

## 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.

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## Emergent Challenges and New Business Models

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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.

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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.

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