

# The Bath Perspective

Thought Leadership from the University of Bath School of Management

Stories and Storytelling in  
Organizations and Research

The Corporate Partnership  
Scheme

So you want your brand to be  
authentic? Here's how.

Universities and the Global  
Knowledge Race



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# The University of Bath School of Management

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🕒 With over forty years' experience of delivering high quality management programmes, the School of Management is one of the oldest established business schools in the UK. The School is research-led, with a faculty and staff unique in the diversity of cultures and interests represented.

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## Dean's Message

### Let me tell you a story...

As lecturers we are in the business of imparting serious knowledge but we have long understood that the best way to make sure our students engage with the subject matter we are covering is through the use of stories, or to give it its official name, our students are engaged in absorbing narrative knowledge. Prof Yiannis Gabriel is one of the leading experts in the study of stories and storytelling in organizations and his article (page 4) is a fascinating insight into how the power of the story is being used in business today.

The currency of our real-time links with businesses, helping them to look at current issues that face them, is of critical importance to us, and it ensures our business anecdotes are relevant and current. The Corporate Partner scheme (page 8) that we have established is helping to make these links as reciprocal as possible - we gain insights into current business issues and in return we offer possible solutions to challenges they face. Through the scheme we also offer access to a pool of very talented graduates who are highly sought after in the recruitment market.

As a management school we combine three core areas of work – teaching, corporate links and, importantly, research. It is a great privilege to be able to share our knowledge with bright, intelligent students but it is also intellectually rewarding to engage in research activities that delve deeper into why and how organizations work. As Dr Rajani Naidoo says in her

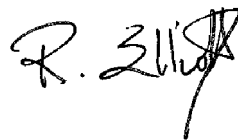
article (page 24) we are engaged in a global knowledge race. Rajani also points out there is pressure for universities to develop teaching programmes that are more relevant to changing labour markets and to develop skills that are of direct relevance to employment. We are at the forefront of that work as we help our students develop their skills and expertise, often moving into areas they had not anticipated in their careers, as our alumni profile of BSc IMML graduate Louise Herring (page 20) shows. Our DBA Higher Education Management (DBA HEM), led by Rajani, is also having a direct impact on how universities operate within the global knowledge race. Our interview with current DBA HEM student Tim Gore (page 30), who is focusing his research on the positioning of universities as knowledge producers in a globalising world, shows this impact.

We share the pride of our students' and graduates' successes, indeed it is our links with our students and graduates that are a core part of what makes us love what we do here. This love of doing resonates with Prof Michael Beverland's article (page 14) about why authentic brands succeed. He explains that 'Focusing on loving the doing is why authentic brands talk endlessly about their products, invest in design and communicate a love of craft in their stories'. If our products are seen as our students then we are happy to talk endlessly and enthusiastically about them. As Dean I also recognise that our 'products' are also our people and we are fortunate to have such dedicated people working in the School. The latest awards,

voted on by students, for the best tutor in the School of Management showed a great wealth of positive feeling by the students for their tutors.

Being surrounded by people who love what they do is one of the great privileges of my job and it would be remiss of me not to take this opportunity of thanking Dr Alan Butt-Philip for his outstanding contribution to the School over a thirty-five year period. Alan officially retired this summer but will continue his links with the School through part-time work with us, for which we are most grateful.

This magazine is intended to help in sharing some of the knowledge that abounds in the School at the moment. If you would like to contact any of the contributors to find out more about their area of expertise or if you are interested in getting involved with our Corporate Partner scheme, or if you'd like to contact me, please do get in touch – contact details can be found on the back page of this publication.



Prof Richard Elliott



**O**nce upon a time there were two princesses  
next door to each other. You may have heard  
of the first one. Her name was Cinderella. She  
was forced to work from morning till  
night scrubbing pots and  
pannel stepmother.

# Stories and Storytelling in Organizations and Research

Yiannis Gabriel, Professor of Organizational Theory and  
Deputy Dean of the School of Management

**🕒 Prof Gabriel uses stories to study social and organizational phenomena; he has found that they open windows into profound aspects of the human experience in a way that other research methods cannot emulate. Learning from stories – narrative knowledge – is not new but many are now re-discovering that working with stories can be a powerful way of enhancing our practices as managers, leaders, communicators and researchers.**

## Stay hungry, stay foolish

In 2005 Steve Jobs delivered his commencement address at Stanford University which had honoured him with a degree. It consisted simply of three stories.

The first was about dropping out of college as a 17-year old, aware that his education was costing his parents the earth and offered him little. He did, however, benefit from a course in calligraphy, which many years later came in handy when he incorporated multiple typefaces and proportionally spaced fonts in the Apple Mac. The second story relates the pain and disappointment he experienced in 1985 when he left Apple, the company he had founded. In his version of the story (disputed by others involved in the event) he 'got fired' from Apple; yet, his sacking turned out to be 'the best thing that ever happened' to him. It allowed him to start a new career as a creative spirit rather than as company CEO, enabling him eventually to return to Apple as its saviour. The third story describes his early discovery that death may be around the corner and his determination to live each day as though it is his last. This led him to see death not as an enemy but as the natural destination of all life and helped him to survive cancer. Death is the friend who prompts him to make the most out of life.

He concludes by invoking the words of a creative publication that, in its final issue before closing down, urged its readers to 'Stay hungry, stay foolish'.

Three stories of life and death, achievement and disappointment, hope and loss. No commentary, no sermon, just three deep expressions of his life experiences he wanted to share with his college-going audience. Steve Jobs regularly uses stories in his presentations, as do numerous leaders in business, politics and every other field of social endeavour.

In his thought-provoking book *Leading Minds: An anatomy of leadership*, Howard Gardner {1995} argues that telling stories is one

of the most important things leaders do. Gardner examines the lives of 11 men and women from the last century who left their marks as leaders and argues that much of their effectiveness in inspiring others came from the power of their stories and the extent to which their own lives embodied their story.

## What are stories?

Storytelling has long been a feature of human societies, groups and organizations. Stories are pithy narratives with plots, characters and twists that can be full of meaning. Successful stories have beginnings, middles and ends. While some stories may be pure fiction, others, like those told by Steve Jobs at his commencement, are inspired by actual events. Their relation to events, however, is tenuous – in stories, accuracy is often sacrificed for effect.

Stories pass moral judgements on events, casting their protagonists in roles like hero, villain, survivor, fool and victim. They are capable of stimulating strong emotions of sympathy, anger, fear, anxiety and so forth. A hundred years ago, many scholars argued that traditional storytelling was on its way out, silenced by the rise of different forms of entertainment, of electric light, and different media of communication. The easy availability of quick and reliable information and the advance of scientific, evidence-based knowledge, it was thought, would strike the final blow to stories. Today, however, many scholars, like many leaders, are rediscovering the power of storytelling.

Amazon currently lists over 26,000 books with 'storytelling' in the title, of which no fewer than 3,470 are located in its business department, indicating that it has become another fashionable topic for many managers. A far greater number of books are themselves personal stories or memoirs, many relating the stories of 'ordinary people' who want to relate a personal experience, for example, how they made their first million, how they survived cancer or how they discovered the power of storytelling.

👉 **If business gurus have turned to storytelling it is hardly surprising; think of Christ's parables as a set of stories that, even among non-believers, have lost none of their power through the centuries.**

### Why do stories matter?

- stories help us make sense of our experiences, especially when these draw us outside routines and habits;
- stories enable us to learn from the experiences of other people and to share our experiences with others;
- stories are powerful at influencing hearts and minds;
- stories enable us to express our emotions, ranging from admiration to anger and from pride to disappointment;
- stories can be effective triggers of change, but can also act as stumbling blocks undermining change;
- stories are vital ways in which we construct our individual and group identities, and sustain our bonds to our communities, whose stories we share;
- stories entertain, console, divert and warn us.

### The power of storytelling

So where does storytelling draw its power? Why does our attention get instantly alerted when someone says "Now let me tell you what happened when ..."? And why do stories influence hearts and minds in a way that the cold power of logic, science and facts fail to do? It seems to me that the ready availability of information and data, far from undermining the power of storytelling, has reinforced it. In a world where many of us are choking on information and data, facts, figures and PowerPoint slides, stories cut through and communicate meaning with remarkable speed and economy. If we have a professional problem or a management problem we will often turn to a person who has experienced and managed to overcome a similar problem, seeking to learn from their experience.

Many consultants have turned storytellers, starting with Tom Peters whose famous best-seller *In Search of Excellence* (co-authored with Robert Waterman) contains no fewer than 137 pithy stories of business success and failures, and whose presentations to business people amount to little more than strings of stories. If business gurus have turned to storytelling it is hardly surprising; think of Christ's parables as a set of stories that, even among non-believers, have lost none of their power through the centuries. Stories enable us to share not only information and knowledge but also moral views and emotions with others in an economic and memorable way.

### Sharing knowledge

A few years ago, I was stuck in Denver's international airport due to a storm brewing in the American Midwest. At one of the airport restaurants, I was overhearing the conversation of four pilots, like me stranded due to bad weather and waiting for their flights to resume. And guess what they were talking about? They were each describing the most dangerous escapes that they had had while flying their planes in bad weather. In these stories, the planes, 747s, 727s and 757s, were not just flying machines but characters with distinct personalities, likes and dislikes that required special and careful handling.

Listening to such scary stories was the last thing I needed just prior to taking off, but it taught me many things. Clearly, each pilot was competing with his peers in recounting a more dangerous situation and a more brilliant escape. At the same time, however, they were all sharing knowledge, knowledge about particular weather conditions, knowledge about different planes, and knowledge about different risks. The pilots were what we refer to as a community of practice, learning from each other's experience through the medium of storytelling.

### Communities of practice

There is much talk these days of communities of practice, groups of people who share similar problems and have complementary skills and outlooks. They are mostly occupational and professional groups, like pilots, managers and academics, but they can also refer to people sharing hobbies or interests, like plane-spotters or amateur gardeners. Within such communities, a great deal of knowledge is transferred and this knowledge is not scientific; it cannot be codified into generalizable laws and formulas. Instead, it assumes the form of stories, recipes and direct accounts of experience.

Within communities of practice, storytelling is the natural currency, and stories present facts-as-experience rather than facts-as-information. Stories delve in the subjective, the intimate, and sacrifice accuracy for effect.

### Narrative knowledge

Learning from other people's stories is what we now call narrative knowledge. One of the fascinating discoveries of the last twenty years is that the very professionals whose expertise rests on the authority of their scientific disciplines (the pilot, the medic, the accountant, the lawyer, the technician) also make extensive use of narrative knowledge in their professional practices.

## 📖 Learning to work with stories, to listen to them, tell them, question them and translate them can be a powerful way of enhancing our practices as managers, leaders, communicators and researchers.

For example, the treatment of diabetes as a general condition may be determined by the up-to-date scientific knowledge available to a physician (based on randomised control trials and so forth), yet, the treatment of a particular person's diabetes with specific complications and idiosyncrasies may well be informed by stories of how other physicians treated similar cases. And by the same token, the diabetes sufferer will consult his/her physician for the most up-to-date treatments for his/her condition, but will also consult other diabetes sufferers to find out how they learnt to live with their condition, tame it and manage it.

### Stories as data

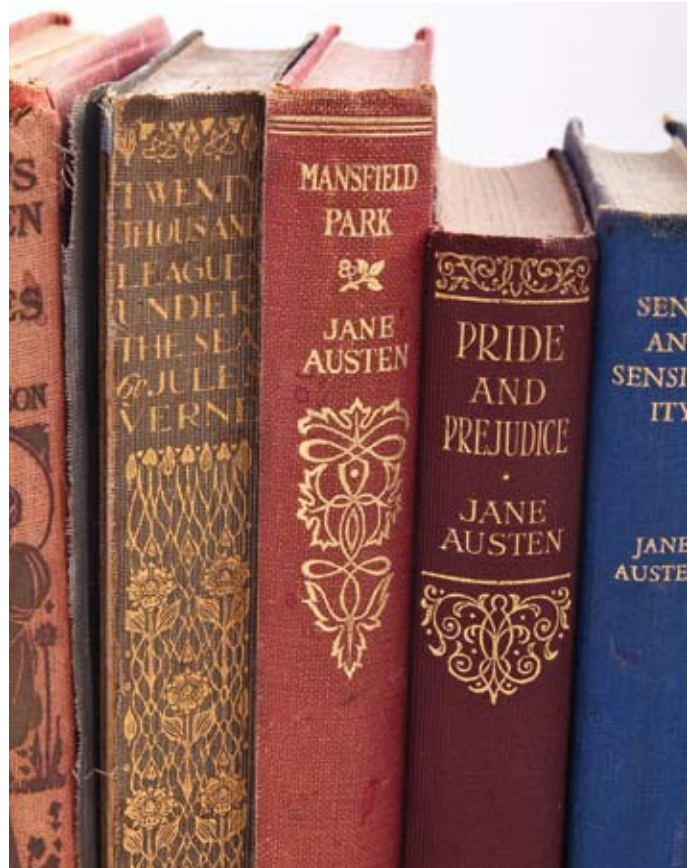
Research on organizational storytelling has accelerated considerably since the 1990s when stories started to make regular appearances as 'data' for organizational analysis, allowing scholars to delve into the cultural, political and emotional lives of organizations.

Numerous PhDs are currently based on storytelling research as are some major projects in social research. I am currently involved in two such projects, one major and one small one. The former, funded by a major grant of the Service Delivery Organization of the National Institute for Health Research has looked at patient care and leadership in three British hospitals.

A large part of the data we collected was in the form of stories, told by clinicians, administrative and other staff, about the quality of patient care in their hospitals and about their relations with their organization's leaders. The latter, a much smaller project, looked at the experiences of senior managers and professionals who found themselves unemployed in their 50s, trying to establish the most suitable type of coaching that will help them resume their lives after a traumatic event. Like the other project, it relied on the stories told by these people as a way of understanding the way they made sense of their experiences, trying to incorporate them into their life stories sustaining their sense of self and identity.

### Windows into our experiences

As someone who has carried out research using stories for many years, I must say that I have found they open windows into profound aspects of our experiences as humans that other research methods cannot emulate. Listening carefully to stories can teach us a lot about different organizations, their cultures, politics and challenges. More generally, learning to work with stories, to listen to them, tell them, question them and translate them can be a powerful way of enhancing our practices as managers, leaders, communicators and researchers.



Yiannis Gabriel is Professor of Organizational Theory and Deputy Dean of the School of Management at the University of Bath. Yiannis has used stories as a way of studying numerous social and organizational phenomena including leader-follower relations, group dynamics and fantasies, nostalgia, insults and apologies. Yiannis is co-founder and co-ordinator of the Organizational Storytelling Seminar series, now in its ninth year (see <http://www.organizational-storytelling.org.uk/>). He is the author of nine books, including *Storytelling in Organizations* and *Myths, Stories and Organizations*, and numerous articles. He has been editor of *Management Learning* and associate editor of *Human Relations*.

# The University of Bath School of Management Corporate Partnership Scheme

## Strong partners

The Corporate Partnership Scheme was launched in Spring 2008 at the University of Bath School of Management. We are proud to say that the group now includes: Nestlé, Zurich, Intel, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Procter & Gamble, Lloyds Banking Group and BP.

## Raising organizations' profiles

The scheme enables selected organizations to have a higher profile within the School of Management. A mutually beneficial and tailored package of activities has been developed for each partner according to their strategic objectives.

## Delivering high calibre students

Established partners have highlighted that they require a strategy which delivers a pool of interested, high calibre students who can be assessed over time in relation to their potential organizational fit and capability.

## Broad base of activities

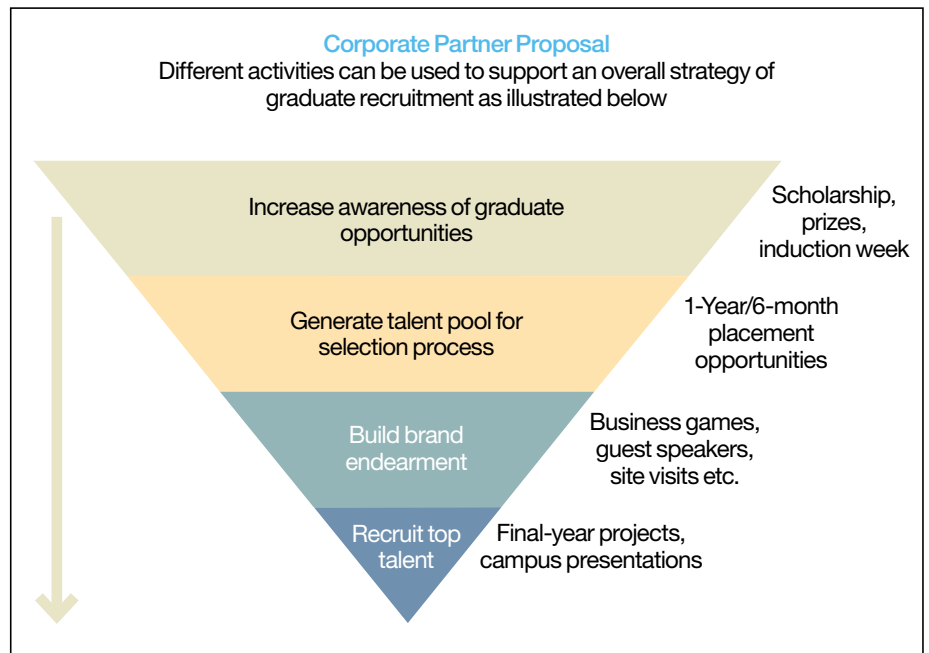
The strategy demands a broad base of activities which reinforce one another and result in successful recruitment. Part of the challenge is in keeping a particular organization's brand "top of mind" throughout the longer degree programmes and beyond the placement opportunities.

In consultation with the partners we have developed a programme of activities designed to raise awareness within the student population.

## Portfolio of programmes

The School provides a portfolio of programmes which can help feed an organization's talent recruitment strategy:

- BSc Business Administration – four-year programme with the opportunity to offer placements at year two and year three together with project work in year four.
- BSc Accountancy and Finance – optional third-year placements with availability to recruit the following year.
- MSc in Advanced Management Practice – placement from April to September with graduates immediately available for hire.
- MSc in Management/MSc in Marketing/MSc in Accounting & Finance – no placement opportunities, but high recruitment potential as graduates are "business ready" after a one-year intensive programme following a good undergraduate degree.



### Channels for raising awareness

The School can help raise awareness of an organization and what it offers through a number of channels including:

- being highlighted as a Partner in the School's reception area;
- promotions via plasma screens in the reception area;
- exposure on the School's website;
- guest speaker appearances for senior managers on programmes;
- publicised programme scholarships and prizes;
- presentations and employer packs distributed on campus;
- site visits where students can experience the organization and its culture;
- support from the School of Management in hosting events on campus;
- involvement in first-year student Corporate Partner induction week.

Proposed costs per annum start at £3,000 going up to £8,000 (all packages are bespoke and final price is determined by services included). A partnership would ideally be for a period of two to three years in order to measure return on investment effectively; costs for any prizes and scholarships are offset against the total price.

For more information about the Corporate Partnership Scheme please contact Stephen Rangecroft, Director of External Relations & Marketing: telephone 01225 386643 or email [s.rangecroft@bath.ac.uk](mailto:s.rangecroft@bath.ac.uk)

## Big Team Challenge

The School's Corporate Partners have also been playing a role in enhancing the induction process for our new BSc and MSc students. Working closely with induction week organiser, Eliza Shaw, Student Experience Officer for the School, five of the Partners – Intel, Lloyds, P&G, PWC, and Zurich – sponsored a day in The Big Team Challenge. The events were designed to introduce new students to important skills that they will use during their studies and to promote further integration with their classmates in their first few weeks of arrival.

This year Intel sponsored the team-building game – the first session of its kind to be provided for freshers, its purpose was to encourage integration and to get students to 'think outside the box' through a series of business games.

Eliza Shaw commented on the Big Team Challenge:

*"We feel that it was an excellent opportunity for students to work with Corporate Partner representatives and encourage team-working skills with their new classmates, through a series of fun challenges. We received very good feedback from students about the event, who appreciated the fun and relaxed atmosphere that was created during the activities."*



Photo: Nic Deives-Broughton, University of Bath

One of the BBA students involved commented:

*"I enjoyed taking part in the Big Team Challenge. It was interesting and very social. A great way to get to know your classmates, but also an excellent way of talking to established companies."*

## Spotlight

### Corporate Partner: Intel



Photo: Ben Langdon Photography

#### Hannah Betts, Intel Psychology 1996

Intel was the first organization to join the School of Management's Corporate Partnership scheme. Hannah Betts, a University of Bath graduate, has been key to the development of the relationship. She explains more about how the Partnership came about and how it has developed.

#### What attracted Intel to the Partnership with Bath?

Our EMEA Finance Team was looking to strengthen relations with top UK universities, in order to develop our graduate pipeline. The aim was to foster relationships in order to be able to secure a diverse source of placement students and graduates. Bath's reputation and Intel's existing links with the Bath MBA led us to approach Bath about developing the relationship further.

#### How has the link developed?

Stephen Rangelcroft, Director of External Relations & Marketing, was appointed to his role in the School of Management at the same time as we were looking at developing our relationship with Bath and he introduced the Corporate Partnership idea to us. Working with John Lautze, the EMEA Finance Director, we developed the relationship. In the two years since becoming a Partner, the Partnership has

evolved significantly beyond our initial requirement to develop our talent pipeline into areas including knowledge-sharing and executive development. It started small but the concept has quickly spawned many ideas, exceeding our expectations of what the Partnership could offer us.

Stephen is fantastic – his approachability and his willingness to work with us in a reciprocal manner have been critical to the success of the link. Prof Mike Lewis, the academic lead on Executive Development, has also been incredibly helpful, answering specific questions for us and designing bespoke interventions which have been very valuable to our organization. Other academics have also become involved with us and their external perspective and inputs have been very useful. On our side, Intel has really entered into the spirit of the relationship: we have had senior people present Intel case studies on the MBA programme; we have delivered both graduate and undergraduate workshops; offered skills sessions to help MBA students prepare for interviews; sponsored prizes and more. We are open to the idea of coming to Bath to help with events and in return we have had help with very specific questions and challenges of our own where the University has been able to offer a different perspective, access to a network of contacts or direct support in tailoring interventions for our business.

### Does the Corporate Partners' scheme meet the needs of your business?

Yes, we want to keep hiring graduates from Bath and one of the most positive outcomes of the scheme has been the raising of our profile and brand amongst Bath students via the scheme. Our relationship with the Placements Office, specifically offering students workshops relating to various areas of business, has helped us to attract a number of graduates and we want to continue to do so. Bath's students seem to be very capable, many offering strong language skills which are a key ingredient for a significant proportion of our placement and graduate hiring schemes.

### How would you rate Bath's preparation of its graduates for work in the commercial world?

The preparation is good, especially via the placements scheme. Unfortunately at present the majority of our placements are 12-13 months in duration which doesn't quite fit with the BSc Business Administration format. This said, we have found Gurpita Lehal, Placements, Projects and International Manager, really helpful in trying to help us fill specific gaps for undergraduates. The students from the School of Management's BSc Accounting and Finance programme who have been able to do 12-month placements with us have been very good.

### What is the future with Bath?

We are looking for opportunities to extend the Partnership and its benefits so as to include other parts of our EMEA organization. There is definitely a benefit of the Corporate Partners' scheme in providing access to a wider network of organizations. The prospect of executive development sessions with others in the Partnership enabling us to share insights, work on common challenges and suchlike is very appealing. The cross-section of organizations and the different ways in which they are approaching common challenges are aspects of the Partnership that we would like to leverage further. How the different Corporate Partners work together for mutual benefit will be an interesting angle going forward and in this regard Bath represents the 'oil' that could help facilitate some very promising collaborative relationships.




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**“ We want to keep hiring graduates from Bath and one of the most positive outcomes of the scheme has been the raising of our profile and brand amongst Bath students. ”**

## Spotlight

### Corporate Partner: BP



#### **Jon O'Sullivan BP Biofuels** MSc in Management with Marketing 2000

On completion of his MSc at Bath, Jon went straight onto the BP graduate commercial development programme, a three-year scheme in which Jon worked in three different commercial roles across BP. He now works for BP Biofuels and joined BP's Bath campus team one year ago. Jon explains about the link between BP and its chosen UK university partners.

#### **How did the link between BP and its chosen UK universities develop?**

Approximately three years ago BP undertook a review to focus its graduate recruitment activities in the UK. This new strategy centred around enhancing BP's relationships with a small group of core universities and as a result teams comprising four to six alumni, now working in BP, were appointed to each core university. These teams have been granted resources to develop these relationships - including financial, Human Resources and time away from the office. Each core university was chosen on the basis of a strong track record with BP, e.g. where many successful graduate recruits have come from recently, and league tables regarding which are the strongest universities in areas particularly relevant for BP such as engineering and business.

#### **What does BP hope to achieve from the Partnerships?**

Primarily we are looking at improving graduate recruitment into the core areas of our business. We realise that recruiting the best graduates is not just about contacting them when they graduate so we are looking at an ongoing relationship developed throughout their time at university. BP has a central graduate recruitment function which has looked into touchpoints throughout the degree, aiming to give BP visibility with the best students from the first year right through to the final year. There is often a clear flow from internships, summer projects, trading games and recruitment to assessment centres to job offers with BP.

#### **What is BP's link with the School of Management?**

BP entered into a Corporate Partnership with the School of Management about eight months ago. The University of Bath is strong in the engineering and business departments - both of which are particularly appealing to our business. The Corporate Partnership scheme that the School has developed is an excellent and very easy way to show the tangible links between BP and the School. It helps that the scheme uses business speak that is easy for us to relate to and it is an efficient type of partnership in which you can clearly see what you put in and what you get out. I have been pleased with the structure of the Partnership scheme as it has been very flexible and we have been

able to tailor the original package to suit everyone e.g. sponsoring prizes and scholarships in important subjects to BP. All of this is good for the students and good for our corporate visibility, so it is a win all round. It has set reasonable expectations on both sides and helped create a good working relationship.

#### How does the business simulation day that you are planning to pilot at Bath fit with your overall objectives for the Partnership?

It is a feather in the cap for Bath that it has been chosen as the pilot university for this business-meets-engineering simulation day. This is not a central graduate recruitment offer for all of BP's core universities but a unique training opportunity that has significant resources attached to it. This is a sign of the success that we've had in building relationships and contacts between BP and Bath.

#### How do you rate Bath's preparation of its graduates for work in the commercial world?

In my opinion, Bath does an excellent job in preparing graduates for work in the commercial world – it integrates valuable work experience into academic programmes and gives students real, tangible examples to use in interviews/assessment centres etc. I think it does this better than most universities, and having some blue-chip corporate names on a student's CV certainly doesn't hurt

when it comes to surviving the graduate recruitment process.

#### What is the future with Bath?

We have agreed an initial three-year Corporate Partnership with Bath and we would like to see the relationship thrive and perhaps be extended beyond this period. We are working together to push forward opportunities that are mutually beneficial; it is a growing relationship that we are developing all the time.



“ The Corporate Partnership scheme that the School has developed is an excellent and very easy way to show the tangible links between BP and the School. ”



## So you want your brand to be authentic? Here's how.

Michael Beverland, Professor of Marketing

🕒 **With authentic brands earning higher margins at less cost than their competitors, creating and enhancing a brand's authenticity is highly desirable, but getting it wrong is all too easy. Based on eight years of research, Prof Beverland has identified seven habits that characterize authentic brands.**

### The rise of authentic branding

Over the past two years, high profile publications such as *Fast Company*, *Brandweek*, *Marketing*, *Marketing Week*, *Wired*, and *Monocle* (among others) have all charted the rise of authentic branding. *Brandweek* (August 31 2009) chronicled the strength of several iconic American brands such as Hellman's, Red Wing Boots, Zippo, and Woolrich's buffalo-striped shirt – identifying how consumers were prepared to pay more for these enduring locally made brands despite tough economic times. As American consumers seek value, they are increasingly turning to brands that have an established heritage of quality and durability, and that support local economies (similar trends have been identified in Australasia).

As a result, many brand managers are looking at developing an “authentic brand strategy”. Levi-Strauss for example have sought to turnaround their declining fortunes by stressing their working-class heritage. Likewise, Jack Daniels have stressed (in their ongoing ad campaign) the authenticity of their whiskey, playing up the brand's love of tradition, craft production and home town aura. However, creating and enhancing a brand's authenticity is by no means easy – simply stating “I'm authentic” will not only fail, but also backfire because consumers are sceptical of such marketing spin. To be seen as authentic one must walk the walk rather than just talk the talk. So just what habits characterize authentic brands?

Based on eight years of research, I have identified the seven. Before I cover those, let's first look at why consumers seek authenticity from brands, and then what the benefits of keeping it real are for brand managers.

### Why should brands be authentic?

The desire for the real, true and genuine (or authenticity) is a recurring theme in human social history. Individuals and groups seek to project their identity through various rituals, objects and practices. Historically, in Western societies, identity was found in notions of place, class, status, religion, and other social institutions (such as community groups, sports teams and so on). Although these institutions still matter, globalization, immigration, and increased fragmentation have seen a decline in their role as shared identity markers (in fact many of these traditions more often than not alienate people).

In contrast, brands are both ubiquitous and open to all. As a result, consumers have begun to use brands as marketers of their desired identity. For example, I desire to be seen as creative. As a result, I adopt certain brands (such as Apple, Wacom, Chuck Taylor and Moleskine) to reflect this desired identity. Such a process is called self-authentication – or an activity that reveals the desired self. Since most people understand how these brands are positioned, my identity is reinforced



socially through their use (sadly I am not in the least bit creative, so my desired identity is never achieved).

For marketers, this has many benefits. Leaving aside the obvious (such as ease of product placement and loyalty), research reveals that authentic brands attract and retain a higher proportion of high income consumers, enjoy high levels of word of mouth support, and are more likely to be purchased than brands positioned solely on functional performance. That is, authentic brands earn higher margins at less cost than their competitors.

### How can brands be authentic?

Authenticity is hard to fake – in fact it is hard to create since ultimately consumers decide whether a brand is authentic or not. Unilever has found this out with the Campaign for Natural Beauty (supporting

## 🕒 Simply stating “I’m authentic” will not only fail, but also backfire because consumers are sceptical of such marketing spin.

their brand Dove). The repositioning of Dove as the brand that helps women feel comfortable with their own body image is admirable. The advertisements urging mothers to “talk to their daughters before the beauty industry does” are great copy, and effectively capture the brand’s position. However, Unilever does not walk the walk – their diverse brand portfolio includes brands such as Lynx whose advertisements are about as sexist and far away from the Campaign for Natural Beauty as it gets. As a result Unilever are subject to brand parodies (“talk to your daughter before Unilever does” and “Dove is the Beauty Industry”) and criticism from a range of activist groups such as Adbusters that reflects the disconnect between the stated intent of the brand and the reality of their operations.

There has always been tension between the commerce and authenticity. The very self-interest inherent in commerce undermines the purity associated with authenticity. Artists or designers that overtly adopt commercial motives or practices often lose authenticity and eventually sales as they are viewed as selling out (Iggy Pop and insurance anyone?). Despite these claims, many of the greatest artists in history have gained enduring commercial success, while the claims of authenticity made by European winemakers and other bearers of tradition often mask the reality of a very industrialized, commercially-driven operation. Brands it appears can be

authentic, but to do so, they need to underplay their commercial motivations and marketing prowess. The next section identifies seven ways in which brands achieve authenticity and endurance.

### 1 Tell stories

Last year was a momentous one for many automotive brands. Brands that had once been identified as quintessential examples of good practice barely avoided bankruptcy while those once pilloried as dinosaurs succeeded. For example, GM (and the rest of the Big Three) went cap in hand to the United States Congress for bailout monies, while a company once derided as being representative of all that is wrong with British industry celebrated its centenary in Malvern Link. I am of course talking about the Morgan Motor Company (MMC). Owners from around the world (including from as far away as New Zealand) descended on the idyllic English town to celebrate the anniversary of a brand that inspires love from consumers (and derision from many others), and that has succeeded precisely because they appear to have gone against the grain of best practice.

From a brand point of view, the MMC is interesting. Like many old organizations, no formal brand planning was done (not until 2005/2006); instead successive generations of the Morgan family have kept the cult alive through stories – both those that are true, and those that are myths but created and owned by consumers. For example, French

consumers believe the car’s chassis is made entirely out of wood (MMC still uses English Ash in the production of its car, but certainly not for the chassis). Such a myth helps French owners connect with the brand, and helps build a myth around the brand. It is also patently false – a situation the MMC had tried to correct. Like any good urban myth however, the wooden chassis story endures, and the MMC marketing team eventually gave up trying to convince French consumers otherwise.

Such an approach is intolerable when viewed from the vantage point of traditional brand theory – which assumes brand managers are the sole arbiters of brand truths. However, the MMC is on to something – stories unite people because they seem true. And, brand-related stories are useful for connecting like-minded people. As the MMC found out, it’s so much easier to let such myths add to the aura of the brand than spend funds trying to convince consumers they’re wrong. Other brands adopt a similar approach, turning chance events into brand-related stories in order to enhance their authenticity.

### 2 Appear as artisanal amateurs

Marketers are taught to revel in their professionalism and skill. Particularly, they take great pride in how well they know their customers and how good they are at tapping into their needs. Australian winemakers during the 1990’s took great pleasure in extolling the virtues of their scientific

## 🕒 Authentic brands never ignore their past; instead they understand that their past is the one thing no one can copy.

winemaking and marketing approach. The problem was consumers eventually lost interest, preferring instead the seemingly more amateurish, intuitive approach of the “Old World”. Such a result is easy to explain – professionalism is the enemy of authenticity. Just as great artists are self-taught, so the likes of Apple, Ralph Lauren and Virgin celebrate the fact their respective founders cannot write code, were not trained in fashion design or business. Authenticity is derived from the passion of the amateur (who after all do things for love not money).

But, amateurism by itself is not enough. Amateur theatre productions can be great; however they can also be awful. And I’ve had the misfortune to drink many a bad wine made by people who are self-taught. Artisans on the other hand are highly skilled individuals who constantly seek to perfect their art form. When these two things are combined – the love and passion of the amateur with the skill and dedication of the artisan – authenticity arises. For example, Peter Jackson may have cut his film-making teeth on B-grade slasher movies, but his dedication to the art of film-making eventually saw him move on to create the Lord of the Rings trilogy.

Appearances can however be deceiving – Richard Branson may play up his lack of formal business training, but there is a serious amount of due diligence behind each decision to move the Virgin brand

into new categories. One thing that struck me early on in my research is how professional the business operations behind authentic brands really are. Chateau Margaux’s winemakers may play up their intuitive understanding of nature and their vineyard, but their scientific understanding of winemaking is second to none (and every square metre of the famous vineyard has been scientifically studied to ensure the best result). What differentiates this brand from all the New World wines seeking to develop iconic brands is the fact that they deliberately downplay (although do not deny) such professionalism (just as Morgan happily admit they use kanban techniques to improve quality while emphasizing the timeless skill of their craftspeople in their marketing communications).

The lesson is obvious – take great pride in your work, but be humble about your skills when talking to consumers.

### 3 Stick to your roots

During the early 1980’s Coca Cola were desperately trying to hold off the attack from Pepsi. During one key moment in the video case I use in class, the then CEO of Coca Cola identifies how everything in the company’s then 80+-year history was up for grabs. A brand’s history matters for many reasons, but a historical narrative is essential for creating authenticity. While many brand managers ditch their history when seeking to renew in the face



of competition, authentic brands seek to reinterpret their history for new times (a fact Coke learnt at the cost of several billion dollars).

Having a connection to the past is critical for achieving self-authentication – and the same process works for brands. Authentic brands remain true to their roots while building new layers of meaning through stories. No brand has perhaps benefited from returning to its roots more than Apple. The return of Steve Jobs to run the company (people forget he resigned from Apple instead of being fired) is described by several authors in biblical terms (e.g., “The Second Coming”). After a decade of trying to out-compete rivals on power and functionality, Jobs returned the brand to its founding spirit focused on fun, playfulness, creativity, and intuitive design. The results to date have been stunning. Authentic brands never ignore their past; instead they understand that their past is the one thing no one can copy.

### 4 Love the doing

Do you like your job? Seriously, do you love what you do? Or, do you try and get through the week in order to do what you really



## 🔗 If your staff love doing what they do, consumers will respond in kind.

Dual Cyclone vacuum become a reality. Likewise, the late Steve Irwin's love of Australia's wildlife was obvious to all who watched the crocodile hunter in action (Irwin literally, and tragically, died doing what he loved). Focusing on loving the doing is why authentic brands talk endlessly about their products, invest in design, and communicate a love of craft in their stories. The lesson is simple – if your staff love doing what they do, consumers will respond in kind, precisely because they themselves ultimately desire to follow their dreams.

### 5 Immerse yourself in your market

Are customers always right? In fact, most customers are notoriously right-wing – conservative, reactionary and stuck in the mud. In response to the Sony Walkman, competitors generated the Sound Burger – a ridiculous portable record-player that ruined your records and made you look stupid. Such mindlessly derivative products are the result of that killer of creativity – the focus group. In the case of the Walkman, would a focus group come up with an iPod, or generate answers from vinyl-loving consumers that they desired portability but hated cassettes? Authentic brands seem paradoxical – they famously reject any role for the voice of the customer while creating products consumers love. How? They live in their markets.

Market immersion ensures staff live in the consumers' world, observing their

struggles, practices and desires. As a result, innovative products are developed that truly reflect a deep customer understanding. Hans Beck, the late designer of Playmobil called this process “instinctive feeling”. If you examine one of Playmobil's distinctive figures (which have sold 2.2 billion copies to date) you'll notice the figures accentuate the body (rather than the legs) and contain no nose. Beck developed this from observing how children actually drew people. No formal research technique could generate this insight – children could not articulate what they wanted in a figure; rather true understanding came from spending time in their world.

The result of market immersion is obvious: firms can swear (hand on heart) that their products are derived from inspiration or feeling – a powerful marker of authenticity in an age when even so-called conviction politicians focus-group their ideas.

### 6 Contribute to something greater

No history of photography can fail to mention Oskar Barnack and Hans Leitz – the two people responsible for bringing us the first truly portable camera, the Ur-Leica. Leica's creation and development of the professional and serious amateur photography market has changed the way in which we view the 20th Century. Some of the most iconic images of our time include Korda's famous head shot of Che Guevara, Elliot Erwitt's pearl-grey smile-cum-kiss

love in the weekend? The people behind authentic brands work long hours (often for less pay) and love it. Why? They see little difference between work and play because they genuinely love the doing – Richard Branson famously noted how surprised he was when friends said he should take some time out of business to enjoy life – he was genuinely having a great time working. While many CEOs flit from one industry job to the next regardless of their actual connectedness to the focal activity of their firms, authentic brands benefit from people who truly engage with their key function. Thus, Virgin managers are required to regularly work check-in counters to stay in touch with customers. Ralph Lauren still walks the floors of retail stores to ensure his clothes are presented correctly. And, unlike other CEOs, Steve Jobs and Charles Morgan remain heavily involved in product design and motor racing respectively.

James Dyson is the perfect embodiment of this spirit. While other vacuum producers rejected his invention, Dyson invested everything he had (and more) to see the

## In an age of mass production, putting a real face and story to your product provides a human connection to the brand.

reflected in the wing mirror of a car, and Eisenstadt's famous Life Magazine shot of a sailor kissing a nurse in Times Square on VJ Day. Put simply, authentic brands play a part in social history.

The forces of globalization and the difficulties consumers face in telling reality from image often make it hard to connect to a shared sense of humanity. Brands such as Leica, Chuck Taylor, and Zippo have all become greater than their products by contributing to something greater (photography, sport and soldiering). My students are currently working on re-launching a brand called C.W. Dixey (currently owned by Bath alumnus Simon Palmer), a specialist in fine optical wear. C.W. Dixey was founded in 1777 and has provided glasses (and other optical items) to royalty, politicians (Sir Winston Churchill), actors (Peter Sellers), and artists (Ian Fleming) among others. As well, the various owners of the brand have played a role in the development of personal eyewear, including a leading role in the development of the contact lens. As such, the brand has been part of history in the making, and retains a powerful aura of authenticity.

### 7 Encourage cult-like devotion in staff

Watching Gordon Ramsay deal with his staff is quite a sight, especially when one operates in such a politically correct environment as a university. Ramsay bullies his staff in a way that not even the most hardened army sergeant would dream of

(outside of Hollywood anyway). Yet, Ramsay's empire would not survive for long without a devoted group of skilled artisans. What people may not know is that Ramsay has retained over 80 per cent of his staff in the past 10 years. Critically, he gets rid of the poor ones early, and then pushes the most talented to do their best work. Steve Jobs has a similar approach at Apple, often pushing his engineers and designers hard in their pursuit of the perfect product.

Behind every great brand lie great employees. Authentic brands go further than most by drawing a connection between the brand and real, everyday people. Authenticity arises because these brands sit in direct contrast to others that are produced by an outsourced, offshore, anonymous workforce. Islay-based whiskey producer Bruichladdich celebrates its staff in various product releases, including the PC range of up-market single malts. Australian wine producer Yalumba celebrate their staff every year in an equally public way – launching a product called “The Signature” which features the signature and story of the staff member voted by the workforce as having contributed the most to the firm over the years (more often than not these employees come from the factory floor).

The lesson here is simple – in an age of mass production, putting a real face and story to your product provides a human connection to the brand.

### Conclusion

The key lesson from this article is that while your consumers ultimately give authenticity to you, brand managers also play a central part in creating authenticity. To do so, they must rethink many of their learned practices and habits, including the belief they know best, they are in control of the brand's story, and staying on message is central to brand success. Instead, authenticity comes from being open to the new, focusing on substance and style, solving accepted trade-offs and immersing yourself in your consumers' world. Consumers use brands to find meaning in their lives – are you prepared and willing to keep it real?

Prof Beverland's research explores the nexus between consumption and production with a particular emphasis on the management of brands, design of innovations and how consumers find meaning through consumption or anti-consumption acts. His focus is on deriving practical models and tools for managers to build brand value and excite consumers through the use of qualitative research methods. Further information about enhancing your brand's authenticity can be found in his book: *Building Brand Authenticity: 7 Habits of Iconic Brands* via [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)

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# Louise Herring, The Wine Society

BSc International Management with Modern Languages (IMML) French 1998-2002

**👉 As Campaigns Manager at The Wine Society, Louise Herring has come a long way from surgical drapes and gowns.**

## Opportunity knocks

One of the biggest lessons Louise learned from her undergraduate degree at Bath was that networking, being positive, open-minded and taking opportunities are key to a successful career. Louise had aspirations of working in the luxury goods industry but had never considered that marketing medical devices to the NHS and private health sector would help propel her into a career in fine wine.

With the help of our BSc IMML Year Abroad Manager, Sandra Griffiths, and the strong experience of a previous IMML student, Louise secured a placement as Assistant Product Manager for the surgical drapes and gowns section at Johnson & Johnson just outside Paris. As fate would have it Mölnlycke Health Care, from her native country of Sweden, acquired this section of the company in June 2001 and Louise wrote her dissertation on the acquisition. On graduating in 2002 she was offered a number of positions from blue-chip companies, but with her experience at Johnson & Johnson, her contacts at the new company developed during her dissertation, as well as her language skills (Swedish/English/French), she fitted so well with Mölnlycke that they created a graduate training programme for her. The opportunity was too good to turn down and she joined the new team.

## The Wine Society

After gaining a good grounding in business-to-business marketing, sales and project management at Mölnlycke, Louise decided it was time to move into business-to-consumer marketing. Her career versatility was called into play when she transferred her marketing skills to The Wine Society ([www.thewinesociety.com](http://www.thewinesociety.com)), the world's oldest wine club. The complexity of targeting different end-users in the healthcare business from surgeons to Finance Managers was markedly different from targeting the end-user of the product directly in the wine trade. The change in lead times, seeing reviews of the product posted immediately on the website by consumers was, Louise says, refreshing in being so instant.

Undaunted by the prospect of working with wine aficionados, Louise says: "I have learned since joining The Society that the more you get involved in wine, the more you understand the less you know! It was a steep learning curve for me during the first six months at The Wine Society, but it was a great experience. All Wine Society staff participate in the Wine and Spirits Education Trust's Intermediate and Advanced Level courses. We learn about viticulture, vinification, different grape varieties, what works in different parts of the world and why, and we take wine-tasting exams.

With every vintage being different there is something new to learn each year and that's a really enriching part of the job for me."

## Ethics and integrity

Established in 1874, The Wine Society was set up as a non-profit maximising co-operative, owned and run for the benefit of its members, not with the intention of making profits but aiming to introduce members to the best of the world's vineyards at a fair price. The greatest challenge Louise has to tackle at The Wine Society is making sure that mutuality and what it means comes through in a relevant way. Being a mutual means The Society does not have shareholders' profits to worry about; this absence of the drive for profits above all else makes a difference. Louise says that 'integrity' is a key word in The Society, and it is something she prizes highly about the organization.

She encountered a tangible manifestation of The Society's integrity on her first day at work during an operations meeting: "the wine buyer had discovered that one of our fine white Burgundies was suffering premature oxidation (ageing faster than expected) and it was agreed that we would write to members and offer either their money back at current market prices, or an equal or better wine in place of the Burgundy. This unequivocal stance showed

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## “ The key with management disciplines like marketing is that your skills are highly transferable. ”

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me clearly that The Wine Society lives by its core value of integrity.”

The ethical sourcing policy of The Wine Society is also something Louise prizes highly. The Society aims for long-term relationships with producers and it deals fairly with suppliers. Louise says: “There is no other agenda for the members other than providing the best, high quality, interesting and value-for-money wines from around the world at all price levels with no bias to particular producers for favourable margins. Our six wine buyers spend a considerable part of the year travelling to their regions going to vineyards, tasting wines, making new contacts, looking at new developments and investments made by the growers, and strengthening existing relationships in order to find the best possible wines for members. Importantly, the buyers work with some of the world’s best wine makers to blend The Society and Exhibition ranges of wines and other bottlings exclusive to The Society. Unlike some retailers, The Society will not sell a wine that has not been tasted and approved by our buying team. One example is the House of Alfred Gratien, makers of The Society’s Champagne, which has supplied The Society with superb sparkling wines since 1906. We draw our members into this relationship via wine tastings where members can meet the growers and wine makers face-to-face, via online videos of

our wine makers, helping to bring their personalities to life through our website, via our Society Grapevine blog, newsletters and, most importantly, our direct mail offers.”

### Strong relations

“Our strong relations with our wine growers and buyers allow both sides to be frank about any issues that arise, and work together for the good of The Society’s member as well as for the growers, their families and workers. For example, we saw a huge response from our members at the time of the Chilean earthquake earlier this year who wrote asking how they could help to support the growers who had been affected. Chile is our second biggest selling country and The Wine Society has been voted ‘Best Specialist Merchant for Chile’ by the International Wine Challenge for the last three years so we have strong links there. Our suppliers told us that the best way for members to support them was to keep buying Chilean wine; they did not want a charity campaign but they greatly valued the support that our members continue to give them in buying wines from their vineyards. The nature of a membership organization is that it is very personal and there is genuine care for those involved in it. Fortunately none of our producers lost their lives in the disaster but many have lost a proportion of their wine stocks. This may have an impact on the next harvest but it is as yet unclear

what the impact on the vintage will be. They are trying to rebuild their export industry as fast as possible and we are supporting them as much as we can.”

### An enjoyable business

The Wine Society’s guarantee is that their wine should be enjoyable. Louise says: “Quality is key, we have two ‘Masters of Wine’ (MWs) and a third working towards it in the buying team; they are very modest but extremely knowledgeable people. The expertise our wine buyers have is incredible: Sebastian Payne MW is our Chief Wine Buyer and he has 37 years’ experience. He and his team know when they think a wine is good and they are not swayed by the hype that can overwhelm a vintage. For example, with the current Bordeaux 2009 vintage, they will only buy wines to offer ‘en primeur’ (i.e. sales of wines which are still maturing in cask, lying in cellars in the their country of origin, which only usually delivered two years after sale) if they believe the wines will be good and represent good value for money and, with their expertise, they are seldom wrong.”

With such expertise and clarity of focus on quality, not company profits, it might seem an obvious area for those interested in using wine as an investment to put their money. Louise comments: “Wine can be a good investment but at The Wine Society it is our

policy to focus on offering advice and wines for drinking pleasure not investment. To this end we offer several fine wine services including The Society's Vintage Cellar Plan through which we enable people to lay wines down for future enjoyment. Our buyers choose wines that will build up an excellent cellar for short, medium or long-term drinking. We also offer temperature-controlled Members' Reserves cellars to store members wines in the best possible conditions. I had the fortune to project-manage the rebranding and relaunch of the Vintage Cellar Plan. We did extensive qualitative and quantitative research amongst our members to find out what they wanted from a fine wine monthly payment scheme, and the feedback was that they wanted a simple and affordable plan that could be tailored to members particular taste and where they could benefit from the extensive knowledge and expertise of The Society's buyers. The whole plan was repositioned to fit the members' wishes for the style and type of wine, and price. We also rebranded the scheme, changing the look and feel of promotional material and making the new features and benefits clear. As a result we have seen a 300% increase in its subscriptions rate."

"Another new service which aims to provide long-term drinking pleasure for members is The Wine Society's Wedding & Gift List

service. As I am planning my own wedding, I was delighted to be part of the project team that developed the concept and to be responsible for devising the marketing and communications plan for the service. My fiancé, fellow Bath Alumnus Michael Wisson (MEng Civil & Architectural Engineering 1998-2003), and I are so taken with it that we have put our own wedding list there!"

#### Benefits of the degree

"Studying at Bath was a fantastic experience and the degree has helped a lot in my career. What I learned about the basic theories of consumers really helped when I made the transition from business-to-business to business-to-consumer marketing. I use my French a lot with the winemakers; being able to speak in their language certainly helps to open doors. I found that my placement allowed me to use the skills I was learning about in a real environment and the experience definitely helped kick-start my future career. The international marketing experience was particularly useful - finding out about different cultures and about the subtleties of communications with different people has been invaluable."

"I chose the course at Bath because I was looking for a business studies course that focused on marketing and I wanted to use my French and English and have a placement; the International Management

with Modern Languages course at Bath provided all of this and more. I would certainly recommend it to others."

#### Advice for other students

"My advice to other students is that networking and building good relationships is key; you have to find out what opportunities are out there and you need to broaden your network to achieve this. Also, when you leave university be open-minded about opportunities that present themselves, you never know how different experiences will help your career. The key with management disciplines like marketing is that your skills are highly transferable. In my case it was thanks to my experience at Mönlycke that I got the job at The Wine Society."



# Universities and the Global Knowledge Race

Dr Rajani Naidoo

**Higher education has become a crucial resource for the production and transfer of economically productive knowledge. Dr Naidoo's multi-national studies highlight how the benefits of global competition could be maximised whilst avoiding some of the accompanying dangers.**

## The global knowledge race

The ability of nation states to compete successfully in the international context increasingly relies on a global knowledge race. This is a contest in which countries compete in the production of value-added products and services which are mainly dependent on scientific and technological knowledge, and on innovation. In this context, higher education has become a crucial resource for the production and transfer of economically productive knowledge.

## National competitive strategies

Government policy advisors have argued that university research should contribute in a direct manner to national competitive strategies. Universities are also expected to lead the way to a high skills society by equipping a greater proportion of the population with the intellectual, technological and managerial skills to meet the needs of dynamic labour markets. In addition, the view that investment in higher education in emerging economies would bring limited returns, spearheaded by powerful international organizations such as the World Bank, has been overturned. Higher education is now seen as an essential requisite for low income countries to leapfrog developmental stages and escape their peripheral status in the global economy.

These factors have contributed to major transformations in national higher education systems. Social equity concerns as well as the link between human capital and economic productivity have led to the exponential expansion of higher education as countries benchmark themselves against competitor nations.

## The rise of emerging economies

Developed economies like the United States of America, Canada, Japan and countries in Western Europe which achieved participation rates of over 50% have been caught up or indeed overtaken by countries like South Korea. In addition, higher education expansion is extending beyond the rapidly growing economies of Brazil and Russia to emerging economies such as Lithuania and Hungary, and resource-rich Middle Eastern countries like Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates<sup>1</sup>. The entry of emerging powers such as India

and China has intensified this competition<sup>2</sup>. In the 1980s the Chinese government launched a major expansion to build the largest higher education system in the world. Figures from 2006 show that in one decade China tripled its share of gross domestic product spent on higher education, that the number of institutions more than doubled and the number of students enrolled in higher education increased five times<sup>3</sup>. The Indian government has also planned to expand its national system of higher education by 2012 to include 30 new comprehensive universities and 40 new institutes specialising in Science, Technology, Management and Information Technology.

## Global interaction

A further consequence of the race for knowledge has been the exponential increase of interactions between universities in different world regions. Strategic partnerships have developed between Western universities and those in China, India, Malaysia, Singapore, Latin America and Africa. The rationales for these partnerships have included knowledge exchange, capacity building and revenue generation. There has also been the desire to deploy higher education for regional and global influence, and as an instrument to fashion a preferred geo-political world order. Mutual self-interest is also evident. Universities from the USA and the UK for example are attracted by the large numbers of revenue-generating students in rapidly growing economies such as China, while the Chinese government is keen to leverage university partnerships for knowledge transfer in order to build indigenous research and teaching capacity. At the same time competition amongst universities in different nation states has intensified including the search for 'world-class university' status. This has been

<sup>1</sup> See Brown, P., Lauder, H. and Ashton, D. (2010) *The Global Auction: The Broken Promises of Education, Jobs, and Incomes*. Oxford University Press

<sup>2</sup> Wildavsky, B. (2010) *The Great Brain Race: How Global Universities Are Reshaping the World*. Princeton University Press

<sup>3</sup> Zhong, Y. Globalization and Higher Education Reform in China <http://www.aare.edu.au/05pap/zho05780.pdf>.

## 📌 These developments have led to a rapidly changing landscape of national and global higher education and one which poses many benefits for world societies.

accompanied by a race for prestige through competition in global university rankings. While prestigious American and British universities top such rankings, China is also taking great strides forward. The Chinese government has implemented major initiatives to support 100 key universities to become world-class. In addition, the government is dispersing further funding of U.S.\$225 million each to Beijing and Tsinghua universities to support them in achieving world-class status by 2015 and 2011 respectively<sup>4</sup>.

### The competitive edge

Governments have also attempted to harness public universities more directly to national economic strategy by changing the ways in which universities are managed and funded. Government funding as well as academic self-steering is diminishing worldwide. Instead, universities are increasingly required to raise their own revenue and are steered by a combination of government instruments including audits and mechanisms of performance management. Many countries have also introduced quasi market competition and have developed new legislation which encourages the entry of private, foreign and for-profit providers of higher education. The re-conceptualisation of students as ‘consumers’ of higher education and the development of mechanisms of choice, complaints and redress are expected to drive up the quality of teaching and put pressure on academics to develop curricula that are of direct relevance to employment.

### Knowledge transfer

The funding and assessment of research has also changed in an attempt to shift universities from basic ‘blue skies’ exploration to ‘mode 2’ research which is applied and evaluated primarily through its real world application. Universities are expected to engage in research for commercial product development, to transfer knowledge from the university to the commercial sector and to intertwine more closely with large corporations. In addition, universities compete across borders by attracting students from other countries and selling higher education courses abroad in order to generate revenue for the institution and trade surpluses for the country. The particular combination of these various steering

measures differs across countries. In the UK, higher education is steered by a combination of bureaucratic and market mechanisms<sup>5</sup>. In China, a major ideological shift within the Communist Party has occurred and market elements such as student fees and competition between universities have been introduced. However, the state’s role has not diminished. Instead, the state deploys market mechanisms to fulfil its political agenda and to meet state goals. Indeed, the Communist Party Secretary serves as Chair of the University Council which is responsible for appointing senior university managers such as Deans and Vice Presidents<sup>6</sup>.

### International collaboration

These developments have led to a rapidly changing landscape of national and global higher education and one which poses many benefits for world societies. The major problems facing the world today such as rising levels of poverty, the financial crisis, environmental degradation on a planetary scale and an escalation of conflict around ethnic, political and religious differences can only be solved by countries and universities working together across national, cultural and ideological boundaries. The increased international interactions amongst universities and the movement

<sup>4</sup> Choi, S. (2010) Globalization, China’s drive for world-class universities (211 Project) and the challenges of ethnic minority higher education: the case of Yanbian university *Asia Pacific Education Review* 11 pp 169–178

<sup>5</sup> Naidoo, R. (2008) The Competitive State and the Mobilised Market : Higher Education Policy Reform in the United Kingdom (1980-2007) *Critique Internationale*. Presses de Sciences Po. pp 47-65

<sup>6</sup> Mok, K-H. (2003) Similar Trends, Diverse Agendas: higher education reforms in East Asia. *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 1 (2) pp 201-221

<sup>7</sup> The Changing Academic Profession project is a successor to the well-known Carnegie study carried out in the early 1990s. Its aim is to examine the changes being experienced by academics in 18 countries in the context of globalisation and to consider differences and similarities between countries, types of higher education institutions and disciplines and to explore the consequences for knowledge societies.

<sup>8</sup> Power, M. (1999) *The Audit Society: Rituals of Verification*. Oxford University Press

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**🕒 Students who take on a consumer mentality become passive consumers of education who take little responsibility for their own learning and believe that they are entitled to high grades.**

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of faculty and students across different regions of the world have the potential for increased sharing of intellectual and cultural heritages. The entry of foreign and private universities has also helped to alleviate pressures for access in some countries where there is limited domestic capacity and little government resource to meet growing demand. New accountability measures and competition have also challenged those who work within higher education to reassess the core functions of teaching and research in relation to quality, efficiency and the changing roles of the university in society.

#### Potential dangers

However present conditions also carry many dangers. The tight coupling of higher education to the economic requirements of the knowledge economy eclipses other important social, political and cultural functions of higher education such as the development of citizenship and the university's role in calling 'truth to power'. The focus on Science and Technology marginalises other important disciplines in the Social Sciences and Humanities which contribute to different dimensions of knowledge societies. The harnessing of the curriculum in a direct manner to employability skills may lead to students developing narrow instrumental attitudes to learning rather than widening their horizons and enabling them to become critical, innovative and independent learners. In addition, audit and performance management may have unintended and negative consequences.

The findings of an 18-country research project that I am involved in on the organizational implications of globalisation on the academic profession has indicated that the UK has amongst the highest levels of performance management in higher education and that the levels of dissatisfaction amongst UK academics are higher than in any of the other countries studied<sup>7</sup>. More specifically, there may be adverse effects on core higher education activities. The auditing of teaching for example may lead to what Michael Power has called a movement away from 'first order' functions such as developing innovative courses and pedagogical strategies to 'second order' functions such as simply documenting and accounting for teaching<sup>8</sup>. Research also indicates that high quality learning requires risk-

taking on the part of both teacher and student which in turn requires trust. My own research warns that the micro-auditing of teaching and the threat of student complaints encourages faculty to opt for 'safe teaching' where pre-ordained, easily digestible content can be passed on to students<sup>9</sup>. In addition, students who take on a consumer mentality become passive recipients of education who take little responsibility for their own learning and believe that they are entitled to high grades. Moreover, performance indicators and league tables, which have become part of the higher education landscape to give students information and choice, may also invoke a particular pathology since they function as powerful market currencies. Rather than investing in achieving missions, universities invest valuable resources in attempting to move up rankings.

In relation to research, there is a danger that the current focus on relevance and impact which values the short-term benefits of research may drive down intellectual creativity. Research on the consequences of the Research Assessment Exercise in the UK found many benefits including the concentration of resources in stronger units and the adoption of clearer research strategies by universities. However, the 'publish or perish' culture has also led to a reduction in collegiality, a dysfunctional separation between research and teaching, and constraints on researchers moving into novel areas and developing new interdisciplinary fields<sup>10</sup>. In this way, one of the most important attributes for driving innovation in society may be eroded.

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<sup>9</sup> Naidoo, R. and Jamieson, I. M. 2005. Empowering participants or corroding learning?: Towards a research agenda on the impact of student consumerism in higher education. *Journal of Education Policy*, 20 (3): 267-281

<sup>10</sup> Martin, B.R. and Whitley, R. (2009) The UK Research Assessment Exercise: a Case of Regulatory Capture? Paper presented at a workshop on 'Reconfiguring the Public Sciences', held at the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities, February 18-20, 2009

<sup>11</sup> Levin, R. The Rise of Asia's Universities. Seventh Annual Higher Education Policy Institute Lecture by Professor Richard Levin, President, Yale University on 1 February 2010

🕒 It is therefore vital to identify and develop leaders who have a passion for higher education, who develop an understanding of the roles, functions and cultures in higher education, who can cross the borders between the administrative core and the academic heartland within universities, and who can act as intermediaries between the internal world of higher education and the world outside.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to present some thoughts on how we might maximise the benefits of global competition while avoiding some of the dangers.

**First**, governments need to resist the temptation to overload individual universities with multiple and often conflicting demands ranging from productivity in research to knowledge transfer to industry to empowering disadvantaged communities. Instead, higher education systems that encompass truly diverse sets of institutions with different missions should be actively encouraged so that the higher education system as a whole can operate to meet various needs. Alongside this, funding streams and accountability measures to discourage mission drift and provide adequate support for the full range of institutions should be instituted.

**Second**, policy to shape competitive and collaborative relationships between domestic, foreign, public and private sectors should be implemented in order to build capacity. In addition, the assumption that publicly funded institutions by their very nature are likely to contribute to the public good is misplaced. It is therefore important to determine which functions of higher education require public investment and which functions of higher education can be opened up to market forces.

**Third**, governments should be wary of over-managing teaching and research. Light-touch quality assurance mechanisms which give faculty the space to be innovative at the same time as protecting the rights of students are urgently required. The 1945 report produced in the USA entitled *Science: The Endless Frontier*, by Vannevar Bush, the Science Adviser to President Truman, is often cited by university leaders as being highly relevant today in outlining the fundamental principles for creating a strong research system<sup>11</sup>. The report notes that the economic gains from advances in basic science often do not accrue for decades and often yield results in

applications that were entirely unanticipated at the time of the scientific breakthrough. Private enterprises will therefore in general have insufficient incentive to make many socially productive investments. In this context, universities and research institutions, rather than firms, become the driving forces of scientific advances. Thus, the report argues, governments should bear primary responsibility for funding basic science. In addition, universities – rather than government-run laboratories or private industry – should be responsible for carrying out government-funded basic research so that postgraduate scientists-in-training can be exposed to the most cutting-edge techniques and areas of research. In relation to research assessment, the report argues that although the government should determine the total amount of funding, specific projects should not be assessed on political or commercial grounds, but through a process of peer review. According to university leaders, this results in the protection of the creative aspects of the research process, which is often a serendipitous one in which the outcomes are not easily identifiable at the start of the process. Importantly, in this way, socially productive, and in the longer term, economically productive research, can be sustained and nurtured.

**Fourth**, the changing conditions and the wide range of diverse and pressing expectations from all sectors of society require leaders and leadership skills that are more specialised and of a higher order than in previous eras. The sector, however, appears to veer between appointing academics who are untrained and often ambiguous about leadership roles and importing private sector managers with little knowledge of higher education who attempt to transform institutions by the direct application of commercial principles. Both these trends, potentially, have highly deleterious effects on higher education institutions and on the sector as a whole. It is therefore vital to identify and develop leaders who have a passion for higher education, who develop an understanding of the roles, functions and cultures in higher education, who can cross the borders between the administrative core and the academic heartland within universities, and who can act as intermediaries between the internal world of higher education and the world outside.

**Fifth**, while the interaction of universities across borders could lead to international knowledge transfer of the best that each global region has to offer, there is also the fear that the dominance exerted by Western universities inordinately shapes developments elsewhere. There are concerns, for example, that China's vision of world-class universities is largely imitative of Western and American models thus dampening the potential for more creative cosmopolitan engagement. While transnational education has an important role to play in exposing students to international knowledge, there is also the concern that the dominance of the English language and Western culture may erode indigenous languages and important aspects of history and culture. At the same time, however, it is important to note that cultures are never static and the local and the global is increasingly intertwined. Global forces may also provide new opportunities to revolt against hierarchical and outmoded relations and create new hybrid cultures and values for an increasingly interconnected world. A fundamental role for the university of the 21st century is therefore to open up spaces for communication so that individuals and groups within and across countries can engage in free, open and critical debate on the important issues facing world societies.

**Finally**, insights and evidence relating to how best to steer universities by state and market mechanisms and how to manage universities in this rapidly changing context have become pressing. However, there is relatively little research or executive development related to higher education in business and management schools worldwide. It is difficult to understand the reasons for this apart from the suspicion that researchers find it sacrilegious to turn the microscope around to investigate their own professional worlds. The School of Management at the University of Bath, however, has broken this barrier by developing the first Doctor of Business Administration in Higher Education Management. This programme was launched in 2002 as a direct response to the critical developments taking place in higher education that have been mentioned above. The degree combines research excellence with advanced managerial practice and offers research expertise from

across the School of Management as well as opportunities for peer learning. It has been highly successful in recruiting over a 100 senior university managers from all over the world including the USA, Canada, Europe, Latin America, Australia, Africa and the Middle East. Since the participants are senior managers in universities or in government ministries, the research that they have conducted has already helped shape policy and management practices in higher education worldwide. Clearly, research into the governance and management of universities and the training of leaders for higher education offers management schools an important opportunity to contribute to one of the most wide-ranging and important institutions in society.

Dr Rajani Naidoo is Director of the Doctor of Business Administration in Higher Education Management programme. She has held a range of faculty and management positions in the UK and South Africa including the rôle of academic co-ordinator in an institution which aimed to act as a model for the transformation of higher education in apartheid South Africa. She is involved in the multi-national project on the Changing Academic Profession and has been commissioned to produce research and evaluation for bodies such as the Higher Education Policy Institute and the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency. Dr Naidoo has also been involved in executive development programmes for senior university managers. She has published on various aspects of higher education and is on the Executive Editorial Board of the *British Journal of Sociology of Education and Studies in Higher Education*. She has been past Secretary of the Society for Research in Higher Education and sits on the Research and Development Committee of the European Foundation for Management Development.

## Tim Gore

DBA Higher Education Management, current student

**Tim Gore is the founding Director of the Centre for Indian Business, the University of Greenwich. His role is to engage the University of Greenwich's intellectual capital with India and to create sustainable and mutually beneficial partnerships.**

Tim has worked closely with educationalists, institutions, companies and governments to improve bilateral and multilateral educational links in Hong Kong, Singapore, United Arab Emirates, Jordan and India over a 23-year career. He has led the development of programmes on creativity for professionals with the Singapore Government (CREST); established e-learning and blended learning programmes for Hong Kong, Singapore and Dubai; led the establishment of the British University in Dubai; and helped Jordan establish an evaluation framework for its ICT-led Jordan Education Initiative. His most recent role was Director, Education at the British Council in India where he was responsible for developing the knowledge partnership between India and the UK. In addition, Tim led the establishment of the UK India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI) which has £26 million funding from the UK and Indian governments and sponsors over a 5-year period and has already established over 200 educational partnerships.

Tim is pursuing a DBAHEM at the University of Bath. His research concerns the positioning of universities as knowledge producers in a globalising world. Tim also holds two master's: as an applied linguist and in business administration. He was awarded an OBE for services to education in June 2008. In September he is moving to a new rôle at the University of London External Programme as Director, Global Partnerships and Communities.

### What sparked your interest in working in education?

I had graduated from Bradford University in Archaeological Sciences but wasn't sure what career I wanted to follow. I found out about a volunteer programme for graduates in Sudan. I signed up and spent two fascinating years in north and south Sudan as a volunteer teacher. I used my background in science, and taught maths and physics as well as English literature and even practical health! The experience of working as a teacher amongst the Sudanese sparked my love of education.

### Why did you choose to go overseas to work?

My experience in Sudan was very important – I realised that the world was large and very diverse and this made me curious to live in new environments. I had also always been interested in history and archaeology which gave me a perspective on the world at large. While I was young my father gave me some old books on the great Victorian explorers which also opened up fascinating glimpses of other cultures and environments. I met my wife, Isabelle, just after my experience in Sudan and we shared an excitement about travelling – we set off together for Egypt in the early eighties and spent the next 23 years overseas.

### Why did you choose to pursue the DBA HEM at Bath?

I did a lot of research on doctoral programmes that would suit my fairly



varied background. Bath stood out as a programme which combined the intellectual depth of a doctorate with a professional focus on higher education – I liked the way the programme was structured so that you get an overview of the sector at a more analytical level before homing in on areas of interest. It gives a lot of scope for creativity and exploratory research.

### Your service to education has been recognised by the conferment of the OBE in 2008 – what specifically led to this award being conferred on you?

My work with the UK India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI) was an important part of this. I was the British Council's Country Director in Jordan and moved to India as Director, Education just as this programme was starting to be conceptualised. Within the first couple of weeks I had to organise an exploratory visit for the then Higher Education Minister Bill Rammell to look at how the programme was to be designed and implemented. I was responsible for developing and leading the British Council's involvement in UKIERI and we took on the delivery of the programme and management of the resources. It was a

complex project involving 13 funding stakeholders in UK and India from the private sector as well as the two governments, and totalled an investment of £26 million. The timescales were very tight and as everything about the project was new we needed to create and implement systems for dealing with the finances, legal aspects, evaluations and implementation as we went along. The project has been credited with reviving the UK-India educational relationship at a time when it was widely criticized for being based solely on attracting Indian students to UK universities. The mantra of mutuality was a very important part of establishing a new basis for our partnership.

#### **How has the Centre for Indian Business succeeded in creating links between academics and industrial partners?**

As an example, we have just run a very successful conference on Doing Business in India at Greenwich. The conference involved around a hundred delegates from about 60 organizations – about half the participants were from academic institutions and the other half were from industry. The feedback has been extremely positive and quite a number of conversations about collaboration of different types has emerged. One example is a Mumbai-based organization that wants to work with us using graduate students to develop an incubation project, where innovative ideas developed in India are evaluated for the UK and European market with the aim of commercialising a number of new technologies and services.

#### **Are UK universities adequately positioning themselves as knowledge producers in a globalising world?**

The short answer is no! We are not and I don't see many examples of where universities are getting it right. Perhaps the best UK example is Imperial College which

is one of the few to have an international strategy based on knowledge production. Knowledge production is a highly specialised activity which is still geographically focused on a few locations mainly in East and West Coast USA, Europe and East Asia despite a 'flattening' world. Universities have enormous strength as institutions and tend to far outlast commercial entities in terms of length of survival. However, they are also very complex institutions that have great difficulty being flexible and responsive to opportunity. Many universities try to attract knowledge creation to themselves in the form of science and innovation parks – indeed having universities within knowledge-creating zones is essential – however they are much weaker at outreach and have great difficulty in being strategic about the role they can play in dispersed knowledge creation. Most cutting-edge knowledge creation involves a loose network of experts based in the US, Europe and a few other centres of excellence. The emergence of China and India's research expertise is changing this dynamic. Are our universities ensuring they play their role in these networks? I think this is still more by accident than design and universities risk being outmanoeuvred by private knowledge producers.

#### **Is the exportation of British education a success story? Is there a perception of it being an anachronism from our imperialist days?**

Some UK universities see the importance of being international – the University of Nottingham for example. They truly integrate internationalisation into everything they do. There is no sense in which these institutions can be considered anachronistic. In many ways, universities have always transcended national boundaries, and the complex

interaction of a number of objectives as well as the range of stakeholders involved mitigate against any single-minded goal such as revenue generation. Universities tend to have a long history and intend to have a long future so take to heart their reputation at home and abroad. UK universities are increasingly internationally staffed and tend to have great understanding of international issues. At the University of Greenwich we work with Malaviya National Institute of Technology in Jaipur, India. This institution has a very strong reputation in India and is very strong in technical education. We see this relationship as a partnership of equals where we have as much to learn as to give.

#### **Is education just a pawn in political attempts at forging cultural diplomacy?**

There is no direct political control of universities in the UK, unlike many other countries, and so it would be difficult to make a case for them being pawns of the state in any such endeavour. However, even if this was the case, cultural diplomacy is preferable by far to a more confrontational approach to solving international issues. Universities are crucially important in international understanding. My own university is extremely diverse with over 4,000 non-EU students, a very large number of EU students and a very diverse British population. Whenever I walk out of my office I am surrounded by different languages and ways of dressing and being. In the class, I can always rely on getting the examples or viewpoints of cultures from around the world. This is a tremendously enriching experience.

#### **Is there a universal standard in education that can/should be attained?**

Yes – it should instill a sense of wonder, respect and curiosity! Other than that I don't think so!

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