

The Business School in the Twenty-First Century

Questions about the status, identity and legitimacy of business schools in the modern university system continue to stimulate debate among deans, educational policy makers and commentators. In this book, three world experts share their critical insights on management education and new business school models in the US, Europe and Asia, on designing the business school of the future, and how to make it work. They look at how the business school is changing and focus in particular on emergent global challenges and innovations in curricula, professional roles, pedagogy, uses of technology and organisational delineations. Set within the context of a wider discussion about management as a profession, the authors provide a systematic, historical perspective, analysing major trends in business school models, and reviewing a wealth of current literature, to provide an informed and unique perspective that is firmly grounded in practical and experimental analysis.

HOWARD THOMAS is Dean and LKCSB Chair in Strategic Management at the Lee Kong Chian School of Business, Singapore Management University. He was Dean of Warwick Business School (2000–10) and, prior to this, he was Dean of the College of Commerce and Business Administration at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (1991–2000).

PETER LORANGE is President of the Lorange Institute of Business, Zurich, and is one of the world's foremost business school academics. He is Professor of Strategy at IMD, Switzerland, and was the President of IMD (1993–2008). Prior to this, he was President of the Norwegian Business School (BI) in Oslo.

JAGDISH SHETH is the Charles H. Kellstadt Chair of Marketing in the Goizueta Business School at Emory University, Atlanta, where he won the school's Global Innovation Award in June 2008. Professor Sheth is an internationally recognised business consultant and has been an educator for more than forty years.

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Emergent Challenges and New Business Models

HOWARD THOMAS

PETER LORANGE

JAGDISH SHETH



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-01380-3 — The Business School in the Twenty-First Century
Howard Thomas , Peter Lorange , Jagdish Sheth
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York
Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107013803

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First published 2013

Printed in the United Kingdom by CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon CR0 4YY

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Thomas, Howard.

The business school in the twenty-first century : emergent challenges and new business models / Howard Thomas, Peter Lorange, Jagdish Sheth.

pages cm

Includes index.

ISBN 978-1-107-01380-3 (Hardback)

1. Business schools. 2. Business education. 3. Management—Study and teaching. I. Lorange, Peter II. Sheth, Jagdish N. III. Title.

HF1111.L668 2013

650.071'1—dc23 2013013775

ISBN 978-1-107-01380-3 Hardback

Additional resources for this publication at www.cambridge.org/9781107013803

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Preface: Tipping or tripping? The business school and its dilemmas

Even the most cursory perusal of this book will reveal that it deals with an industry that, if not actually in crisis, is certainly suffering from a bad case of existential angst. The industry in question is the education of managers and the subjects are business schools, the main purveyors of management education.

As this book attempts to explain, business schools are in the line of fire of many critics and stakeholders for many reasons. It is an odd position for them to be in. Business schools are in the main fairly august institutions that can trace their origins back a long way (many celebrated their centenary just a few years ago, though with remarkably little external fanfare).

So what are they allegedly doing so wrong? Well, according to their critics, just about everything.

For example, they are said to be far too driven (for an academic institution) by the need and the desire to make a profit. They are accused of pursuing a spurious academic rigour that leads to esoteric research that has little relevance to the real practice of management. Indeed, it is argued that attending a business school programme never actually made anyone a better manager. Some maintain that management is an art and not a science and is not even a profession since it has no widely accepted body of knowledge that has to be mastered, unlike in 'real' professions such as accounting, medicine and law.

That such criticism comes after what has been a Golden Age of some four decades for business schools is surprising. In the latter part of the last century business schools enjoyed enormous financial and reputational success. It disappeared in the crashes of the early twenty-first century. First there was the dot.com boom and bust (which was never the fault of business schools and in which they suffered

considerably from potential students ditching MBA programmes in favour of crazily excessive entrepreneurial start-ups) and then the financial disaster of 2007–8, in which, some argue, business schools were more directly involved through advocating market populism rather than stakeholder capitalism.

So it may not be too much to say that management education and business schools are both at a tipping point. More seriously, they may also be at a *tripping* point, either about to stumble ungraciously to the floor and possibly knock themselves out or ready to collect their wits, pick up their feet and recover their poise. This book catches them, so to speak, in mid-air. Can they reinvent themselves and regain a new sense of identity and legitimacy among their key stakeholders? (What the outcome will be must remain to be seen.)

Acknowledgements

This book would not have come about without the background of the long friendship between the three authors who have known and trusted each other for several decades.

Peter's career in management education has covered such schools as Sloan (MIT), Wharton, Norwegian Business School (BI) (Dean), IMD, Switzerland (President), and the Lorange Institute of Business (President), whereas Jagdish's illustrious research career in consumer behavior and competitive strategy has embraced schools such as Columbia, MIT, Illinois, the University of Southern California and Emory University. Both of them have huge experience of management education. Howard's career has also involved experience in management education, gained in three continents (North America, Europe and Asia). He has been a distinguished strategic management scholar in such schools as London Business School, MIT, University of British Columbia, Northwestern, HEC Montreal and Warwick Business School. He has also held three deanships, at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (US), at Warwick Business School (UK) and most recently in Asia at the Singapore Management University.

Paula Parish was a key catalyst for this project. Through her role as a Senior Publishing Editor for Cambridge University Press, she already had published books on management education by Peter Lorange and Howard Thomas. She encouraged the book's focus and the author line-up. We are very grateful to her for her tireless efforts to bring this project to fruition.

We are also grateful to many colleagues for their advice and insight. There are so many that picking particular individuals is an invidious and impossible task.

However, we would like to thank our colleagues and researchers at Emory, the Lorange Institute and Singapore Management University. In the latter case President Arnoud De Meyer of SMU deserves special mention.

Finally, our sincere appreciation goes to the set of researchers, secretaries and editors who provided considerable support and understanding for this project. Therefore, we thank Gillian Goh Cheng Cheng for her excellent research assistance and Susan Chong Oi Yin for her highly professional and splendid competence in typing various drafts of the book. We further thank Andrea Zlobinski (Peter's PA) and Dorasen Khoo Ban Yie (Howard's PA) for organising Peter's and Howard's time and schedule so effectively and Michelle Lee Pui Yee, Associate Professor of Marketing, for her insight and for her ability in co-ordinating a number of research assistants.

Our Consultant Editor, George Bickerstaffe, is also owed considerable thanks for the high quality and professionalism of his work in making the final manuscript readable and accessible to our readers.

However, we alone are solely responsible for the quality of the final product. We sincerely hope you enjoy this book.

SMU, Singapore

Lorange Institute, Switzerland

Emory University, US

Howard Thomas

Peter Lorange

Jagdish Sheth