 22 expressions of interest following the presentation and 12 students were listed for initial interview.

"The standard of those we interviewed was very high, and we shortlisted four, based on their impact, communication and analysis skills, and their ability to make the links between the different MBA components," says Kevin. "We made offers to all four candidates."

Some of the new team will



**ALUMNUS KEVIN THISTLETHWAITE WAS KEEN TO INVOLVE STUDENTS**

be based in Glasgow and they will be aiming to meet the strategy and business improvement needs of Scottish clients in the public and private sectors.

"The success of this exercise was beyond our expectations and we'd be delighted to repeat the experience in 2005," adds Kevin.

## A master class in management

► Over the last two years, USGSB has been developing and delivering its advanced management programme, a 14 day (100 hour) programme aimed at the needs of senior managers and directors. Many of the participants are managers for whom the MBA is too big a commitment, or past MBA participants who have been looking for a refresher programme.

Currently planning our 2005 activities, we are considering running a series of master classes and hope to offer short courses and events aimed at the needs of our alumni. Initial informal research suggests that there are two areas of interest – topics from the MBA electives that partici-

pants may not have had the chance to attend, and MBA themes that individuals or groups would like to explore in practice.

To help us in our research for this, it would be helpful if you could get in touch, telling us:  
 what subjects you would most like support with  
 what subjects you/your employer would be prepared to invest in  
 what you would be prepared to pay per day for a two to three day master class that was a) academic led and b) facilitator led.  
 Please send all responses to [survey@gsb.strath.ac.uk](mailto:survey@gsb.strath.ac.uk).

## fuzzywords

GET DEFUZZED IN OUR FOURTH STROLL THROUGH THE JARGON ALPHABET

**Living document:** A document intended to be kept current through continuous revision and updates. Of course, after six months everyone is sick of it and it sits ignored and unread on a server somewhere.

**Loop mail:** The ever-increasing email copies to 'keep you in the loop'. Most of it is unnecessary, and a major reason why you can't get your own work done.

**Space junk:** The space-eating files on a computer that you suspect no longer have a purpose but you are afraid to delete.

**Work spasm:** The initial spurt of energy you pour into work after returning from vacation or a relaxing weekend. It generally wears off by lunchtime on Monday.

# Could you be a winner in Greece?



## GREECE IS NOW A LAND OF OPPORTUNITY, BUT IT PAYS TO UNDERSTAND LOCAL WAYS BEFORE YOU ATTEMPT TO DO BUSINESS THERE

► The Greek business environment has changed dramatically in the past decade. Privatisation and liberalisation of key industries, such as energy, transport, and telecommunications, have moved the country towards a thoroughly free market economy.

Entry to the EU has been a great boost to the Greek economy and much of the country's transformation from economic backwater to the leading economy in south East Europe stems from its rigorous adaptation of EU convergence criteria.

With substantial funding from the EU and a key link to the emerging markets in the Balkans and eastern Mediterranean, Greece, as the only EU state in this part of Europe, is regarded as a zone of relative economic and political stability in a volatile region.

The public sector accounts for half of Greece's GDP. Traditionally agricultural, 20% of the working population still works the land – a high proportion by EU standards. Tourism is the most important service industry, booming since the 1980s, with more than 10 million tourists visiting every year, accounting for about 10% of the GDP.

The win by the Greek football team in the European championships

and the Olympic Games this year have put the country even more in the spotlight, ensuring tourism will probably continue to increase in forthcoming years.

The banking sector has undergone significant deregulation and consolidation, resulting in a highly competitive sector. The energy, construction and telecommunication sectors have also undergone significant reforms and have been among the best performers in the Greek economy.

Shipping is an important industry. Greece has the world's largest merchant marine fleet and greater Athens, together with the port of Piraeus, is a major hub for international trans-

port and trade – a role which has been enhanced by the opening of the new international airport.

Athens experienced a building boom as a result of the Olympics and the construction industry received a major boost. Projects included the Athens metro extension, new sports venues, and new hotel rooms to accommodate an influx of visitors.

### Considering investment?

The Greek government is generally supportive of foreign investment, but dealing with local bureaucracy can be time-consuming. The government is however now making extra efforts to cut down on bureaucracy so that should all change.

If planning to set up in business, it's important to approach the market with a developed business plan and undertake careful market research. Appointing a local representative in Greece is a suitable way of entering the market.

The representative's contacts and local knowledge could prove invaluable when applying for public sector tenders. Personal contact is valued and it's important to visit the market, both to establish a contact and at regular intervals to show commitment.

## BUSINESS ETIQUETTE

Wherever you go in the world, each country has its idiosyncratic business protocol, despite the cliché of the 'world becoming smaller' owing to air travel and faster communication processes. Greece is no different.

In Greece, nodding the head upwards means 'no' – so be careful of misinterpreting such gestures – and never raise an open palm – to raise your hand with an open palm at face level is an insult.

There is a strong emphasis on family and friends in Greece and business requires the building of personal relations before any real tasks are accomplished.

Business dress is formal and it is the custom to use the person's surname rather than a first name on a first meeting until a longer acquaintance has been established.

Punctuality is expected for meetings, but a Greek host may keep a business visitor waiting for a short time. While handshakes are customary at the beginning and end of meetings, once everyone is better acquainted embracing and kissing is not uncommon. Business cards should be in English and Greek, and are exchanged after introductions have been made.

Hospitality is an important part of Greek culture and being taken to lunch or dinner will probably be part of a business trip. Gifts are well received but not expected, unless invited to a colleague's home. Luxury chocolates, wine or flowers are all acceptable.

• USGSB's local partner is International Management Studies, Athens.  
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