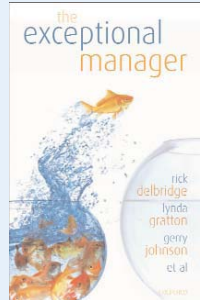




AIM RESEARCH: The Exceptional Manager Book Release



This book is the combined insight of some of the best minds in management, grouped together in the Advanced Institute of Management Research. It presents a clear and crisp analysis of the context and the challenge, and offers managers a range of ideas on how to develop the competences, practices, and values that can make a difference. It is a welcome addition to the genre.

This book will be launched in March 2006, and on 19th April 2006 a conference based on the books findings will take place in Manchester.

For further information please visit the Oxford University Press website on www.oup.co.uk/isbn/0-19-929222-1

AIM Event: Successful Strategic Transformers: Global, National and Scottish Experience. University of Strathclyde Graduate School of Business – 9th November 2005

The Successful Strategic Transformers Conference, which took place on Wednesday 9th November at Strathclyde University proved to be a hit with delegates and speakers alike. The conference reported the findings of Professor Gerry Johnson and Professor George Yip as well as featuring some of the leading figures in Scottish business and guru Professor Gary Hamel.

Through case studies and their own personal experience, industry leaders outlined the key values necessary to make strategic transformation a success and also the management and economic challenges that it brings.

The day was rounded off by a panel session chaired by Ken Symon, Business Editor of the Sunday Herald. Delegates quizzed the panel on the day's findings as well as asking questions pertinent to their own industry. Delegate feedback has indicated that the conference was extremely worthwhile and surpassed their objectives in attending.

Appointment for AIM IVF Matthew Slaughter

Congratulations to Matthew Slaughter, Economics Professor at Dartmouth College and an AIM International Visiting Fellow for being appointed to the US Council of Economic Advisers.

Engagement Manager and Events Officer join the team at AIM

AIM is pleased to welcome Victoria Gatt who joined AIM on the 3rd October as the new Events Officer, and Gabrielle Schachter who joined AIM on the 24th October in the new position of Engagement Manager.



Victoria Gatt

Victoria joined AIM Research in October 2005 as the Events Officer. Victoria will organise AIM's workshops and conferences throughout the UK.

After graduating with a Politics degree in 2003, Victoria joined the Institution of Mechanical Engineers in their Conference and Events department. Here she organised seminars, conferences and social functions throughout the UK and Europe.

For information relating to AIM Events please contact Victoria Gatt at vgatt@london.edu



Gabrielle Schachter

Gabrielle Schachter joined AIM Research as Engagement Manager in October 2005. One of AIM's objectives is to expand the size and capacity of the active research base for UK research on Management. Gabrielle's role is to develop the engagement of that capacity with world-class research outside the UK and with practitioners as co-producers of knowledge about management and other users of research within the UK.

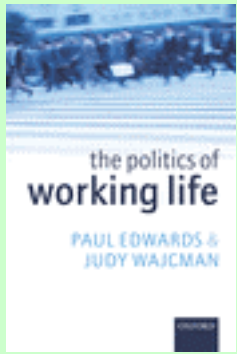
Prior to joining AIM Gabrielle was working as the Account Coordinator for the Centre for Economic Policy Research in London. In this capacity, she was responsible for managing the Centre's Corporate Membership Scheme, running member events and assisting with the marketing and dissemination of the membership programme.

Gabrielle Schachter holds a BSc (Hons) in Management Science from the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST).

For additional information please contact Gabrielle Schachter at gschachter@london.edu



New book on the realities of life in organizations



Is the organizational career an outdated concept? Has it become harder to balance work and family life? Why is empowerment hard to achieve? Is decision-making a rational process? And what are the personal responsibilities of working in organizations? These are some of the questions posed and addressed in a new book by AIM Senior Fellow Paul Edwards, together with Judy Wajcman (Australian National University). The Politics of Working Life takes the perspective of the 'questioning observer', the thoughtful but not necessarily informed person seeking a clear, engaging but not superficial analysis of modern organizations. Structured around the three themes of personal experience, the functioning of organizations, and the context of markets and globalization, the book offers a challenging view of the organization and how it might be changed.

The Politics of Working Life is published by Oxford University Press at £19.99 and US\$34.50.

For more information please view the Oxford University Press Website <http://www.oup.co.uk/isbn/0-19-927191-7>

AIM International Doctoral School on Organisational Learning (26-28 October 2005)



As part of the Advanced Institute of Management Research agenda to build capacity, the first in a series of three AIM International Doctoral Schools on Organisational Learning co-organised by Professor Elena Antonacopoulou, AIM Senior Fellow and two International Visiting Fellows (Professors Bente Elkjaer and Silvia Gherardi) has been successfully delivered during 26-28 October 2005.

This exciting international doctoral school was designed to bring together some of the leading researchers in Organisational Learning. The objective of the forum was to develop a clear agenda for future research in organisational learning. The mode of work during the course aimed to initiate and facilitate analysis of theoretical and empirical material drawing on the participants' own research work.

Each day contained short lectures, group discussions and exercises as well as individual supervision, provided by course facilitators. The facilitators and contributors to the Doctoral School programme were:

Professor Elena Antonacopoulou, University of Liverpool, UK.
 Professor Linda Argote, Carnegie Mellon University, USA.
 Professor Maria Bonnafous-Boucher, Conservatoire national des arts et métiers (C.N.A.M.), France.
 Professor Bente Elkjaer, The Danish University of Education, Denmark.
 Professor Martha S. Feldman, University of California, Irvine, USA.
 Professor Silvia Gherardi, University of Trento, Italy.
 Professor Remi Jardat, Ecole supérieure de commerce et de marketing, STEC, France.
 Professor Georges Romme, Eindhoven University, Netherlands.
 Professor Theo Peridis, York University, Canada.
 Professor Yvon Pesqueux, Conservatoire national des arts et métiers (C.N.A.M.), France.
 Professor M. Susan Taylor, University of Maryland at College Park, USA.
 Professor Russ Vince, University of Hull, UK.
 Professor Maurizio Zollo, INSEAD, France.

The three-day event was attended by 30 doctoral candidates from 8 different countries including: Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, The Netherlands and The UK. AIM awarded 7 scholarships for participants to attend the doctoral school. The recipients of the AIM scholarships were:

Susanne Broekhuizen, UK, Swenketu Patnaik, UK, Nicolas Ronde, Germany, Terry Rocves, France, Jonas Sprogøe, Denmark, Manuela Perrotta, Italy, Francesca Gennai, Italy

All participants to the Doctoral School received a certificate of attendance, which was presented by the Director of AIM, Prof. Robin Wensley at a drinks reception organised during the Doctoral School dinner. The certificates awarded were also approved by the University of Liverpool which enables a UK institution for the first time to provide EU doctoral students the opportunity to claim through their attendance to the AIM Doctoral School relevant credits (4 or equivalent to 12 hours of attendance) which are recognised by the doctoral programmes in their countries.

The feedback received from the participants in the evaluation forms they completed at the end of the three-day course was very favourable with the majority of the ratings ranging 4-5 (good – very good).



AIM Event: Professor Jeffrey Pfeffer lectures at Cardiff Business School – 3rd October 2005

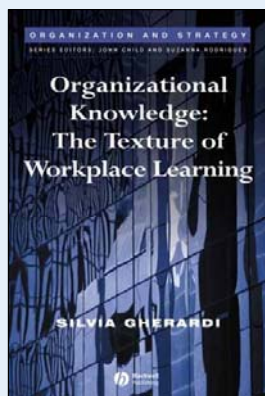
Professor Jeff Pfeffer, AIM International Visiting Fellow presented a lively and engaging Lecture titled “Turning Knowledge into Action: Overcoming the Knowing-Doing Problem”. Local business people, academics and policymakers attended this popular and successful event.



From left to right:
Professor Rick Delbridge AIM Senior Fellow (Cardiff Business School), Professor Andy Neely AIM Deputy Director, Professor Jeff Pfeffer AIM International Visiting Fellow, Professor Bob McNabb Dean of Cardiff Business School

This lecture completed a run of lectures around the UK, which started in London Business School on the 21st September, moved to Strathclyde Business School on the 23rd September and was finally completed in Cardiff. AIM would like to thank Professor Pfeffer for these successful events.

Organizational Knowledge: The texture of workplace learning



AIM International Visiting Fellow Silvia Gherardi, launched her new book on Organizational Knowledge in October 2005. Why has the issue of learning and knowledge in organizations been the subject of such lively debate over the last 20 years? This book furnishes an answer to this question, supported with arguments, and founded on data and examples from empirical research.

The author uses her detailed study of safety practices in different corporate settings to ground her theories of organizational learning. She shows how safety can be interpreted as an organizational practice and, using this example, she empirically describes how learning, knowing and organizing are practised. Her account centres on the transformative concepts of “knowing in practice” and the “texture” of organizational learning.

This book gives readers a rich account of how organizations learn and how corporate practices and policies evolve, and in this way makes an important contribution to our understanding of organizational knowledge.

For more information please view the Blackwell Publishing website www.blackwellpublishing.com

Two best-paper award nominations for Professor Julian Birkinshaw

Professor Julian Birkinshaw's paper with Cris Gibson entitled “The antecedents, consequences and mediating role of ambidexterity” was voted one of the top three papers in the Academy of Management Journal in 2004, and also his paper “Building Ambidexterity into the Organization” with the same co-author was voted one of the top three papers in the Sloan Management Review in 2004.

Scholarship as Conversation

October 13-14, 2005: AIM Research Fellows participated in a career management and writing workshop in which Professor Anne Huff passed on the distilled wisdom of an eminent career as academic and author. Research Fellows were challenged to think of their academic careers in terms of a corpus of published work and, particularly a publishing strategy for the next 12 months. As an aide-memoir and for the benefit of others, we briefly reflect on some of the principal learning points from the workshop. A more in-depth discussion of these points can be found in Professor Huff's book *Writing for Scholarly Publication* (1999, Sage Publications).

The importance of researcher identity

An important theme for the workshop, and one from which much else flowed, was the need for coherence in researchers' identities. From the point of view of developing a CV and in the choices made and decisions taken when writing a particular paper, researchers should reflect their wider personal research identity and portfolio of skills and interests. A CV should therefore reflect a clearly articulated area of research interest and demonstrate a publication contribution. Research Fellows were asked to specify, in degrees of reducing abstraction, their domain of major research, themes of interest within that domain and the nature of their contribution within those themes. As an example, a domain of research could be ‘Innovation Management’ and a theme within it ‘Diffusion Theory’. The contribution to diffusion theory could be around the issue of ‘problematic innovations and their non-adoption’.

AIM contributors to this work are AIM Research Fellows: Richard Adams, Gail Clarkson, Jonathan Sapsed, Leonieke Zomerdijk, Louise Kight and Nicola Dragonetti.



AIM Senior Fellow Ian Clarke Elected as Vice Chair of BAM

Ian Clarke, AIM Senior Fellow and Professor of Marketing at Lancaster University Management School, has been elected as the new Vice Chair for BAM from January 2006. Ian's early career was in marketing for 7 years as a research advisor to Tesco PLC and he consequently feels comfortable with the practice link agenda. He rejoined academia in 1992 and has since had grants from EPSRC and ESRC, in addition to his AIM Fellowship. He feels that this link will enable him to continue to build productive relationships between BAM and AIM at an important stage in BAM's development. As a member of the BAM Council he has used his experience of the research councils (and particularly the funding process) to organize a series of Grant Writing Workshops, organized and run jointly on behalf of BAM and AIM.

Ian understands the needs of the business and management community well from his experiences of working in the post-1992 sector (both in England at Manchester Metropolitan and in Scotland at Glasgow Caledonian), the ancients (Durham) and, more recently, at Lancaster. His wants to use his experience and involvement in AIM to benefit the Academy and to work with the Executive and the Council members in two ways. First, by taking responsibility for the marketing and communications activities of the Academy to further encourage development. This will involve communicating the increasing benefits of membership. In particular, Ian is very keen to explore the potential for a new academy journal with the explicit purpose of improving communication of leading-edge management research to practitioners – a strategic initiative recently discussed within Council – as an important vehicle for supporting practice-relevant management research in the UK. Second, through his involvement in AIM Ian believes he can play an important part in encouraging continuity of the collaborative agenda that has been developed so that the business and management community as a whole can be better served.

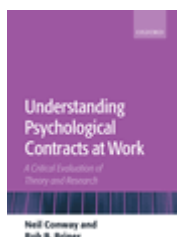
AIM research reported in Harvard Business Review

The January 2006 issue of Harvard Business Review will contain an article by London Business School Visiting Professor Gary Hamel that has emerged out of an ongoing research effort by Hamel, AIM Senior Fellow and London Business School Professor Julian Birkinshaw and AIM & London Business School Research Fellow Michael Mol into management innovation. In the article Hamel reflects on 'the why, what and how of management innovation'. He refers to the experiences of some of the world's most successful management innovators including General Electric, Toyota, and Visa.

The article also contains a list of the top-12 management innovations created since 1900 that was compiled by Hamel, Birkinshaw, and Mol from a much larger pool of management innovations. They ask three questions to identify these key innovations. Was the innovation a marked departure from previous management practices? Did it confer a competitive advantage on the pioneering company or companies? And has the innovation endured—can it be found in some form in organizations today? Hamel ends his paper by outlining how firms can become more successful management innovators.

For more information on this research project contact Michael Mol (mmol@london.edu).

Understanding Psychological Contracts at Work: A Critical Evaluation of Theory and Research by Dr Neil Conway (AIM Scholar) and Professor Rob B. Briner, Birkbeck College



- First book to provide a comprehensive and critical overview of what is now the major way of trying to understand the employment relationship - the concept of the psychological contract
- Examines issues such as how can we understand the relationship between employer and employee and what happens when they go wrong
- Examines the practicalities of using the psychological contract to manage people
- Tackles theoretical and methodological issues

Available now through all good bookshops, or direct from Oxford University Press at: <http://www.oup.co.uk/isbn/0-19-928065-7>

Dr Paul Collier presents his research at the 5th Annual Police Performance Management Conference in January '06

Dr Paul Collier of Aston Business School will be running a half-day workshop for senior police officers "Towards superior performance: Effectively linking performance management with the National Intelligence Model". The workshop, to be held on 30th January 2006 is part of the 5th Annual Police Performance Management Conference, held in London.

The workshop is based on the findings of Dr Collier's AIM Public Sector Fellowship, which he presented in summary at the 2005 conference. The workshop builds on this research by sharing best practice ideas and exploring the tensions between the different national, force, and local emphases on performance. It will also explore tensions between crime and anti-social behaviour, and between being response-led, reassurance-led, and intelligence-led. The conference website is www.iqpc.co.uk/2576a

IDEAS Factory Dr Xiaolan Fu wins "European Best Paper Award"

Dr Xiaolan Fu an IDEAS Factory Researcher has won the European Foundation for Management Development, Gate2Growth Academic Network 2005 "European Best Paper Award" for a paper on 'How much does informality in management matter for SME innovation'.



Harvard Business School Strategy Group

October 05 – Professor Jonathan Haskel (AIM Senior Fellow), gave a seminar at the Harvard Business School Strategy Group Conference in October, on his work on multi-nationals and innovation carried out under the AIM project.

AIM Fellow delivers conference at CBI Annual Conference

28th November 05 – Professor Julian Birkinshaw (AIM Senior Fellow) presented keynote speech at the CBI Annual Conference on November 28th. He spoke on Management Innovation.

Professional Development Workshop on "New directions in the study of coordination"

The Professional Development Workshop on "New directions in the study of coordination" organized at the Academy of Management Meetings in Hawaii by Phanish Puranam (AIM Scholar) and Micahel Jacobides (AIM Ghoshal Fellow) was a great success - it was one of the best attended PDW's at the Meetings with nearly fifty people attending and signed onto the discussion group on Coordination hosted on the AIM portal. To join, please contact Phanish Puranam on ppuranam@london.edu or 020 7262 5050

Strategy as Practice: An Activity-Based Approach by Paula Jarzabkowski (AIM Ghoshal Fellow)

Strategy is not just something a firm has – a position. It is also something that a firm and its multiple actors do. However, the problem of doing strategy, how it is done, who does it and what they use to do it has been little dealt with in much strategic management research, which has been dominated by the positivistic assumptions and research traditions of microeconomics. Strategy as Practice heralds a defining moment in how strategic management is understood. It leads the way in setting out the meaning and implications of this new field.

If we wish to understand strategy, we need to understand how that activity is constructed, by whom and what its consequences are. Paula Jarzabkowski gets to grips with these challenges by developing an activity framework for studying strategy as practice, and by providing empirical evidence to illustrate the dynamics of this framework in real terms.

This book bridges the gap between organizational strategies and what managers actually do.

Strategy as Practice is indispensable reading for academics and postgraduate students conducting research or study into strategy as practice, strategy implementation or strategy in action, as well as advanced issues in strategy.

For more information please view the Sage Publishing website <http://www.sagepub.co.uk/book.aspx?pid=106986>

The 5th International Conference on Theory and Practice in Performance Measurement and Management CALL FOR PAPERS, WORKSHOPS AND PARTICIPATION

Keynote Speakers

Professor Rajiv Banker, Fox School of Business
Paul Boyle, Financial Reporting Council
Greg Hackett, Founder of the Hackett Group

Conference Chairs Professor Andy Neely and Dr Mike Kennerley, Cranfield School of Management

Building on the tremendous success of the past conferences 'Performance Measurement and Management – Public and Private' is the fifth in a series of bi-annual conferences focusing on the theory and practice of performance measurement and management. In line with the previous four conferences, PMA 2006 will provide a unique international forum for those interested in performance measurement to share ideas and concepts drawn from research and practice. With some 400 delegates from around the globe PMA 2006 will be the leading event of its kind. Typically up to one third of participants at the PMA conference come from practice, while two thirds are drawn from academia. Attendees come from all over the globe and have diverse backgrounds, which makes the event particularly fascinating given the diversity of views held and shared by participants.

The principal aim of the conference is to provide a unique inter-disciplinary and international forum for the exchange of cutting-edge knowledge and research about organisational performance measurement within both the public and private sectors. If you would like to participate, either as an individual presenter or by organising a panel please register your interest by 15 December 2005.

This year we are particularly keen to encourage symposia, organised by participants at the conference focusing on topical performance measurement and management issues. Broad themes have been identified for the conference. Although these are not exclusive, submissions that strive to tackle these areas are encouraged. More details on the conference are available on the full call for papers and website: www.performanceportal.org/pma2006.htm

SUBMISSION DETAILS: In order to engage both academic and practitioners there are two types of submission – Academic Research Submissions and Practical Application Submissions. To submit an extended abstract for PMA 2006 please follow the guidelines set out in the full Call for Papers and email your submission by 16 January 2006.



**Call for Papers: EGOS: 2006 The Organizing Society: Abstracts due 6 Jan.
Standing Working Group 6: Strategizing and Organizing Activity and Practice
Convenors: Paula Jarzabkowski, Patrick Regnér, Linda Rouleau**

In this sub-theme, we are keen to engage participants in panel discussions of key strategizing and practice topics, have whole group sessions to discuss papers that contribute to key issues in the field, and provide more personal feedback for developmental papers. At the same time, we would like to take as many participants as possible. We will therefore run the sub-theme sessions as a mix of: an introductory and concluding panel session with key presenters and discussants, such as Yrjo Engestrom, Ann Langley and Hari Tsoukas;

3 x standard paper sessions of 3 papers for those papers that are either very well developed or that raise topical issues for discussion
2 x interactive round table paper sessions of up to 4 tables, with 3 papers per table, to provide small group feedback and discussion on other papers, with a particular aim of helping participants to develop their ideas and contributions to the strategizing activity and practice field.

We hope this will provide a combination of lively discussion, advancement of the field, and attention to and support for each others' work.

A practice perspective on strategizing focuses on the day-to-day activities and practices of strategizing and addresses questions such as: who the strategists are, what strategists do, how they do it, what influences the work of strategizing, and what are the consequences of strategizing activity? This year, in keeping with the main theme of the track, the 'Strategizing: Activity and Practice' Standing Working Group is looking for papers that explore the association between organizing and strategizing, both organizing inside the firm and how the strategizing that takes place within firms contributes to the organizing of wider social, economic and industry characteristics. We are looking for theoretical papers as well as case studies that can provide useful insights into these questions. Innovative papers that draw on theoretical and methodological pluralism are encouraged. Papers that address the following two themes are welcome but these themes are not exclusive, and any papers that address the principles of the Standing Working Group will be considered (see www.egosnet.org/groups/rgroupstrategizing.shtml, or www.strategy-as-practice.org for details on the type of work that our community is interested in).

About the convenors:

1. Paula Jarzabkowski is an AIM Ghoshal Fellow and a Reader in strategic management at Aston Business School, Aston University, UK. Her research focuses on the social dynamics of strategizing practices and their consequences for strategy formation inside the firm. She is particularly interested in strategizing practices in pluralistic contexts that have multiple conflicting strategies. <http://www.abs.aston.ac.uk/newweb/staff/detail.asp?sfldStaffID=A0000633>
2. Patrick Regnér is Assistant professor at the Institute of International Business at the Stockholm School of Economics. His research is focused on strategy development and dynamics with a particular focus on the origins of strategy and exploration/exploitation tradeoffs.
3. Linda Rouleau: Associate professor, management department - HEC Montreal. Her research focuses on the social character of strategy formation and on the transformation of control and identity of middle managers in the context of organizational restructuring.

More Awards from AoM - Professor Elena Antonacopoulou



Professor Elena Antonacopoulou, the Founder of GNOSIS, a management research initiative based in the University's Management School, has been given a prestigious award.

Professor Antonacopoulou received the Academy of Management Award for Outstanding Services in Management Education and Development. She received a commemorative plaque in the ceremony which was held at the Academy's annual conference held in Honolulu, Hawaii.

GNOSIS has just celebrated a successful first year. The initiative, which is linked to the Advanced Institute of Management Research, brings together academics, business leaders and policy makers to develop new ways of managing that can improve innovation and competitiveness.

Elena, who is Director of GNOSIS, said: "We have launched a major UK study looking at core business practices and their reconfiguration to enhance innovation and competitiveness. Over two years, this will look at three critical sectors of the UK economy – retail banking, biopharmaceuticals and management consultancies. This same study is being replicated in seven other countries - Canada, the US, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands – so that we can make sound comparisons.

"We have seen immense growth in terms of the interest which has been generated in the GNOSIS research."



AIM Scholar launches large survey on Outsourcing and Offshoring

AIM Scholar Phanish Puranam and PhD student Kannan Srikanth have launched a large scale survey of management practices in Business Process Outsourcing and Offshoring. The first phase of the project is supported by CAPCO, a financial services consulting firm, and targets senior ("CXO") level respondents in the financial services sector to assess their opinions about the trends and strategies they feel affect outsourcing/offshoring in their sector. This survey has already received responses from about 50 of the largest financial services companies. In the second phase, Puranam and Srikanth are surveying project managers to statistically validate their arguments about the coordination and control strategies that are most likely to be effective in offshoring/outsourcing services.

For more information, please contact Phanish Puranam on ppuranam@london.edu or 020 7262 5050

AIM Capacity Building: Training Management Researchers as Trainers

AIM and the British Academy of Management (BAM) have received related awards under the ESRC's Researcher Development Initiative (RDI). The proposals submitted by AIM and BAM were part of a joint plan for capacity building with a dual focus:

1. the AIM RDI programme - to train management researchers (other than research students) in their secondary role as trainers, with responsibility for building the capacity of research students and other researchers in their institutions through research methods teaching, supervising and mentoring;
2. activities offered by AIM and BAM (including the BAM RDI programme) - to build the capacity of all management researchers in their primary role as researchers across their academic life course.

The title of the AIM RDI programme is 'Building Management Research Capacity: Training Researchers as Trainers'. It will run for three years from January 2006. The programme is coordinated by Mike Wallace, Lead Fellow for Capacity Building. There are four programme components:

- the consultative development of teaching materials on the logic of enquiry that frames the research process and production of outputs;
- a workshop series on research methods course design and teaching;
- a workshop series on teaching selected priority research methods generating potentially publishable outputs - systematic reviewing, critical reviewing, and handling large data sets;
- a workshop series on training in supervision and in mentoring skills;

A conception of the logic of enquiry in the social sciences underpins all four components. Academic discourse is viewed as a two-way process of attempting to convince a sceptical audience of one's own argument about the social world, while adopting a sceptical stance towards others' arguments. Materials development will employ e-learning as a consultative medium and a means of disseminating the products. The workshop series will be offered in four regional locations.

For more information, please contact Mike Wallace on A.M.Wallace@bath.ac.uk

AIM Events roundup: Events Diary

Forum on the Future of UK Business Schools

Date: 13th December 2005

Location: Scarman House, Warwick University

DoRN Faculty Development and Capacity Building Conference

Date: 26th January 2006

Location: London Business School

The Exceptional Manager Book Launch

Date: March 2006

Location: AIM offices

ESRC's Science Week

Date: 10th - 19th March 2006

Location: Countrywide

The Exceptional Manager Conference

Date: April 2006

Location: Manchester

The Practice of Dynamic Capabilities: Theory Development and Research

Date 4th-5th May 2006

Location: Lancaster

Beyond the Productivity Gap

Date: 15 June 2005

Location: AIM Offices

Academy of Management Annual Meeting

Date 11th-16th August 2006

Location: Atlanta, Georgia, USA

BAM Annual Conference 2006

Date: 12th - 14th September 2006

Location: Belfast

For further information about any AIM event please contact Victoria Gatt on vgatt@london.edu or 020 7000 0516, or view the AIM website www.aimresearch.org



The AIM Website

Over the last couple of months AIM has released a number of new sections on the website. In October there was the launch of the Resource Centre and the Online Media Centre. The Resource Centre is a reference area, which is not just AIM Research related, but aims to capture information from the Management Research Community. This includes information such as research events and workshops, engagement case studies and useful links. The Media Centre is aimed at journalists and is there to disseminate information to the media world. This year the AIM Senior Fellows have been interviewed by Suntop Media with regards to the projects and research they are working on. These will all be published to the media centre early next year.

More recently, there has been a redesign of the AIM Publications and Output Section on the website. There is now information relating to forthcoming publications, requesting hard copies of each and all downloads of every AIM publication to date. The Frequently Asked Questions Section is released today which asks the standard questions on all aspects of AIM Research, from events, to media to the website. The AIM News Section has had some minor alterations, as has the AIM Community section. As AIM is constantly growing so must the website.

We have thousands of hits each week and the website is a source of invaluable information. We are extremely keen to promote new event, news and media or research information to our website, whether it be AIM related or simply relating to management research. If you know of an event you would like publicised, would like to link to our website or would like us to link to yours please contact Susy Johnson at sjohnson@london.edu.

Professor Chris Skelcher, Institute of Local Government Studies, University of Birmingham

Chris Skelcher's AIM Fellowship examined the relationship between 'governance' and 'performance'. Different ways of governing public services have been introduced in recent years. Alongside elected bodies are found appointed boards, multi-organisational partnerships, companies, and various other corporate forms. The policy rationale is that this will improve performance. But how it will do this and in what ways is unclear, as are the wider consequences of the move away from control of public services by elected politicians.

The Fellowship involved a literature review, small scale case studies (Scottish Water, Los Angeles Community College District and Unitary School District, Thinktank Trust (England), Viking Ship Museum (Denmark), Herefordshire and Worcestershire Connexions, and Newark Development Corporation (USA)), appointment of ESRC International Visiting Fellows to work with the award holder, papers to conferences, and a series of discussions and seminars with relevant academics and practitioners.

The study concluded that public service performance needs to be understood in relation to three realms - organisational, democratic, system. The UK debate understands performance largely in organisational terms, i.e. to do with efficiency, quality, outputs, outcomes, etc. Democratic performance concerns the anchorage of the institution in the wider governmental and political process, while system performance concerns the implications of governance forms for the overall operation of the governmental system. The creation of single purpose bodies can enhance system performance where they are designed to enable collaboration between different entities, but may deliver contrary outcomes as a result of fragmenting power and authority in a polycentric system.

Many of the bodies studied were hybrids, combining different governance archetypes. Analysis of the case studies resulted in the identification of five archetypes: the club, polity, agency, firm, and collegiate. The study concluded that the ability to deliver organisational, democratic or system performance is affected by (a) characteristics of each archetype and (b) the coherence and/or fault lines between the archetypes in any hybrid.

There is substantial literature on organisational performance, but little on democratic performance. Methodologies for assessing democratic performance were developed. This was assisted by a commission from the Home Office to write a paper on the ways in which public organisations could assess their fitness for purpose in engaging with the Government's civil renewal agenda.

Chris presented his work to twelve academic conferences and seminars in the UK and abroad, and several events specifically for policy-makers – including a breakfast seminar in London attended by 50 policy makers and managers. Prof Erik-Hans Klijn (Erasmus University, Rotterdam) and Prof Mark Considine (Melbourne University), the International Fellows, played a key role at these events, and at a conference hosted for the British Academy of Management Interorganisational Relations Special Interest Group.

There have been six published or accepted academic outputs, two outputs specifically for non-academic audiences, and four further articles for publication are in draft or preparation. Five papers from an international colloquium supported by AIM have already been published or accepted. Conference and working papers from the Fellowship are available at <http://www.inlogov.bham.ac.uk/research/aimfellowship.htm>

Fellowship activities contributed to non-academic research users through a scoping paper to the Home Office on civil renewal, advice to the Audit Commission on partnership governance, and a seminar at the House of Commons. The Public Service Fellows collectively contributed to the design of the ESRC Programme Public Services: quality, performance and delivery, which was being established concurrently by Prof Hood.

The Fellowship has generated continuing streams of work. The ESRC has made a £200,000 research award to Chris Skelcher to develop his work on the democratic performance of new approaches to governance, in collaboration with Erik-Hans Klijn (Erasmus) and Eva Sorensen (Roskilde University, Denmark). Klijn spends four weeks a year at the University of Birmingham as a visiting professor, and has collaborated with Skelcher on a paper for Public Administration and a panel for the International Research Symposium on Public Management. Skelcher and Klijn have continued to run the annual PhD workshop for the BAM special interest group, and there are plans to develop closer working relationships with other European universities on PhD capacity building in the field of governance. There has been further consolidation of relationships with a number of other US and European universities.