

FROM COLLABORATION TO BALANCED SCORECARDS: HELPING MANAGERS GET IT RIGHT

Collaboration between organisations, though often critical to success, is frequently messy, ill-defined and difficult to manage, according to a new guide for managers to be launched during Social Science Week (March 10 to 19) organised by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

A handy management briefing aimed at improving the approach to **collaborations** of all kinds – from small business networks to corporate alliances - will be presented by Professor Chris Huxham and Dr Paul Hibbert at a seminar at Strathclyde Graduate School of Business on March 14.

This is one of six meetings, workshops and networking events arranged as its contribution to Social Science Week by the Advanced Institute of Management Research (AIM), which is funded by the ESRC and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC).

As well as looking at **collaboration**, AIM sessions will examine performance measurement, biotechnology in the UK, managing innovation, and how academics can conduct meaningful research into the everyday workings of UK companies. Professor Huxham said, "Our particular focus is on learning between collaborators. We have observed a complex mixture of selfish and sharing attitudes, and the Strathclyde seminar will focus on how to explore these in real situations as well as the implications for collaborating successfully."

Help is also on hand for those dealing with an increasingly common management tool, the **balanced scorecard**. As many as 60 per cent of large firms in the UK may have adopted this measurement system, but until now there has been little robust evidence about its impact on performance, says Professor Andy Neely, deputy director of AIM. At a seminar at the AIM offices in London on March 13, Professor Neely and Dr Rachel Griffith, Deputy Director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies, will reveal the findings of the most comprehensive investigation of the impact of the balanced scorecard to date.

Hinting at the flavour of the findings, Professor Neely said “This research is sure to provoke managers to ask some significant questions of their measurement initiatives.”

Collaboration again comes under the microscope at a workshop at Lancaster University on March 16. Professors Ian Clarke and Mark Easterby-Smith will ask what is the value of **industry-university collaborations** in management research, and how they can be developed successfully. AIM researchers and senior managers from major companies will describe 'warts and all' their experiences from both sides. The workshop will examine two live examples involving leading European multinational companies and universities in the management field.

And with the biotechnology industry likely to play a vital role in the future economic prosperity of the UK, researchers have looked at 165 companies involved in the sector in Oxford, Scotland and South West England. This project has been conducted by AIM researchers at Cardiff Business School. In a briefing to be released at a workshop at Cardiff on March 15, Professor Rick Delbridge and Dr Edward Kasabov set out their major findings and argue that the UK must retain all the key stages of the **biotech value chain**, including the high-end science. The workshop will also explore policy implications with colleagues from Cardiff University's Centre for Advanced Social Studies and the Welsh Economy Research Unit.

Using a 'Question Time' format, an event at Imperial College, London, on March 14, led by Professor John Bessant, will outline the challenges of **managing innovation**, and include accounts from practitioners in the field.

And at Aston Business School on March 17, a session primarily for academics and led by Dr Paula Jarzabkowski and Professor Julia Balogun, will include research into how firms put **strategic planning** and reorganizations into practice, and the language they use when doing so.

Notes for Editors

For further information, contact:

Alexandra Saxon or Annika Howard at ESRC, on 01793 413032/413119.

Or Professor Andy Neely, Deputy Director, AIM, on 0870 734 3000 or 07050 052 035; email: aneely@london.edu,

Or Claire Fitzpatrick, Press and Communications, AIM, on 020 7000 0517 or 07967 092137; email: cfitzpatrick@london.edu,

Social Science Week is organised by the Economic and Social Research Council, and runs from March 10 -17, alongside National Science Week. It celebrates some of the very best British social science research, as well as highlighting the ways in which social science touches everyday lives. Press releases detailing some of the varied events are available at www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/week

Aim Events for Science Week 2006:

March 13: Balanced perspectives on the Balanced Scorecard.

Aim offices, 6-16 Huntsworth Mews, London.

March 14: *Give and Take – Understanding Attitudes to Learning in the Collaborative Process.*

Strathclyde Graduate School of Business, Glasgow.

Challenges in Managing Innovation.

Imperial College, London.

March 15: *Clusters, Economic Development and Innovation: Empirical Evidence and Policy Implications in the UK Biotechnology Sector.*

Cardiff University.

March 16: *Researching Managerial Elites: Engaging in a Collaborative Agenda?*

Lancaster University.

March 17: *Studying Practices Empirically.*

Aston Business School, Birmingham.

The ESRC is the UK's largest funding agency for research and postgraduate training relating to social and economic issues. It provides independent, high quality, relevant research to business, the public sector and Government. The

ESRC total expenditure in 2005/6 is £135million. At any time the ESRC supports more than 4,000 researchers and postgraduate students in academic institutions and research policy institutes. More at <http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk>

AIM Research, launched in 2002, is funded by the ESRC and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council. AIM's objectives are: to conduct research that will identify actions to enhance the UK's international competitiveness; to raise the scientific quality and international standing of UK research on international competitiveness; to expand the size and capacity of the active research base for UK research on management; and 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. More at <http://www.aimresearch.org>

ESRC Society Today offers free access to a broad range of social science research and presents it in a way that makes it easy to navigate and saves users valuable time. As well as bringing together all ESRC-funded research (formerly accessible via the Regard website) and key online resources such as the Social Science Information Gateway and the UK Data Archive, non-ESRC resources are included, for example the Office for National Statistics. The portal provides access to early findings and research summaries, as well as full texts and original datasets through integrated search facilities. More at <http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk>

