STAFF IN THE NEWS

Keynote speech at launch of innovative Futures Research Centre

Professor Colin Williams, Associate Dean (Research) in the Management School shared the platform with Professor Linda McDowell (St John’s College, Oxford University) at the launch of an innovative new university-wide Research Centre at the University of Southampton. Both gave keynote addresses on visions of the future of work in the 21st century.

Find out more about the Work Futures Research Centre (http://www.soton.ac.uk/wfrc/)

The Centre will bring together diverse disciplines from social science, education, health sciences, geography, engineering and computer science to explore trans-disciplinary topics addressing the future of work.

Professor Colin Williams commented “It has been a pleasure to help launch this truly multi-disciplinary research centre and to make a contribution to setting a research agenda to facilitate its future success”.

AWARDS

Keith Glaister

Dean wins best paper award for International Business at BAM, 2009

Professor Keith Glaister and colleagues, A Boateng, M M Uddin and G Lordofus, secured the award for best paper in the International Business category at the recent annual British Academy of Management conference in Brighton.

The paper was entitled “Motives for Cross-border Mergers and Acquisitions: Evidence from multiple sources, British Academy of Management Annual
Said Professor Colin Williams, Associate Dean (Research) “It is great to see staff from the School receive such accolades for the quality of their work, and even better when our Dean leads from the front and provides us with a clear signal of what we should be striving to achieve”.

**Naoko Komori**

Dr Naoko Komori’s publication “Towards the feminization of accounting practice: lessons from the experiences of Japanese women in the accounting profession” was highly commended in the above award shortlist run by Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal (AAAJ).

The AAAJ provides a forum for the publication of high-quality manuscripts which explore, debate and critique accounting and auditing policy and practice and how these interact within their socio-economic and political environments.

The shortlist for the Mary Parker Follett Award is selected each year by editors and members of the advisory board in recognition of the paper making the most significant contribution towards research literature published in the AAAJ. The award reflects AAAJ’s leadership and commitment to the IPAAA (Interdisciplinary perspectives on accounting, auditing and accountability) movement honouring a woman who was a pioneer in interdisciplinary approaches to the philosophy and practice of accountability and management.

Dr Komori’s work was chosen for the significant contribution it makes to the opening up of Anglo-centred argument in the research area, as well as its excellence in approach and presentation.

The paper explores the relationship of women and accounting in different social and cultural contexts, drawing on in-depth ethnographical studies to examine the real-life experiences of 66 Japanese women accounting professionals. By considering the influence that their entry into the accounting profession had had on its role and position, it locates their lived experiences within the context of ongoing corporate governance changes and globalization in the field of accountancy.

The paper can be found in the Special Issue of AAAJ on “Gender and Accounting Revisited” (edited by Jane Broadbent and Linda Kirkham) in 2008 (Vol.21, No.4)
with Prof. Lee Parker, editor of AAAJ and Prof. Katsuhiko Kokubu, Kobe University, Japan.

RESEARCHER PROFILES

**Andrew Tylecote: Discovering China**

I have been interested in the Chinese economy and the technological development of China for many years. (My father was an archaeo-metallurgist who worked, among other things, on the marvellously advanced iron industry of ancient China. When he visited Beijing in the early 80s his interpreter was one of my sisters, who was married to a British diplomat stationed there, and was extremely fluent in Chinese.) But because I didn’t speak Chinese myself I didn’t feel I could really go in depth. That changed in 2001 when I got my first Chinese research student, Cai Jing (now Dr J. Cai, a lecturer at Aberdeen University). To be a good supervisor I had to talk to her a lot about China, and as her studies developed I began publishing jointly with her on aspects of Chinese management of technology. I soon found myself being treated as an expert on China by Chinese scholars, which I found rather funny because of course at that stage I depended heavily on Jing’s knowledge. My first visit to China was only in 2004. However I did have one advantage over other Western scholars working on China – I had lived in India and I had worked in some depth on Brazil and I knew very well that one should not try to simply apply Western theories and conceptual frameworks to developing countries – one had to adapt those frameworks first. I did that quite thoroughly for China; and since even Chinese scholars often try to use Western frameworks without adaptation, that gave me an edge.

It now seems odd to remember that there was a time - not a decade ago - when I wasn’t working on China. I now have to resist the pull to become a China specialist, which I wouldn’t want and nor would my Chinese colleagues and collaborators. Since 2005 I have spent a total of four months as a Visiting Professor at top Chinese universities – three months at Tsinghua and a month at Zhejiang. I have given many papers and an increasing number of keynotes at conferences on and in China, and visited many Chinese universities. (I had a particularly large and appreciative audience at UESTC in Chengdu (Sichuan) ten days after the Sichuan earthquake last year, since I seemed to be almost the only Westerner in Sichuan.)

In 2005 Jing completed her doctorate, and happily I got another excellent Chinese research student, Liu Jiajia, who was also my research assistant on a research project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council on Corporate Governance and Technological
Development in China. Jiajia is now a lecturer at Manchester Business School (even before she has her PhD!) but happily I have a third Chinese research student……

My knowledge of China is now giving me a new advantage. For a long time I have been working on the dynamics of the world economy, parallel to my work on technology management (there is a closer connection than you might think). With the world crisis this work is more urgent and important than before: and of course it is hard to understand the world economy without understanding China……

Frank Birkin

Before becoming an academic, I worked as an accountant with the General Electric Company (GEC) and International Computers Limited (ICL) in the UK and with Nchanga Consolidated Copper Mines in Zambia, a company managed by Anglo Charter International. This work was followed by five years teaching accountancy at Mombasa Polytechnic in Kenya and then my first taste of academic life at Staffordshire University. However, it was not until I joined the University of Sheffield that my research career gained momentum.

The principal aim of my research has always been to incorporate aspects of environmental, ecological and social performance within the formal accounting systems of companies. This has always been international. For example, the first research project that I undertook was with money from the DTI to study environmental accounting in Denmark. I worked with a colleague from Price Waterhouse Coopers to study Danish companies such as Danish Steel and Danfoss A/S that were already practising detailed and formal environmental accounting. My work was side tracked a little when I collaborated with a group of Europeans (Danes, Austrians, Portuguese and Swiss) working for the EU on an environmental management project, “Preventative Environmental Management for Small Enterprises (PREMISE)” - EU DGXII Environment. This study enabled me to deliver a series of seminars and
I lectured on environmental management at universities in Indonesia.

But I regained my original focus when I won EU funding for a three country study (UK, Greece and Italy), “Sustainable Tourism’s Environmental Protection Systems (STEPS) for islands”. This was my first formulation of accounting for sustainable development. The project ended with a dedicated conference in Venice attended by global institutions such as UNEP, the World Tourism Organisation and the World Wide Fund for Nature.

My environmental accounting and management experience enabled me to join forces with the University of Sheffield’s Civil Engineering department to win EPSRC money for a study of Whole Life Costing of Water Distribution Networks. This project was the first of several successful collaborations between the School of Management and Civil Engineering.

Whilst highly theoretical and pioneering in many respects, my work has always had a strong practical dimension and this has enabled me to keep close links with industry. I was for example a founding member of Staffordshire Business and Environment Network (SBEN) in collaboration with Staffordshire County Council, Josiah Wedgwood, Royal Doulton and the Midland Electricity Board. I am currently a committee member of the South Yorkshire Green Business Club hosted by Sheffield Chamber of Commerce. It is a further measure of my practical aspects that two spin-off companies arose from different research projects in which I was engaged.

In recent years, I formed the Chinese Europe Responsible Trade (CERT) Network that instigated several business and official visits from China, and research and capacity building projects.

I am now active in projects to implement and develop environmental management accounting across Chinese industry starting with the Taiyuan High-Tech Park in Shanxi Province; to implement a form of sustainability accounting in the Environmental Health Management function in Sheffield, Gothenburg, Taiyuan and Nanjing Cities; and to develop management information systems for the development of sustainable forms of tourism in China and SE Asia. Finally in collaboration with Prof Thomas Polesie of Gothenburg University, I am writing a book with the title of “Intrinsically Sustainable Business: Active Nature, Accounting and Open Societies”.

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Pauline Dibben

In terms of my research perspective, I take a broad political economy approach, evaluating factors such as the impact of privatisation on public sector employees, but also engage with institutional theory and examine how the complex network of relationships at national and supranational levels impacts on employment relations and the role of trade unions. Primary research has included the analysis of large scale surveys and also in-depth qualitative research involving interviews and observation.

My research career did not follow a traditional route. I left school with ‘O’ levels, then, supported by my husband, returned to study for ‘A’ levels part-time while bringing up two young children. I worked in cafes and retail jobs while taking my undergraduate degree, and studied for a PhD part-time while employed at the University of North London and then Middlesex University. In 2006, I moved to the University of Sheffield.

My research has progressed through four main phases. My undergraduate and postgraduate dissertations focused on employment policy, and this was followed by practical experience as a JobClub leader, assisting long term unemployed people into work. After this, I worked within local government, and later moved into the University sector. The second phase of my research focused on local government decision-making, resulting in publications in journals such as ‘Local Government Studies’ and ‘Public Administration’, and two edited books examining public sector reform. The third phase of my research focused on disability and job retention, with joint publications in a range of journals including the ‘British Journal of Management’, the ‘Human Resource Management Journal’, and ‘Public Money and Management’. Although I still maintain an interest in UK public sector reform and employment, the fourth, and current, phase focuses on regulation, infrastructure, and employment relations in South Africa and Mozambique. Publications have included chapters in edited volumes and articles in journals such as the ‘African Sociological Review’ and ‘Relations Industrielles/Industrial Relations’.

Why do I not simply focus my research on the UK? During exploratory research trips to South Africa and Mozambique in the late 1990s, I was shocked by high levels of...
poverty and overwhelmed by the willingness of people to forgive and move forward following their countries’ traumatic pasts. As a Christian, my wish to help those who are marginalised has since led me to be a Trustee for FOILAIDs, a UK based charity supporting Aids victims and their families in South Africa. Current research in South Africa and Mozambique includes investigation into the role of trade unions in supporting those in formal and informal sector (undeclared) work. Mozambique is a challenging country within which to conduct research, not least because I have needed to learn the official language of Portuguese. Also, the existing body of knowledge on Mozambique is patchy, and therefore much of my research breaks new ground. Further challenges relate to building connections with Mozambican scholars who face a range of pressures, including a lack of infrastructure and financial resources. In the capital city of Maputo, although there are signs of economic growth, there is also evidence of destruction following the civil war, widespread poverty, and high levels of HIVAIDs and cholera. Therefore the country relies heavily on foreign investment and donor organisations such as Iris Ministries, a Christian charity that runs churches, feeds the poor and provides orphanages (see photo).

My research experience feeds into my teaching. At the University of Sheffield, I enjoy teaching courses that are closely related to my research interests - an undergraduate module on Industrial Relations, and postgraduate modules on Industrial Relations and International Human Resource Studies. I have also taught courses in research methods, human resource management and organisational behaviour. Throughout my studies and my academic career I have benefited from the encouragement given to me by both tutors and colleagues.

Where do I see myself in ten years’ time? I expect to be still lecturing at the University of Sheffield, but also intend that my research in the UK and Africa will have made a positive impact.

I have been working at Sheffield University since 1990, mainly teaching courses on sport and recreation management at Master’s level along with the Research Methods module. My interests for a long-time have focused on volunteering and sports management. In particular, these are two fields of research that have for some time taken up a
considerable amount of my research efforts.

*Sports programmes targeted at young people so as to reduce crime.*

Over the past decade or so, I have evaluated five programmes, and these were published in a book:

This book was written for students, practitioners and policy makers. Indeed, it not only directly arose out of my teaching but also fed directly back into my future teaching in this field. This volume deals with some complex problems involved in programme evaluation. A theoretical framework for relating different types of programme to different mechanisms of crime reduction is further developed in:


Over the years, I have published 14 other papers on this topic, some focusing specifically on the role of outdoor adventurous activities. I have also contributed to numerous conferences for practitioners; such as North Wales Police; the West Australian Sport and Recreation Industry Annual Conference, Perth, Australia; Sports Council for Wales; and the Institute of Sport and Recreation Management Annual Conference. I am a member of the Centre for Criminological Research at the University of Sheffield.

*Volunteers in sport*

In 1991 Sheffield hosted the World Student Games and enrolled many in the local population to act as volunteers for this sporting event. Since this date, I have been deeply involved in researching this subject. Nearly every major sporting event now has a large volunteer body from every major Olympics to the football World Cup. My research explores how volunteers can be used most effectively in sport.

My present research includes a case study of Manchester Event Volunteers, a volunteer development programme designed to produce a legacy from the 2002 Commonwealth Games. This organisation acts as a broker between volunteers and event managers and is probably the best example in the world of a volunteering legacy organisation established after a major sports event. It therefore offers a valuable model for others to copy of how a volunteering legacy can be created in an area well after similar showcase events have been and gone. In this research, I am using the concept of the psychological contract to examine the relationships between volunteers and managers, and examining the way the organisation facilitates episodic volunteering – allowing volunteers to give as much or as little time as they want, to individual events. This builds on research into a similar programme in Newham, which is one of the host boroughs for the 2012 Olympics will be held. See:


With a colleague, I am currently presenting interim results from the Manchester research at conferences of the Voluntary Sector Studies Network in the UK, and the Australia and New Zealand Leisure Studies Association, in Brisbane.

During 2009 I have also been a co-researcher on the most detailed survey ever conducted of the financial state of voluntary sector sports clubs in the UK. This research was conducted for the Central Council for Physical Recreation:


Some key findings are the very small profits made by such clubs, the significance of bar takings to the clubs with their own social facilities, and the general robustness of clubs in the economic recession.

In 2008 I also co-researched the impact of child protection legislation on sports volunteers in Scotland. This research report is:


I have joint authored the two most extensive surveys of sports volunteers in the UK, conducted for Sport England in 2002, and the Sports Council, 1996. I have published over 12 papers on sports volunteers and several other contributions for practitioners. In these I have explored the impact of the ‘professionalisation’ of the voluntary sector and the challenges facing volunteers from societal changes, such as increased legislation, risk aversion, and performance indicators applied by Sport England, via the national Governing bodies of sport. I’m a member of the Sports Volunteering Research Network which meets twice a year to discuss sports volunteer research.

**Beyond the academic job**

As you might expect, I am both a keen volunteer and love engaging in sport in my leisure time. My favourite leisure activities are mountaineering, rock climbing and fell running, so Sheffield is the perfect location for me with so many great facilities right on my doorstep.
PhD STUDENT PROFILES

Olga Onoshchenko

Olga Onoshchenko is from the Ukraine. She joined the Management School in October 2009 as a PhD research student under the supervision of Professor Colin C. Williams.

Her research project explores the extent and nature of undeclared work in Ukraine, the reasons for staying off-the-books, current governmental policy to tackle this issue and possible measures to combat undeclared cash flows in Ukraine. The idea of exploring undeclared cash flows was raised by her two-years auditing experience at KPMG Ukraine where she worked after obtaining her MSc degree in International Economics at Kyiv National Economic University (Ukraine).

NEW RESEARCH GRANTS

Martina McGuinness

Risk and Resilience Grant Award
October 16th, 2009 Dr Tina McGuinness has been successful in her grant application to the White Rose Collaboration Fund. She has been awarded £14,960 to conduct a collaborative research project entitled “Risk, Resilience and Governance”.

Professor Colin Williams, Associate Dean (Research), commented “It is wonderful to see Tina’s pioneering work on risk management being recognised and rewarded, especially given how crucial it is becoming in the contemporary context of the need to create more resilient communities. We look forward to seeing the results of this project and supporting its dissemination to a wide audience”.

Colin Williams

TACKLING CASH-IN-HAND PRACTICES IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Until now, national governments have found it difficult to know what policy approaches and measures are effective and appropriate when tackling undeclared work. There has been little systematic sharing of information on what works and what does not.

To resolve this, in 2009 the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions employed a team of researchers to create a ‘knowledge bank’. Led by Professor Colin Williams of the Management School, over 100 policy measures adopted in 27 European countries have been evaluated and their transferability to other nations and sectors explored.
A good practice overview report has also been produced on Measures to Tackle Undeclared Work in European Union. This provides a typology of the potential approaches and measures available against which national governments can compare the breadth and composition of their own approaches.

[Link to overview report](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/labourmarket/tackling/search.php)

**ESTABLISHING A EUROPEAN PLATFORM FOR TACKLING UNDECLARED WORK**

Across the 27 Member States of the European Union (EU-27) as well as EFTA countries, national governments have invested a great deal of effort in developing and testing various policy approaches and measures to tackle undeclared work. Until now, however, the emphasis given to cross-national cooperation has been rather less than one might have expected.

Reflecting this, the role of international cooperation in the prevention and fight against undeclared work has gained increased priority as a policy matter in the EU and in Member States’ agendas. At present, most cooperation occurs on a piecemeal country-by-country basis. More concerted coordinated action between labour inspectorates, and other relevant monitoring and enforcement bodies to prevent and fight undeclared work, has been the exception rather than the rule.

In consequence, it is now widely recognised that there is a need to explore the feasibility of establishing a European platform to coordinate actions between labour inspectorates, and other relevant monitoring and enforcement bodies. The precise configuration of this platform for coordinated European action, however, will need to be fully debated and an evidence-base is required to enable that discussion and debate to take place in the clearest of terms.

Professor Colin Williams of the Management School has been selected by the European Commission to provide the evidence-base and a series of policy options so as to enable an informed discussion and debate.

About Colin Williams; Professor Colin Williams is Director of the Centre for Regional Economic and Enterprise Development (CREED) in the Management School and Programme Director for the MSc Management (Entrepreneurship and Economic Development). He teaches the MSc modules ‘Managing Local & Regional Economies’ and ‘The Future of Work’.
A feasibility study will be conducted during 2010 on establishing a European platform for cooperation between labour inspectorates, and other relevant monitoring and enforcement bodies, to prevent and fight undeclared work, funded by the European Commission [No. VT/2009/049]. This will learn from the lessons of not only previous attempts to seek cooperation in other spheres of activity at a European level and/or cross-nationally but also gauge evidence and views from across the full range of interested parties across governments and social partners in EU member states and beyond.

This research will be conducted in collaboration with Dr Piet Renooy of Regioplan Policy Research in the Netherlands, Ruslan Stefanov of the Center for the Study of Democracy (CSD) in Bulgaria, Professor Charles Woolfson of Linköping University in Sweden and Roeland Hartman, international labour law expert at Holland Van Gijzen Attorneys.

The current project builds upon Professor Williams’ involvement in earlier European-wide research including the design of a 27-nation survey of undeclared work for the European Commission implemented by Eurobarometer in 2007, and the recent production for the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions of a good practice ‘knowledge bank’ evaluating the effectiveness and transferability of over 100 policy measures used in 27 EU member states.

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE INITIATIVES

(1) ConsultIWP Activities

Evaluation of Learning and development with the Royal College of Nursing

ConsultIWP were shortlisted for the Division of Occupational Psychology (DOP), part of the British Psychological Society, Practitioner of the Year Award for a study they carried out earlier this year with the Royal College of Nursing. The DOP commented “ConsultIWP’s nomination particularly impressed the shortlist panel as a piece of work that was of credit to Occupational Psychology.”

The title of the project was ‘Evaluation of learning and development: an opportunity for a systems review’. Following Investors in People (iIP) assessment the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) wanted to understand how evaluation of learning and development (L&D) activities for their 800 UK staff could be enhanced and aligned with business objectives. ConsultIWP conducted focus groups, stakeholder interviews and trio interviews with people who had recently undertaken L&D along with their manager and a peer. Analyses confirmed the need for knowledge sharing and quantification of behavioural and cognitive changes linked to current systems. These themes were explored by using the recent TOTADO model of evaluation (Birdi, 2006) to ensure future evaluation would be a marriage of latest theory and practice.
ConsultIWP created an evaluation model that integrated with their human resource systems, as well as shaping future L&D activities, and which was supported by a set of tools utilising the RCN’s IT platform. Use of the model encourages reflection and role innovation in the workplace based on knowledge sharing. ConsultIWP delivered the model earlier this year and advised the roll-out across the UK.

Immediate results were IiP accreditation along with increased conversations about performance and the use of innovative approaches to learning. Financial and membership benefits for the RCN are expected to occur after full implementation.

Sadly on this occasion ConsultIWP missed out on winning the award but were delighted to have been shortlisted.

Team Effectiveness with the Royal Navy

ConsultIWP engaged in a large scale research project with Royal Navy to track changes in attitudes, team cohesion and effectiveness. The project developed a comprehensive model of how teams function in the organisation. A survey instrument was developed to assess team work in departments at different stages of work cycle.

Wellbeing At Work with Sheffield NHS

This programme of work at Sheffield NHS focused on increasing awareness and understanding of the causes of work related stress, and on increasing the capacity within the organisation to proactively manage stress by developing skills in the use of practical tools and techniques that could be used to intervene and address the causes of stress in the work place. The project delivered:

  o An understanding of the causes of work related stress
  o Techniques for assessing the prevalence of these causes in the work environment
  o Skills and techniques for intervening to improve work environments
  o An understanding of the organisational symptoms of stress
  o An understanding of the individual symptoms stress

Work was carried out at four levels in the organisation:

  o Senior leaders (executive team and those with strategic responsibility): Raising awareness and developing active support
  o Human resource management professionals, staff responsible for supporting and developing employees: Developing capabilities and capacity.
  o Frontline managers: Assessing work environments
  o Frontline staff: Developing self help skills

(2) Logistics and Supply Chain Management Research Centre (LSCM)
LSCM has been involved in a number of recent knowledge exchange activities with industrial partners. Professor Lenny Koh and Professor John Cullen have completed the following innovation vouchers:

**Innovation Voucher with SEAMS Ltd**

SEAMS Ltd and the Logistics and Supply Chain Management Research Centre at the University of Sheffield are spreading the message of modelling CO₂ in the supply chain, both locally and globally.

Professors Koh and Cullen at the University of Sheffield are using WiLCO in their research with great success. Recently, two MSc projects were completed using WiLCO to model the CO₂ in the supply chain of JCB. These projects successfully delivered research that has been presented at a range of global conferences including Netherlands, India and Taiwan. The work is of particular interest to those within the UK’s global supply chain.

The success of the working relationship saw it awarded with one of the first innovation vouchers in the South Yorkshire region. This voucher was used by to explore the market and make recommendations of how WiLCO can deliver value into the planning of green and low carbon supply chains.

One of the initiatives resulted in a series of knowledge exchange sessions. These sessions brought together companies in and around Sheffield to share their experiences and opinions on the CO₂ debate. They typically consisted of a series of presentations and round table discussions. Participants enjoyed this combination of formal presentations and the ability to voice their opinions to their peers. A series of further workshops is planned in the coming year.

**Innovation Voucher with Stradia Ltd**

Again, using the Innovation Voucher Scheme, Professors John Cullen and Lenny Koh undertook an evaluation of Property Works, a strategic asset management system and approach that has been developed by Stradia Ltd to support its consultancy services. The evaluation was focussed on a pilot application at Peterborough City Council. The evaluation was undertaken at a time when the Audit Commission has emphasised the need for local authorities to improve their strategic asset management. It also fits in neatly with the new national Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) performance measurement system that focuses on how well local public services are performing and emphasises indicators such as quality of life and the way in which resources are being managed. Property is a key resource for local authorities and the way in which the property portfolio is managed to improve service provision will become increasingly important. The study identified evaluation criteria, findings against the criteria and key headline conclusions.
Coal Conference

Experts explore benefits of coal industry for Yorkshire

Experts from the worlds of politics, academia and business came together at the University of Sheffield on 28 October 2009 to discuss social and economic regeneration opportunities for the coal industry in Yorkshire and the implications this will have for climate change.

The conference, which was held at the Edge Conference Centre at the University, was hosted by the Rt Hon John Prescott MP. He was joined by a delegation of Chinese politicians who gathered in Sheffield to look at the positive contributions that could be had from the coal industry.

Discussion included increasing co-operation and investment opportunities between the North of England and industrial areas of China, the positive contribution of coal, latest and future techniques in the mining and burning of coal, government policy for the coal industry and coal communities, climate change issues, and regeneration implications and considerations for the region.

The Coalfield Regeneration Trust have been actively supporting the conference and will be showing the delegation from China, several facilities that they have helped establish to deal with the after-effects of the coal industry in the UK. The conference will also include visits on 27 and 29 October 2009 to an industrialised housing scheme on a regenerated coalfield site, and to the internationally acclaimed University of Sheffield Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre (AMRC), which is dedicated to developing the new, technology-driven solutions that help ensure UK manufacturing remains competitive in the world.

The Conference is an initiative supported by the new Centre for Low Carbon Futures (CLCF). This new research hub brings together world-leading expertise based within Yorkshire and Humberside with the aim of building a competitive, sustainable and carbon efficient regional economy while providing climate solution of national and international significance. The Centre for Low Carbon Futures strongly advocates collaboration between government, university and industry, to address these low carbon issues.

Mr Prescott said: "The Coal Conference represents one of the most exciting developments for the future of the economy in Yorkshire. It is very pleasing to be able to hold the event at the University of Sheffield, which is at the centre of these developments in the region."

Professor Lenny Koh, from the University’s Management School is a principal investigator for the new centre, and also spoke at the conference. She is currently leading a project which will map the supply chain, reveal how material flows through it and identifying carbon ‘hotspots’ so that supply chains can be remodelled to
reduce carbon emissions.

Professor Koh said: "We were delighted to welcome such distinguished guests to the University to discuss these pressing issues. I am happy to be working with colleagues to create a visionary research Centre which will begin to address the energy and environmental issues we face today. The Centre for Low Carbon Futures aims to position our region to address low carbon challenges and access the leading edge solutions which we believe will help build a competitive, sustainable and carbon efficient regional economy."

(3) Working with companies through student projects and internments

In September 2009, the CBI Higher Education Task Force produced a report entitled “Stronger Together: Business and Universities in Turbulent Times” and this identified the need for businesses and universities to work together in order to provide employability skills for students and opportunities for student projects to enhance organisational performance. The following three stories provide examples of such activity in the Management School. Dermot Breslin (External Liaison Contact for CREED) said "It is very important for our students to engage with practice as part of their development on our programmes. In doing so, they also make a significant contribution to the organisations that they work with".

My Mydeco Experience: Sumit Janmeja

After completing my studies, I moved to London to gain some Enterprise experience. I had already had some experience in the internet industry where I worked after completing my first degree in Computer Engineering in India. I applied to Mydeco.com as it has a high profile as one of the UK's largest homeware and interior design websites, bringing together over 750 leading high street stores, designers and niche boutiques. After being interviewed by the CEO (previously VP / COO Operations eBay Europe) and Senior Business Development Manager, I joined the company in July 2009 as a Business Development Intern. I was primarily involved in running a feasibility study for a new supply chain management model - drop shipping, which the company was exploring as an option.

During my MBA Programme at Sheffield, I had worked with Quba New Media, a Sheffield-based social media and internet marketing agency. This consultancy work comprised part of the Experiencing Enterprise module and proved invaluable as Mydeco then extended my brief to explore social media marketing. The field is exciting and challenging and I can already see great opportunities for strengthening customer relationships, increasing traffic and generating sales for the company.

Starting with the project, first I analyzed overall marketing efforts and existing customer interactions of the company on social media arena. I examined the way Mydeco was using social media for
marketing purposes and realized there was scope for improvement. I then produced a detailed report with suggested improvements. Social media marketing can be looked upon as way of increasing sales by empowering users and encouraging them to influence other customers’ buying behaviour, thus increasing sales through word of mouth recommendation. I looked at how the company could improve customer interaction and engagement by optimizing the Mydeco blog and integrating all social media channels through one platform.

Currently I am working to develop a strategy to support a social media marketing drive for the company with a series of recommendations on how it can be best implemented and measured.

Jo Casley, Marketing Manager at the company said “Sumit delivered a competitor analysis, social media audit and social media optimisation strategies plan to Mydeco as well as providing guidance on how to use platforms such as twitter more effectively”.

Party Your Way

MSc International Management student Charlotte Huston undertook a research project as part of her dissertation, for Party Your Way (PYW), a small business based in Sheffield, who had launched an internet-based search engine for party services across the United Kingdom. Sam Broadhurst, founder of PYW had approached the Management School at the University of Sheffield in early 2009 with a view to carrying out research on the UK online party services market. Charlotte had obtained a first class honours degree in Sport and Leisure Management at Sheffield Hallam University. Whilst at Hallam, Charlotte also carried out research on a branch of Fitness First For Women, in which she evaluated strategies for managing retention within the organisation. Charlotte enjoyed applying the skills she learnt at university to real life situations, and this motivated her to apply for a company-based dissertation at the University of Sheffield Management School.

The main objective of the PYW project was to conduct a full market analysis for the online party services market and then to explore options open to the small business. Charlotte felt that “there was increased pressure to produce a high-quality dissertation, as it was a real life situation. This made the project more interesting and increased my drive and motivation to produce a thorough market analysis and create an objective ‘picture’ of the environment in which the business operated.” The research studied the consumer buying process of various segments within the market in detail, with a view to identifying a target market for PYW, and then exploring options open to the business to capture this market. The research revealed some unexpected findings in terms of market segmentation. Whilst PYW had previously targeted the mass market, the primary research carried out highlighted that different segments displayed markedly different approaches in how they organised parties. In particular, the findings identified a new target market of end users between 18-25 year olds, and most importantly highlighted that this target market would not use the PYW site without significant modifications to its
content. On the basis of these findings, a number of recommendations were made including:

- A marketing approach which targeted 18-25 year olds starting in one specific geographical area
- The implementation of Google Analytics, an ongoing evaluation tool for user behaviours
- The modification of the content of the site
- The creation of key benefits for end users to book through PYW e.g. percentage discount.
- The continuation of the subscription fee business model
- A number of additional usability specific recommendations were also made

In the conclusions of the report it was recognised that in the current economic climate, and given the constraints facing small businesses such as PYW, the proposed recommendations would be costly. However, the findings revealed that without these changes, the target market would not be captured, as the end users perceived no clear benefits from using the site. On completion of the project, Sam commented that Charlotte had done a “fantastic job” and her research “was excellent, true and exactly what I needed”.

**Kids Must Have Eco Bag- The Journey of an innovative idea**

The services of the University of Sheffield MBA student Jayanta Mukhopadhyay was hired by Bag It Don’t Bin It Ltd for the development and launch of the Kids DIY Eco-Pack with particular emphasis on Marketing. Jayanta has over 17 years of experience in business development and wide experience of marketing new products in Asia, Africa and Europe. His role in the project was to assist Julia Gash, MD, in executing a planned implementation of the project ensuring that no critical step is missed out in the process. He ensured that the process included the “customer voice” while coordinating with the agency and advising Julia on selecting the right product, pricing, promotion and distribution mix. Bag It Don’t Bin It has combined forces with local, design talent to create a Kids Must-Have Eco-Bag, which was showcased at the International Autumn Fair, NEC, Birmingham in September.

**Bag It Don’t Bin It** is a Sheffield based eco-business, which produces fairly traded, branded bags made from sustainable materials. Most of the company’s turnover is generated from business-to-business sales i.e. branded cloth bags for corporate clients or the public sector. The company’s philosophy and product range can be viewed at the website: [www.bagitdontbinit.com](http://www.bagitdontbinit.com).

The Kids Must-Have Eco-Bag is a collection of foldable, pocket-size, cotton bags, packed with fabric crayons, DIY instructions and carrying eco-themed illustrations by local designer Nick Deakin. It conveys the green and creative credentials of the product and Bag It Don’t Bin It. The product received exciting response from some key retailers including Hamleys, British Museum, Waterstone etc. Priced from just £5, the
Kids Must-Have Eco-Bag will be available in independent and multiple retail stores throughout the UK from late October. Jayanta observed that this product combined some key strategic and contemporary individual ingredients: it is green, gives children the opportunity to be creative and combines a toy with an activity. The challenge was to make it commercially viable given the constraints of a small company. Since financing was a challenge, the point of sale merchandising and physical attributes of the product needed to be very strong to grab attention in an already overcrowded retail environment. The carefully executed focus group and concept testing ensured that the right inputs were combined to achieve this.

Julia Gash, MD of Bag It Don’t Bin It, which also makes the I Love Sheffield Bag, says, “Most green products, including Eco-Bags are aimed at and used by adults. Through carrying out initial research I was aware that there are very few environmentally friendly toys, accessories and activities available to children despite the fact that young people often show greater environmental awareness and responsibility than adults. I decided that Bag It Don’t Bin It should create a child-friendly eco-bag, which would also inspire them to be creative, individual and cool!”

Children can colour in Nick’s cute illustrations, which are printed on one side of the bag and which bring a sense of fun and flair to the fairly traded and eco-friendly bags. The unprinted side can then be used as a blank canvas to unleash a budding creative genius. The Bag It Don’t Bin It website will host a Picture Gallery of children’s customised eco-bags and children can email photos of their works of bag-art to kidsecobag@bagitdontbinit.com.

Jayanta found this project stimulating and enjoyable. He used the project when writing his dissertation and would encourage other students to engage with similar projects offered through the Management School. During the project he enjoyed the association with one of the most creative and enterprising business owners in his entire career, Julia Gash. In return, Julia has emphasised the value her business enjoyed through working with an MBA student and would recommend other SMEs to take advantage of the projects on offer through the University of Sheffield Management School.
(4) Knowledge Exchange Reports and Books

Learning representative initiatives in the UK and New Zealand, a comparative study - Research paper 10, Dr Bill Lee and Professor Catherine Cassell

The learning representative concept is now being adopted by unions in other countries. One such country is New Zealand where the learning representative initiative is relatively recent and therefore less developed than that in the UK but is already having considerable impact.

This research paper published in November 2009, written by Dr Bill Lee and Professor Catherine Cassell compares and contrasts Union Learning Representatives (ULRs) in the UK with learning representatives in New Zealand through the use of case studies. A major difference is that, unlike ULRs, learning representatives in New Zealand have no statutory rights to paid time off to train and carry out their duties. Nevertheless, both roles are recognised in collective employment agreements. New Zealand also focus their work with industrial training organisations on job-related training, while ULRs support their members over a wider range of learning including personal development.

(5) Innovation Leaders

Innovation Leaders is a joint HEFCE funded project involving the University of Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam University.

This project is aimed at offering experiential and creative learning opportunities that will make a real difference to organisations in the private, public and third sector.

The programme has three pillars:

- **Problem solving and decision making**: first stage engagement typically using action learning sets to create a peer learning environment
- **Technical sector and/or function skills**: developed through specialist modules and flexible enquiry driven modules with negotiated learning outcomes
- **Leadership and management development**: to develop junior, middle and executive level managers through a programme of modules, events and activities.

The three core areas are underpinned by learning which is enquiry driven, peer and mentor supported, and facilitated by academics.
The core team came together in November 2009 and the programme will be delivered from January 2010 to July 2012. Ian Proctor joined as Business Engagement Manager in November 2009 and is located in the Management School.

As Ian says “This is an exciting opportunity for the Management School to engage with companies, public sector and third sector organisations in order to sustain a range of long term, sustainable relationships”.

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