
Editorial

Peter Scott

School of Sport Studies, Leisure and Nutrition,
Liverpool John Moores University,
Liverpool L17 6BD, UK
Email: r.p.scott@ljmu.ac.uk

Neil Moore and Peter Stokes

Chester Business School,
University of Chester,
Parkgate Road, Chester, CH1 4BJ, UK
Email: n.moore@chester.ac.uk
Email: p.stokes@chester.ac.uk

Biographical notes: Peter Scott is Senior Lecturer in Marketing and Management at Liverpool John Moores University. He became an academic after building his career in the private sector in a variety of sales, marketing and general management roles in the sport and leisure and pharmaceutical sectors. He is an MBA, Chartered Marketeer and award-winning reviewer, who has published and presented at conferences internationally in the fields of strategic marketing, destination marketing and management education.

Neil Moore (PhD, MA, BA (Hons), Cert Ed) is Postgraduate Coordinator (PG Research) and a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Business, Enterprise and Lifelong Learning at the University of Chester. He lectures, tutors and consults in a range of business and management areas. These include international business, management development, contemporary management issues in small and medium sized enterprises and sport management. His interest in business, management and sport led to his doctoral research into business management practices in the English professional football industry. He has also researched and published in a range of other areas, including talent management, event management and research methodology. He is currently a visiting lecturer and academic advisor in a number of HE institutions in the UK and overseas. He is also an Associate Editor of the *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*.

Peter Stokes is Professor in the University of Chester Business School (UK). He has researched and published widely on a range of domains in leading journals and has written several books on the topics of doctoral research, critical management studies and research methodology. He is Editor-in-Chief of the *International Journal of Organizational Analysis* and serves on a number of journal boards including the *EuroMed Journal of Business*. He is Vice-President-Business Relations/UK Country Director for the *EuroMed Research Business Institute* and UK Ambassador for the *Association Francophone de Gestion des Ressources Humaines* (French Academic HR Association).

As organisations embark on the 21st century it is apparent that there is an ever-increasing need to learn from the events of the recent and distant past in conjunction with the ability to take stock, in real time, of the evermore rapidly transforming present and impending futures. The ability to rethink, reshape, innovate and reconfigure organisational structures, actions, roles and mindsets in manners which embrace agility and flexibility has become central to managing emergent ambiguous and complex contexts and the creation of sustainable organisations and stakeholders in societies (Porritt, 2007, p.33; Docherty et al., 2009, p.3; Crane and Ruebottom, 2011; Mäkinen and Kourula, 2012; Han et al., 2012).

Moreover, it is now widely accepted that, within these emergent turbulent and challenging ambidextrous environments, issues of trust and ethics within relationships are intrinsically intertwined (Lavie et al., 2010; Birkinshaw and Gupta, 2013, Shaw, 2014; Mathews and Stokes, 2013). All of the above actions and processes need to be accomplished while maintaining and developing positive relations with stakeholders across a range of social, cultural and geo-political boundaries. This special issue addresses this contemporary complex and dynamic amalgam of issues that confront organisations by drawing together a collection of papers that analyse them from a range of perspectives.

The special issue opens with a paper that focuses upon the development of sustainable client relationships in the centrally important banking industry. Finken et al. explore client migration in the context of unplanned acquisitions amongst private banks located in German-speaking countries during the financial crisis of 2009. The paper emphasises the need for banks to develop a clear understanding of client perceptions in order to establish long term sustainable relationships and concludes by presenting a new model of private banking consumer perception.

The special issue progresses by exploring the challenging issue of social responsibility and sustainability and the relationship of these factors to investment. Negulescu and Doval investigate the issue in the context of Romanian companies and develop a practitioner focused matrix that is designed to aid managers as they develop investment strategies in these areas.

The following paper, by Alenina et al., adopts a case study approach to consider sustainable innovation in high-tech Russian pharmaceutical enterprises. In particular, it explores the challenges and issues associated with the maintenance and development of innovative capacity. The authors formulate a number of recommendations relating to the retention and development of employees, the allocation of resources, the development of infrastructure and the need for government intervention to regulate the industry.

The remaining two papers focus on the special issue theme through the lens of small-to-medium sized enterprises (SMEs). The paper by Sánchez-Hernández and Gallardo-Vázquez explores the role of social responsibility in developing the competitiveness of Spanish SMEs. The work emphasises the importance of owners and managers adopting a holistic approach to the promotion, adoption and implementation of social responsibility principles in order to enhance competitiveness.

The final paper in the special issue investigates the role of SME learning and knowledge transfer in creating sustainable business in the English professional football industry. Moore et al. consider how football clubs responded to the event management challenges and issues that emerged in the wake of a number of stadium crises and tragedies that occurred in the 20th century. The authors conclude that clubs have learned

from past events and that they have begun to collaborate to share knowledge and experience in order to create a sustainable.

In summary, the special issue produces a timely and interesting compilation of studies on business and organisational contexts (spanning multinational to SME), sector foci (including banking, sport, pharmaceutical and investment) and European geographical market perspectives (Germany, Russia, Spain, Romania and the UK). Grounded on in-depth analyses, the papers develop solutions and ways forward to the fundamental changes occurring in the contemporary global business environment and make an important contribution to the ongoing debate and exploration of modern business and organisational development.

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