



Talking Point

WINTER 2005 – 2006

THE LATEST HR NEWS FROM
NEWCASTLE BUSINESS SCHOOL

Welcome to Newcastle Business School

A very warm welcome to the winter edition of Talking Point, Newcastle Business School's Organisation and Human Resource Management newsletter.

We're delighted that one of our postgraduate students has earned an award from the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development for a well-received management report. Newcastle Business School has also been presented with a top award for a pioneering project management scheme that we run in partnership with Northumberland County Council.

We've been co-ordinating a range of events including a successful student evening, a forum on Human Resource Development and a guest lecture from the Development Director of The Community Foundation.

Finally, we have launched two exciting new courses: a Postgraduate Certificate in Coaching and a Masters in Management Practice.

We wish you and your staff every success for the coming year.

Kindest regards,

Paul Croney, Dean, Newcastle Business School



Newcastle Business School
Inspiring Excellence

NEW COURSE...

Masters in Management Practice

Introducing a unique opportunity for your future managers to maximise their potential and reap rewards for your company.

This innovative new masters offers a unique approach to management development.

For more information, please turn to page 4

NBS Postgraduate Student Wins Award for Nike Management Report

One of our brightest students, Lynn Bassett, has earned a top award from the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD) during an event held in November 2005 at Newcastle Civic Centre.



Sir Digby Jones presenting Lynn with her award

The event, 'A Business View of the Employment Landscape', was sponsored by Newcastle Business School (NBS) and chaired by Sir Digby Jones, Director-General of the Confederation of British Industry. The evening provided the opportunity for HR professionals from around the region to hear Sir Digby orate an entertaining dialogue on the joint responsibility of Government and British industry in maintaining employee skills and education. He highlighted that we must continually develop innovation and growth in order to compete with the economies of China, Korea and India, who can all utilise much cheaper labour and mass production to satisfy the worldwide market for affordable goods.

Student Awards

During the night's proceedings an award ceremony took place to recognise the achievements of four distinguished students who had submitted coursework to the CIPD. Their work was scrutinised by a panel of judges and each winner received a cheque for £150.

The award for best NBS postgraduate student studying Human Resource Management and Development went to Lynn Bassett whose management report on 'Managing Talent in NIKE UK' received a top mark which contributed to her award of the Postgraduate Diploma in HRM&D with Distinction.

Brenda Stalker, Programme Director for HRM&D programmes in NBS said,

"Lynn produced an excellent management report and her all round performance on the course reflects both her ability and her drive to achieve high standards in her professional practice with NIKE UK."



Competition winners with George Barker, Chair of North East Branch of the CIPD.

Newcastle Business School
Inspiring Excellence

NEW COURSE...

Postgraduate Certificate in Coaching

This course offers an excellent opportunity to study in an area of enormous growth and will be especially beneficial for:

- Senior HR Practitioners who want to develop coaching skills
- Line Managers who want to develop coaching capability and enhance their management or leadership approach
- Practising coaches who want to develop their coaching methodology and skills

For more information please contact admissions on 0191 227 4433 or email nb.admissions@northumbria.ac.uk

Guest Lecturer Sandra King, Director of the Community Foundation Receives Warm Reception from NBS

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a key area on the CIPD research agenda which is increasingly becoming included into the area of responsibility for HR functions and professionals. As a dynamic and large business school, the majority of undergraduate and postgraduate students at Newcastle Business School learn about CSR throughout their curriculum, so we thought it would be beneficial to invite a guest speaker who could provide real experience to back our courses' theoretical perspectives.

After a successful demonstration session at the local CIPD branch we asked Sandra King, Development Director of The Community Foundation to give a guest lecture titled 'Corporate Community Giving in Tyne and Wear'. The evening, which was held on 30th November, provided students with an informative and entertaining discussion of the core issues of Corporate Social Responsibility. In an enjoyable presentation Sandra highlighted the work of The Community Foundation, a grant-giving organisation that serves Tyne and Wear and Northumberland. With the backing of over 150 donors, the aim of the Foundation is to create a 'culture of giving' that can make a real difference to people's lives. Grants are awarded to groups and projects in need of funding which greatly improves the community.

The audience responded warmly to Sandra's lecture and left with an increased awareness of the ethics, economics and responsibilities of CSR.

Newcastle Business School was recently commended for its teaching and research into Corporate Social Responsibility in the December edition of the ABS Media Bulletin (No.16). Dr Dilek Demirbas received praise for her teaching and research into the economics of sustainable development, renewable energy economics and environmental economics.

Jane Gibbon was highlighted for her research into social accounting in community enterprises. Philip Shives was praised for his current involvement with research into Corporate Governance; and Richard Slack received acclamation for his research into corporate philanthropy.

NBS Wins North East Training Award

A pioneering scheme in Project Management launched by Newcastle Business School has been granted a top training award.

The programme, a partnership between NBS and Northumberland County Council, has sharpened project management skills for public and voluntary sector organisations across the county. The scheme was recognised as demonstrating an outstanding achievement to the region and picked-up a North East Training Award as part of the National Training Awards – the UK's most prestigious accolade for excellence in training and people development.

Nearly 550 people attended the awards event, ranging from senior managers to newly appointed staff, from nearly 50 different organisations including the County Council, District Councils, National Parks, and Business Link for Northumberland as well as such diverse bodies as the Holy Island Community Development Trust and the Northern Coalfields Trust.

The winning programme

Academic consultants from Newcastle Business School's Corporate Management and Development Centre created four short tailor-made programmes offering knowledge and understanding of key Project Management issues. The programmes covered project management, risk management and best practice. Surveys before and after showed that the number of people who said they were either good or fully competent in managing projects rose from 18% to 89% and 96% felt they



were contributing a great deal to project management in their organisation.

Ceridwyn Bessant, Associate Dean, Corporate and Management Development at NBS which delivered the training, said: 'This is a great achievement and demonstrates our commitment to working in partnership with our clients to design and deliver learning and education solutions tailored to meet the specific requirements of a situation. We are proud of what we have collectively achieved here in Northumberland.'

Mark Henderson, Chief Executive of Northumberland County Council, added: 'The programme is a shining testament to the value of shared learning. Whether large organisations or local voluntary groups, we all share the aim of improving the quality of life of Northumberland's residents and the success of our business community. Learning project management together has helped us work together and, three years on, we have far better partnership working, project management skills and systems in place. We can face the future with confidence.'

Key Speakers Head Forum on Human Resource Development

In October 2005 Newcastle Business School hosted a one-day conference on behalf of the University Forum for Human Resource Development (HRD). The event was designed to explore the perceptions and experiences of stakeholders involved in HRD and the UK Government's influences and agenda for developing workforce capability.

Speakers included Professor Stephanie Marshall, Director of Programme Development at the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education; Lesley Lee, Head of Training and Development at Northumbria University; Dave Storrie, Northern TUC Learning Services' Regional Development Worker and Alison Hollinrake, Senior Lecturer of Employee Development at the University of Central Lancashire.

Professor Marshall addressed issues relating to the importance of leadership and management within higher education institutions and, in particular, the growing recognition of the need for greater

investment in strategic HR. She spoke of the four main work streams aimed at supporting individual leaders through, for example, monitoring and coaching, developing the sector's leadership capacity, promoting professional and regional learning networks, and generating ideas and innovations.

Lesley Lee spoke of the application of the Leadership Framework into a particular leadership and management programme within Northumbria University, which is designed to build self-awareness and encourage participants to incorporate best practice into their own portfolio of skills and behaviours.

Dave Storrie discussed the developing role for Union Learning Representatives within the HRD arena. Union Learning Reps are trained to evaluate members' learning needs and aspirations and advise them of available opportunities. Such Reps are an important partner in promoting the value of learning and training in workplaces and play a significant role in engaging workers who might otherwise be reluctant to discuss their training needs.

Alison Hollinrake reported on a North West based research project that identified the extent of Union Learning Reps activity and in particular discussed the enablers and inhibitors of the ULR role within the workplace.



Diversity at Work Presentation Highlights Successful CIPD Student Evening

On Wednesday 23 November Newcastle Business School hosted the CIPD students' evening. The event proved to be a highly successful event, with over 100 people in attendance.

Key to the evening's success was a thought-provoking presentation and discussion organised by Sue Abbott of NBS which was delivered by local business consultancy RBA on the topic of 'Diversity at Work'. Two of RBA's most experienced consultants, Ranjana Bell and Ros Clarke, gave a lively and stimulating talk, assisted by an entertaining video that addressed many of the topic's core components.

The RBA consultants covered a variety of contemporary work issues and responded well to questions from the audience. The discussion focused on the differences between equality and diversity, positive action, the 'canteen' culture, the importance of effective leadership, the business case for diversity and flexible working.

The audience, which included both students and university staff, thoroughly enjoyed the event which generated plenty of positive feedback. The RBA consultants were warmly thanked for their time and we hope to continue relationships with them in the future.

Further information on diversity can be obtained by contacting Sue Abbott on 0191 227 4062 or sue.abbott@northumbria.ac.uk

Leading Research on Learning in Organisations

Over several years Newcastle Business School has established a reputation for leading edge research and consultancy in learning and HRD in organisations.

One area that Newcastle Business School has demonstrated expertise is in the development and application of 'Communities of Practice'. The concept of Communities of Practice (CoP) is now embedded within areas of public and private sector organisations and is evident in diverse organisation settings including the NHS and IBM. Informal groupings have always existed but in the quest to develop and harness knowledge and 'create value' to organisations, CoPs have been embraced and developed as various strands of management practice have fused and merged.

CoPs in Practice

Staff within Newcastle Business School have been supported in creating their own CoPs to support research, consultancy and teaching in themes that use expertise from a range of different subject disciplines e.g. ethics and corporate social responsibility, organisational learning and knowledge, management and leadership practice and public service management. Our experience of CoPs led to staff contributions to a highly esteemed publication, **The Encyclopaedia of Communities of Practice in Information and Knowledge Management (Coakes and Clarke, eds, 2005)** with chapters written by Dr Patricia Bryans, Sandra Corlett, Lai Ling Ng, Dr Jon Pemberton, Dr Sharon Mavin and Brenda Stalker.

Special Issue of 'The Learning Organization: An International Journal': Communities of Practice: One size fits all?

Call for Papers

Dr Jon Pemberton and Dr Sharon Mavin, (European Editor) will be editing a special issue of the Learning Organization journal with a call for papers to be released in the New Year. In this special issue, we are keen to examine and extend the journal's

practitioner and academic audience's understanding of:

- how CoPs emerge, develop, flourish and/or die,
- their potential to improve or even inhibit learning and knowledge in the quest for 'best practice'
- the interaction of individuals in such CoPs and the social learning systems present in such groupings – for example, why do some people thrive in a CoP environment when others avoid them?
- the benefits and limitations of CoPs to their members, non-members and the organisation as a whole
- the practical conditions and considerations needed to support effective CoPs and the factors that potentially indicate 'ineffective' CoPs
- the potential divergence between theoretical viewpoints and the realisation of CoPs in practice
- new theoretical perspectives on the optimal working of CoPs.

Please contact Dr Jon Pemberton on jon.pemberton@northumbria.ac.uk for further details. The special issue of the journal will be published in January 2007.

Learning in Public Sector Management (McMillan & Fenwick, 2005)

Dr Janice McMillan and Dr John Fenwick continue the active development of public management research at Newcastle Business School by presenting this paper to a conference at Glasgow in April 2006 and by convening two panels on organisational learning and HR for the Annual Conference of the Public Administration Committee to be held at Durham University later in the year.

Solve your HR or Personnel Problems and Shape a New Generation of HR Managers!

Do you have a HR or Personnel related issue but no time to investigate it or research for potential solutions? If so, we may be able to help!

Newcastle Business School (NBS) are currently looking for local businesses to provide work experience opportunities for post-graduate students studying Human Resource Management and Development. The students are available from the end of January 2006 until May/June 2006 on Thursdays and/or Fridays of each week.

Any project undertaken will provide the focus for a 'Management Report', which forms part of the assessment for the MA degree, but more importantly meets an essential part of the criteria for CIPD membership. Since the Management Report should be based on recent work experience and actively contribute to resolving a workplace issue, it is something we find difficult to simulate in the classroom or library environment, hence our plea.

Nothing to Lose, Everything to Gain

These are not typical placements, nor are they typical students. **The students will not require payment**, however, they will be able to assist your business by undertaking a HR-related project for you and even help out with day-to-day business operations. The student may require access to information and perhaps a desk to work at, although they could work off-site if accommodation is a challenge for you.

NBS will be providing the opportunity for potential placement supervisors to meet the programme leader, Lynne Powell on Friday 3 February 2006. We will be supporting supervisors providing a skills development workshop on coaching skills and introducing a range of online learning resources which have been specifically designed to support placement supervisors.

If you have a potential project in mind in a HR related field, please give us a call by January 27 on 0191 227 4021 or visit www.newcastlebusinessschool.co.uk for more information. Working together to develop the HR managers of the future...

Newcastle Business School Research Findings Published Internationally

Staff from the Organisational Human Resources Management Division continue the active distribution of their research findings to audiences throughout the world.

Human Resource Development: Challenges and Opportunities (Anmol, 2005)

Newly published in India this publication includes chapters on *Understanding Management Development in China* by Paul Hill, X-Jian Wu and a former colleague together with *Barriers to Learning: Conflicts that Occur Between and Within Organisational Systems* Dr Janice McMillan, Philip Wilding and a former colleague.

Organisational Learning (OL) is a critical component of Strategic Human Resource Development (SHRD). Without OL it would not be possible to engage with the creative faculties of individuals, teams and organisations. Consequently, it would be pointless to engage with the drive to empower individuals in order to maximise their own potential and thereby the potential to develop the organisation from within.

Despite our concern to promote OL as central to SHRD we argue that the literature is fundamentally immature, overly prescriptive and produces rhetorical clichés to the detriment of practical solutions. We argue that Organisational Learning, as the underpinning process for Strategic Human Resource Development, has not yet reached a sufficient degree of maturity. Whilst organisations desire OL in order to achieve positive outcomes and eliminate negative outcomes in performance it is equally clear that in order to create flexible employees and a learning culture capable of generating organisational effectiveness, SHRD needs to reassess the contribution of OL.

Organization Studies Journal (Published by Sage)

The leading-edge research of Ron Beadle, working in conjunction with a former colleague, will shortly be appearing in the international journal *Organization Studies*. Ron's research concerns corporate social responsibility, organisational virtue in business, agents, practices, institutions and environments. This further demonstrates the commitment of NBS staff to leading-edge academic research alongside practical relevance to practitioners.

Train Your Future Managers Today with the NBS Masters in Management Practice

We have developed an exciting new programme that not only equips high calibre business graduates with the skills and knowledge to become high level managers, but also benefits forward thinking companies.

Our one-year Masters in Management Practice is designed and delivered by Newcastle Business School with input from a consortium of regional, national and international companies. Aimed at top-end graduates with strong management potential, delivery and content is tailored specifically to the needs of both the employer and student.

The programme rigorously promotes academic, personal and professional development resulting in highly skilled individuals that match your employee profiles exactly. Partners can influence the design of the programme producing graduates with specific skills and competencies. On-going support is also provided as well as close liaison in order to identify and deliver precise learning and experiential goals for each student.

In return for sponsorship, we ensure that we remain sufficiently flexible for

partners to mentor and provide training according to your specific company needs. This two-way process is called 'Action Learning' and is a system where everyone benefits: the student from a tailored, hands-on learning experience and the company from a well-established link with a high-calibre graduate with a precise employee profile.

As a partner company you simply match your agreed candidate profile with one of our students and work closely with us to identify the best vocational learning path for that student. Your only financial commitment is to pay a salary for the length of the placement as the student has already covered the programme fees. At the end of the placement term, partners benefit from business graduates educated to Masters level with nine months' intensive thinking and hands-on experience in the latest, most relevant management practices.

For more information about how to become one of our partners please contact the programme leader, Sonal Minocha on 0191 243 7677 or email sonal.minocha@northumbria.ac.uk



Solidarity Behaviour versus Queen Bees: Women in Management

Dr Sharon Mavin, Associate Dean Research has progressed research in women in management and has two papers forthcoming in the international journal 'Women in Management Review'.

The research critiques the concept of solidarity behaviour between women as a way of progressing women in management and problematises the continued use of women as Queen Bees in management.

The empirical research investigates negative relationships between women and argues that in order to change the experiences of women in management, rather than masking or ignoring the complexity of their context, recommending more senior women as mentors and role models whilst at the same time blaming them for being more male than the men, there is a need to refocus action on challenging and changing overall gendered structures, cultures and systems which continue to impact upon all women in organisation.

Future action research processes which engage women in senior and other levels in management in consciousness raising to the impact women have on other women is a way forward and as such presents a unique challenge to advancing women in management. The alternative is to maintain the status quo by continuing with a veneer or pretence of sisterhood and solidarity behaviour, continuing to ignore the impact of corporate patriarchy on senior women, whilst as women we continue to 'fight amongst ourselves'.

If you would like further information or copies of the papers please contact gemma.metcalfe@northumbria.ac.uk

C O N T A C T S

Newcastle Business School can help develop and enhance your business through a range of courses, specialist programmes and networking opportunities. If you would like to know more about NBS, or any of the topics covered in this newsletter, or if you would simply like additional copies of this publication, we would be delighted to hear from you.

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