MAKING THE CASE FOR THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

No.6 MANAGEMENT
Foreword

Business Schools, as major sites of inter-disciplinary social science research and teaching, are well placed to address some of the key issues of our times. For instance, the impacts of globalisation and financialisation on the roles of the state, corporate elites and cross-national organisations in shaping the contexts of economies and societies are central in current research being conducted by scholars from accounting, finance, economics and organisation studies. Approaches to organising and managing our public services, effective development of social enterprises, contribution of medium enterprises to growth, the production and consumption of knowledge, organising employees to contribute to innovative, high-value added activities, the development and management of networked organisations, are all features of a vibrant research landscape involving social science researchers in business schools, often in collaboration with other academics, businesses and policymakers.

From econometric modelling to the study of organizational narratives, business schools are amongst the most diverse social science departments in our universities. The UK has considerable strength in terms of academic research across this range and its leading schools are prominent on the international stage.

Alongside this academic excellence, management researchers are active in engaging with practitioners, working with them to solve problems, providing new insights from the evidence that they have gathered, and challenging taken-for-granted assumptions in order to open up new possibilities. Sometimes the beneficiaries are big businesses who find news ways to improve their operations, performance and profits. But management researchers in the UK are not solely interested in the corporate world. UK business schools are home to a range of disciplinary approaches and encompass both critical and mainstream orientations. As befits the breadth of research conducted in business schools, the beneficiaries are therefore diverse and widespread.
This booklet can only give a glimpse of the work that is conducted in the UK’s 100 or so business and management departments. Still, it includes research that has impacted upon large corporations and small firms, policymakers at regional and national levels, cross-national and international organisations in the public, private and third sectors. This research has variously contributed to improvements in customer experiences, better environmental outcomes, enhanced economic efficiency and innovation in private and public organisations large and small, produced fairer and more equitable outcomes for employees, brought better performance through the development of new management practices and improved the lives and experiences of our citizens beyond the workplace in many different ways.

This booklet has been produced by the Academy of Social Sciences in partnership with SAMS (the Society for the Advancement of Management Studies). We have been pleased to work in collaboration with the British Academy of Management and the Advanced Institute of Management Research in bringing together the cases featured. You can find many more examples of how high quality management research is having wide impact on the AIM Research website (aimresearch.org).

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Putting innovation at the heart of global businesses

Although Indian in origin, Tata – one of the largest business groups in the world – is now the largest manufacturer in the UK, having acquired such businesses as Tetley Tea, Jaguar Land Rover and British Steel. Over the last two decades the Tata group transformed itself in terms of product quality, cost-reduction and supply chain efficiency.

But, to become a global leader, it also needed to become more consistently innovative.

Although they had had successes with the highly affordable Tata Nano, and the Tata Swach which provided clean drinking water to the masses at very low cost, it was clear to the leaders of the Group that they needed to do something more systematic. So they created the Tata Group Innovation Forum to start an innovation movement across the group, through specific initiatives, sharing of ideas, and development of capabilities.

Professor Julian Birkinshaw of London Business School had researched these questions over many years and established how innovation can be fostered and supported within a company. He showed the Innovation Forum how to map out the stages and associated challenges of ensuring innovation adds value to their businesses and how their companies could create supportive environments for entrepreneurial behaviours.

Tata initially put the ideas into practice in one of its companies and found they worked well, increasing innovation. They then codified them as part of the company’s ‘Innometer’ which acts as a benchmarking tool to help each Tata company assess how well its existing processes and culture support innovation. Members of
the Innovation Forum have now used the Innometer in dozens of the Tata Group companies, and it has helped them to build a number of related initiatives, including an innovation award scheme, innovation workshops, and technology-sharing platforms.

According to Bloomberg Businessweek (19 August 2009), The Tata Group is well on its way to making “innovation part of its DNA, setting up a way for handling new ideas and making creative thinking a performance criterion.”
Getting things to run efficiently and without waste is the goal of all businesses and organisations. Amongst others the Japanese car company Toyota developed a highly successful ‘Lean’ approach to increase responsiveness in its manufacturing and focus awareness on customer needs. This philosophy has been rolled out to many other types of businesses, but an organisation needs to be sure that investing significant time and money in using such an approach is going to yield more than cost reduction.

Public services are currently being required to reduce their cost base and also increase the quality of the service delivery to the taxpayer or citizen, but bringing in consultants to change working methods can be very expensive. Professor Zoe Radnor at Cardiff University worked with many public bodies on how the lean system works, promoting efficiency and effectiveness so reducing waste and saving money whilst also improving the service to the customer or user.

Organisations need to learn how to focus on their core business, understand and value just what their customers and service users require, simplify operations and ensure that the drive to improve doesn’t stop. The ‘House of Lean’ diagram, illustrating the different elements involved in the system, has become a frequent feature of public service office walls, serving as a reminder of what needs to be done. However, getting a workforce to operate more efficiently involves overcoming many challenges.

Professor Radnor helped organisations identify problem areas (e.g. lack of senior management involvement) and develop awareness of organisational readiness factors (e.g. understanding the process and levels of demands) to enable the Lean philosophy to be implemented and sustained successfully. This meant engaging with cultural and behavioural aspects of putting the Lean process in place as well as the tools and techniques.
Using the Lean approach to redesign its systems enabled HMRC to achieve around £400 million worth of resource savings and £860 million of tax yield between 2005 and 2011. The University of St Andrews estimated that implementing Lean had released the equivalent of nearly 25 full time members of staff to focus on more value-adding pieces of work. Other local government organisations have achieved notable successes from their process improvements: for example by reducing time for repairs to social housing or for planning applications and even a one-third reduction in patient death rate.

The UK’s total consumer spend on food and drink is upwards of £170 billion and DEFRA’s 2011 statistics report that 97% of the 7,300 food and drink manufacturing enterprises in the UK, employing approximately 390,000 people, are classified as Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs). However, despite a substantial contribution to the UK economy, UK farmers and small food and drink manufacturers are operating in an increasingly competitive marketplace with little understanding of who their customers are or how they behave.

In April 2005 Kent Business School and consumer analysts dunnhumby established a joint venture to provide a mechanism for farmers and small food producers to access unique shopper insight from the purchasing behaviour of over 17 million households in the UK.

**Professor Andrew Fearne**, director of the Centre for Value Chain Research (CVCR), developed a free service providing analysis of supermarket shopper behaviour for individual products (e.g. ‘loose Kentish new potatoes’), or groups of food products (e.g. ‘new potatoes’), revealing detailed insights into which products are growing their sales, who is buying them, where they are buying them and what else they are buying. This information is available free of charge to farmers and small food producers from across a wide range of sectors: meat, dairy, fresh produce and cereal-based products.

Professor Fearne and his colleagues have also conducted studies into how small food businesses make use of market information and the barriers and enablers associated with the use of supermarket loyalty card data, which has allowed it to develop the service in line with the specific needs of SMEs.

In total, more than 700 shopper insight reports have been delivered to over 500 individual businesses in the last 7 years and over 200 businesses have attended shopper insight workshops. These businesses...
– including: Burts Chips, Fiddleford Mushrooms, Bath Ales, Natural Balance Foods, Morrelli’s Ice Cream and the Cornish Country Larder – have been able to target their marketing and promotions, develop new projects and diversify their businesses. They have shown increased growth, distribution and sales in both regional and nationwide markets and consumer insight has been an essential ingredient to their success.

http://www.kent.ac.uk/kbs/applied-research/vcr/
Small and medium sized businesses (SMEs) often fail and this business ‘churn’ (the high number of business closures and start-ups) can be a worry for landlords of the sort of properties they rent. **Professor Robert Blackburn** and a team at the Small Business Research Centre (SBRC) at Kingston Business School helped one major provider of managed workspace that focuses on the SME market. They showed how poor business performance and high closure rates may be mitigated by targeted support via a major property service provider. Previous work by the SBRC on business closures had led to the Bank of England re-defining its classification of business ‘failures’ as ‘closures’, and this was extended by research on SMEs during the recession and the challenges of environmental management.

As the landlord of almost 4,000 small business tenants, Workspace Group PLC needed to convince their shareholders that business churn is not necessarily a negative factor in the development of their tenant base and that, by adding services to their client base, benefits would accrue. The property provider was helped to develop a clear market positioning strategy and ultimately improve its own performance by making a strategic shift in their role from ‘property provider’ to a wider ‘service provider’ for SMEs.

Research conducted amongst the customer base resulted in a re-positioning of the marketing strategy that emphasised the service provider’s role as an incubator of higher-growth, successful businesses. TradeLink – an online trading and networking platform for tenants which adds value for existing tenants and encouraged networking – was developed. A second outcome focused on developing the environmental practices of SMEs. This work was a key part of their Corporate and Social Responsibility report that helped Workspace Group PLC to be ranked 7th in the ‘Observer Good Companies Guide’ to the most ethical firms in the FTSE 350 in 2007.
Many of the UK’s 600 Harbour Authorities are seriously challenged to find resources or management time to ensure compliance with complex environmental requirements for sustainable maritime operations and development. As a result they may be losing business. For example, Falmouth Harbour Commissioners in Cornwall oversee the UK’s largest offshore fuel storage (‘marine bunkering’) operation close to environmentally sensitive surroundings including rare maerl beds.

Professor John Dinwoodie, Dr Sarah Tuck and Dr James Benhin, all of Plymouth University, worked with Falmouth Harbour Commissioners (FHC), their Harbour Master Captain Mark Sansom, environmentalist graduate, Harriet Knowles and the Technology Strategy Board to address this problem in 2008-2011.

The research team looked at what went into the sustainable environmental management routine anchoring and bunkering operations at strategic, tactical and operational levels. They embedded stakeholder management and communication issues into the management process and investigated how to help smaller ports comply with environmental sustainability requirements by developing a port sustainability management system and a model of stakeholder engagement, and by showing the regional economic impact of maritime operations.

By ensuring that it could comply with existing and future regulations, Falmouth Harbour Commissioners can continue to operate commercially, bringing in substantial commercial port dues supporting several jobs and helping to generate £1.2 million anticipated cumulative profits by 2014, whilst at the same time increasing preparedness for dealing with potentially catastrophic oil spills and helping FHC to enhance the local environment. Other ports anticipate similar benefits. The port sustainability management system is being expanded to take in other smaller ports in Devon and Cornwall.
Retaining expertise

With rapidly increasing professional competition for talent, an era of corporate restructuring and a generation of baby boomers about to retire, organisations are rightly concerned about losing expertise.

Dr Christine van Winkelen and Professor Jane McKenzie of the Knowledge Management Forum based at Henley Business School carried out applied research, between 2007 and 2009 to help organisations integrate expertise retention and development into knowledge management programmes more effectively. Working in conjunction with Dr Richard McDermott and knowledge managers representing 18 large organisations, both public and private sector, they carried out a review of ways of retaining and developing expertise through interviews in 29 public and private sector organisations. The researchers identified three broad approaches based on knowledge handovers, understanding the thinking processes of experts and developing a learning culture.

The second phase of research involved representatives of ten of the organisations; based upon interviews with experts, this studied how to develop expertise by making expert thinking processes visible.

The research findings were used to develop techniques for handling handovers and the retention of expertise more efficiently and effectively.

The knowledge management representatives involved worked with guidance on how to apply the insights in their practice and the work has been further developed within all the member organisations as part of their continued practice improvement.

Sindy Grewal, a knowledge manager who applied the research first at the Audit Commission and then at the National Audit Office, said: “We used a variety of tools from this project. We had a senior individual
moving on, so we developed a relationship map of his key contacts. We also held a Question Time piece, a technical exchange focused on particular topics and a session around operational and process knowledge."

She said that the issue of expertise retention had been recognised as important for some time, but had stayed ‘on the back burner’. The techniques from the research project allowed them ‘to kick-start it’. They were able to adopt a more structured organisation-wide approach, but also one that was fun, which she viewed as important in a traditional organisation.

Responding better to extreme events

Extreme events such as accidents, crises and disasters often hit the headlines but also occur regularly beyond the public gaze in organisations of all types. Investigations into such incidents typically highlight systemic failures, raising fundamental issues about management and organisation. Following an extreme event such as Deepwater Horizon or the cases of Victoria Climbié and Baby P, organisations often instigate new practices, redesign processes and procedures and implement new work methods to prevent or limit recurrence. In many instances a Board of Inquiry also publishes recommendations for change, codifying practices to be implemented not only in the organisations that suffered the extreme event but also throughout the sector.

However, it often proves very difficult to get the new ways adopted.

A team of researchers, led by Professors David Denyer and David Buchanan of Cranfield School of Management, looked at six particular cases across different sectors. They interviewed people involved and looked at company documents and inquiry reports, using a change management perspective so that they could usefully help managers improve the process of putting changes in place.

The findings included new ways of bringing out and resolving underlying systemic issues, showing how to move from learning passively from events to setting up effective systems of bringing about change and new processes and how to develop the attitudes and practices seen in ‘high reliability’ organisations.

The research has been used by Addenbrooke’s Hospital in Cambridge to help review its strategy for ensuring patient safety, by Bedford and Luton Combined Fire and Rescue Service to look at its procedures for investigating incidents, and
by Centrica Storage Ltd to inform its programme to bring about high reliability. Professor Denyer also helped the senior management at Broadmoor Hospital create a safety and service improvement strategy and develop a safe working culture. Sellafield Ltd and NHS Southwest have used the research to train large numbers of their managers. The potential of the research to inform change management in less extreme or ‘normal’ situations has been developed in conjunction with Lane4, a UK-based management consultancy. Lane4 produced a new product offering a portfolio of practical tools, diagnostics, frameworks and other support to facilitate the development of ‘organisational resilience’.

http://managingextremechange.com
Globalisation places increasing competitive pressures on firms in countries such as the UK where labour costs are high. As a result foreign firms may locate and develop in the UK because it does not require participative employee relation systems, such as trades unions. But this may make it easier for foreign owned subsidiaries to exert downward pressure on labour costs and conditions.

Professor Frank McDonald of the University of Bradford, Professor Heinz-Josef Tüselmann of Manchester Metropolitan University, Professor Arne Heise of the Universität Hamburg, and Dr Matthew Allen of Manchester Business School investigated what was actually happening to employee relations in foreign-owned subsidiaries.

The research team surveyed a number of French, US and German owned subsidiaries, looking at employee relations systems and company performance. They found that subsidiaries from these countries practice a wide range of employee relations systems, but German subsidiaries were more likely to use participative systems. The research found good performance in some foreign owned firms that did not curb employee participation, but which used participative employee relation systems. This result was especially strong in German owned firms in competitive international markets with high knowledge and technology intensity.

The Trade Union Congress (TUC) used the results in their submission to the Trade and Industry Committee of the House of Commons on the Future of UK Manufacturing to make a case for encouraging participative employee relation systems; although the final report focussed away from this area, the Committee requested details of the work and its findings. The Hans Böckler Foundation uses the results in training programmes for Industrialists and Trade Unionists, whilst the German-British Chamber of Industry and Commerce use the results to provide information for German multinational corporations considering investing in the UK.

http://grossbritannien.ahk.de/en
http://www.boeckler.de/36912.htm
Corporate Boards need to generate creative solutions to the complex problems of a dynamic and rapidly changing global business environment. In such a circumstance avoiding ‘group think’ and accessing different perspectives ought to be key objectives.

For more than a decade Professor Susan Vinnicombe OBE and her colleagues in the International Centre for Women Leaders at Cranfield School of Management have been investigating the changing gender composition of the Boards and Executive Committees of UK FTSE-listed companies. Initially there were very few women present on the UK’s top corporate boards, and no publicly available data.

A Female FTSE Report disclosing their findings has been launched each year since 1999, providing data for the Office of National Statistics. This work has had increasing influence on successive UK Governments and other national Governments (including Norway, Spain, India, China, New Zealand and Australia) and their policies concerning women on boards.

Most recently Professor Vinnicombe and Dr Ruth Sealy were invited to contribute data and to participate fully in the Government’s review of women on boards chaired by Lord Davies.

The Davies Report acknowledged the critical role of this research in shaping the agendas and actions of successive UK Governments in this area.

In response to the Davies Report the UK’s Financial Reporting Council has changed the Corporate Governance Code to include a section specifically addressing gender diversity on corporate boards. Also, the Directors of FTSE-350 companies have been encouraged (with support from the Prime Minister David Cameron) to develop gender policies for their boards.

Greater Diversity Better Decision Making
It is well known that business owner-managers are generally too busy to read books and traditionally-styled management taught courses seem to be way off the mark. Professor Richard Thorpe AcSS of Leeds University Business School, working with colleagues, including Professor Ossie Jones, Professor Robin Holt and Dr Allan Macpherson – all at Liverpool University Business School – looked at how best to deliver business education and leadership programmes to small businesses.

They showed that knowledge is implicitly transferred through a variety of mechanisms including business networks, supply chains and professional advisors. The research also reaffirmed how action learning, peer learning and learner- or problem-centred approaches to business education can be effective in changing behaviour and energising change. The most effective approach focuses on the learner’s needs: for example, you don’t talk about ‘lean production’ if they really need help with their marketing in order to survive in business. The findings of the research were shared widely with the business education sector.

Working across the entire north of England, a high level think-tank was set up to establish and implement best practice. It looked at management learning in private, public, voluntary/not-for-profit and small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

It was clear that the SME sector was where there was greatest need and scope for development.

The think-tank formed the basis for the creation of the Northern Leadership Academy, a partnership between Leeds University Business School, Lancaster Management School and University of Liverpool Management School. Funding was provided by three regional development agencies.
In 2010, Goldman Sachs were so impressed with the rationale and fresh approach that they asked Leeds to deliver its leadership programme for 10,000 small businesses in the north. This programme is about to be rolled out nationally. More recently, Professor Thorpe has been talking to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills which is interested in seeing the work continue.
Companies have often not paid sufficient attention to reverse logistics issues, which involve everything that happens to a product after the point of sale, such as the return of faulty or unwanted goods. Such issues impact both on customer service and on these organisations’ bottom line.

**Professor John Cullen** and **Dr Jonathan Gorst** of the University of Sheffield, together with **Mike Bernon** of Cranfield University, worked with retailers, manufacturers and third party logistics providers to develop a toolkit. They did this by intensive interaction, in the form of workshops and industrial forums, with managers from around 40 companies connected to the UK retail sector. The participants represented a range of retail sectors including grocery and supermarkets, general merchandisers, home and personal care, home furnishing, catalogue retailing, car entertainment and accessories, electronics, toys, mobile phones and cosmetics.

The process of co-design of the reverse logistics toolkit was highly significant in terms of the impact arising out of this project. The managers involved in the industrial forums and workshops were taking ideas back to their organisations, sharing good practices, identifying benchmarks, and implementing new processes. One of the organisations involved in the project was Halfords plc which reduced its returns level by 40%.

Chris Hall, Head of Quality & Cost Reduction, Halfords commented: “The reverse logistics project had a major influence on the introduction of new reverse logistics processes within Halfords. It helped to increase awareness of the issues and the large potential for improvement to both bottom line performance and customer service through the introduction of improved processes. The identification of new tools and the support provided by discussions at the workshops played a vital part in the implementation of change at Halfords.”

http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/lscm/impact
Undeclared work, or what is sometimes called the ‘cash-in-hand’, ‘informal’ or ‘off-the-books’ economy, is a growing problem and governments throughout the European Union have been looking at what can be done about it. Until now national governments have had few opportunities to systematically share information with each other on what works and what does not.

Professor Colin Williams of the University of Sheffield Management School was asked by the Eurofound based in Dublin to evaluate what could be done to facilitate a joined-up approach towards this issue and his research highlighted the need for a ‘knowledge bank’ to share good practice. As a first step an on-line ‘knowledge bank’ was created, which evaluated the effectiveness of policy measures in five countries and a synthesis report was produced calling for a more coordinated approach.

The European Parliament then took up this issue, citing his work in a 2008 Resolution to step up the fight to combat undeclared work. The Resolution recommended the development of a more extensive knowledge bank of best practice policy measures as well as investigating creating a European platform to join up the fight against undeclared work. An EU body called Eurofound – the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions – asked Professor Williams to expand the knowledge bank to 31 European countries and he was awarded the European Commission contract to evaluate the feasibility of establishing a European platform for tackling undeclared work.

As a result, national governments now have a ‘learning hub’ to identify a whole range of possible innovative policy measures from other countries for tackling undeclared work as well as access to evaluations of their effectiveness. The European Commission is now discussing a concrete proposal for a European-wide institution for tackling undeclared work.

http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/labourmarket/tackling/search.php
How can police officers on the beat engage more effectively with the communities they serve? Professor Nelarine Cornelius of the University of Bradford and Dr Stephen Lloyd Smith of Brunel Business School looked at what Kent Constabulary had found out about how local communities perceived them. Annual satisfaction surveys, informal feedback and the research team’s own work showed that the public were satisfied with police services generally but regarded beat officers as distant, officious, and at times lacking in courtesy. Officers’ difficulties in engaging satisfactorily with young people and members of ethnic communities showed up as particular problem areas.

Police officers were already receiving training about communities and diversity but found it of limited practical benefit. With the research team, a serving officer PC Di Paul developed training for new officers based on two community placements, nine months apart. During these placements trainees ‘cross the divide’ to work in non-policing roles within groups they have not previously encountered, becoming part of the communities in which they later serve. Three hundred organisations took part and over 1000 officers were trained.

Follow up work nine years later showed clear lasting benefits.

Diversity training was effective as officers perceived it to be locally relevant, giving them an intimate knowledge of specific policing areas, rooted in real-life issues. They attached importance to ‘street-learning’ about local communities, deeming it more effective than ‘desk-learning’. They also brought community experience to their daily work as police officers, adopting informal leadership roles where and when appropriate in day-to-day policing. Greater awareness of the remit of organisations which work with the police enabled them to work with them better. The researchers also found that the public were much less likely to stereotype officers, learning to see the person behind the uniform, which made...
situations easier to handle. People who had provided placements for the trainee officers regarded those officers differently – as more open-minded, less judgmental and better able to communicate – and they also felt valued as a result of the help they had provided. Trust between officers and community organisations was greatly improved.

The Home Office formally recognised and commended the programme and a range of constabularies in England and Wales has adopted it. The programme was also extended to officers at ‘transfer points’ (from constable to sergeant; from sergeant to inspector, for example) to embed a greater community focus beyond entry level officers.
Raising finance is a common problem for businesses in the current climate, particularly financial investment for small firm growth. In the UK there is a big buyout market funded by Private Equity investors and rapid growth of this market has attracted considerable interest from policymakers and the media. However, critics claim that Private Equity backing leads to short-termism and an increased risk of insolvency.

So Professor Nick Wilson of Leeds University Business School and Professor Mike Wright of Imperial College London tracked the financial performance of a sample of Private Equity-backed buyouts between 1995 to 2010 and compared this with a matched sample of private companies, non-Private Equity-backed buyouts and listed companies in order to see if this appeared to be the case.

What they found was that the Private Equity-backed buyouts performed more strongly economically and showed better results in terms of productive efficiency and profitability. Similarly, they were actually less likely to become insolvent than the non-Private Equity-backed buyouts and listed companies, in comparison with other similar sized deals and comparable sectors of industry. The British Venture Capital Association published two reports on this research.

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills used the research findings in its work on estimating the ‘finance gap’.

This is the gap in the provision of finance for medium-sized, fast-growing firms, which the researchers estimated at some £5 billion. Often these firms are too large or fast-growing to ask the shareholders for more funds or to obtain sufficient bank finance; they may not even be ready to launch on the stock market and raise funds that way. As a result of this work Professor Wilson was invited to attend the Expert Economists sub-panel of the Breedon Task Force to
improve non-bank lending for SMEs, which made evidence-based recommendations to government ahead of Budget 2012 on practical measures to facilitate the development of alternative markets.

For more information see: ‘Beyond the Banks’ published by NESTA, available at www.nesta.org.uk and http://www.cmrc.co.uk/
See also www.bvca.co.uk
Dockworkers have a reputation for militancy and port reform, such as privatisation, often proves problematic in the face of worker opposition. This is seen both in developed and developing countries. Recently, attempts by the EC to open access to the port services market have failed and many new concession contracts for global container terminal operators have been delayed in the developing world by strikes and unrest.

**Professor Peter Turnbull** of Cardiff Business School looked at the nature and causes of dock strikes in the international port transport industry. He analysed the data available and looked more closely at some specific cases, interviewing those involved. He also looked at how to promote negotiation, consultation and the exchange of information between the various groups involved – government representatives, employers and workers on the matters of common interest – a process called ‘social dialogue’.

Professor Turnbull worked with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), which is a specialist agency of the United Nations, to find ways of reducing dock strikes especially in the face of changes to the way in which ports are run and to promote decent work. Together they developed a Guidance Manual and training scheme on Social Dialogue in the Process of Structural Adjustments and Private Sector Participation in Ports. The manual has been translated into six different languages including Arabic and Spanish and the training programmes are conducted in ports around the world, in several East European countries and, most recently, Peru. The ILO is now promoting the Guidance Manual in the Middle East in the wake of the ‘Arab Spring’.

The model of ‘social dialogue’ developed during this project is also being used more widely in other industries by the ILO. Professor Turnbull also used ‘social dialogue’ to develop official ILO Guidelines for the training of port workers, which have been agreed by the ILO Governing Body on behalf of its 183 member states.

A joint Cambridge-Harvard-LSE-Stanford team led by **Professor Nicholas Bloom** of Stanford University with **Professor John van Reenan** and **Rebecca Homkes** of LSE, plus **Dr Rafaella Sadun** of Harvard University, has been measuring management practices around the world and documenting the factors that drive success. They identified key groups of practices and, by working with firms, the media and web-tools, have been helping firms to adopt these management best practices to increase profits and save jobs.

Fierce overseas competition and high wages have proved to be a toxic combination for many UK firms. Companies have laid off hundreds of thousands of workers in the current recession, causing misery for many British workers. One solution to stem the job-losses is to help firms continually improve their management practices so that British firms can be the most efficient in the world.

The research team worked with management consultancy McKinsey and the World Bank to survey 10,000 firms around the world and identify the management practices associated with higher profitability and rapid growth. The team also ran management field experiments with another management consultancy firm, Accenture, on 28 large textile plants in India to obtain detailed experimental data on the causal impact of modern management practices.

The research resulted in the first global database on management practices, providing the ability to identify the key essentials of good management which drive economic success. The UK government is using the findings to identify policies to support management and they are also being shared with UK firms. The research has resulted in training schemes to raise management education, promoting foreign multinationals as a conduit for bringing global best-practice to the UK, and removing distortions in the tax system that prevent firms from bringing in professional external management.

[www.worldmanagementsurvey.com](http://www.worldmanagementsurvey.com)
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