

I mentioned at the outset of this graffiti two dimensions – so far I have dwelt on the techniques which were deployed. The other dimension which is noteworthy is the extent of showmanship present. Teaching, some say, is like acting. You need to know your lines, but for every ten who know their lines only one can make the play come alive. One of the finest teachers I know spends the fifteen minutes before a session starts pacing up and down rehearsing his punch lines and his jokes. On one celebrated occasion when a power cut prevented his timed appearance I saw him throw a tantrum worthy of any ballerina or highly strung actor.

Since most of us don't rise to such heights, or only very seldom, the problem often arises of 'follow that'. My strategy is normally to try to play my cards the other way around and first make my own tenor of approach quite clear. Indeed the whole flatter of balanced acting talent is vitally important to course cohesion amongst the participants. The prima donna can be a positively disturbing influence better left out of programmes unless he or she is prepared to blend with its norms and most certainly with its style of presentation.

The show business talents of faculty members in a Business School are typically bi-modally distributed-either the person is good with particular groups or not. This poses real problems in allocating staff to teaching roles. There is a danger that the

paying customers on short courses get the best performances whilst the MBA and/or undergraduates get the less able. To a limited extent, since the professional student is often more determined to be attentive, no harm will be done. The problem however does not go away by understating it. Faculty development and training can do much to improve teaching performance but in the end greater care and attention needs to be paid to teaching skills than has been customary in universities and a willingness to redeploy or eject inadequate faculty members has to appear. There is distressingly little evidence at present that staff or their unions recognise the reality of the problems that can exist and which sometimes defy solution.

It is, I gather, customary for show business people to recall their happiest moments in the theatre or wherever. Perhaps I can be excused for similar reminiscences. I think my greatest thrill was in Bradford's Library Theatre where I gave a public lecture to the Bradford Area Development Association on scope and plans for economic growth in the region. I had spent weeks and weeks with colleagues on research into the present patterns and the identification of future opportunities. I used a slide projector to screen 'prompts' and I spoke off the cuff for an hour and a half. I knew they loved it. I got my only standing ovation in ten years at Bournemouth when I addressed over a hundred store managers from a major chain about retailing. Again I could feel them coming with me and the more they came with me the more I rose to the occasion.

There have been other exciting moments but none reached the exhilaration of those two. It's a sort of crowd effect brought about by oratory that spurs one onwards. The devil of it is that I cannot engineer it at all. It just sometimes happens. All I do know is that it only but not always seems to occur when I do an inordinate amount of preparation and then speak impromptu. These seem to be necessary but they are indubitably not sufficient conditions for a great performance.

*Graffito 11*

# THE ACADEMIC ENTREPRENEUR

There was perhaps no more fertile ground for the entrepreneur to find in the middle sixties than university education. As I have already observed it was the most rapid growth industry in which so far I have worked. Furthermore, it was assumed to be for the good of all that we should develop apace. The great educational assumption of the sixties was that more of it would benefit the nation economically as well as in terms of the individual's self actualisation. Ironically, we are now victims of a massive boomerang effect. Not only has the nation's economic wellbeing not advanced in pace with the investments made since the Robbins' Report was accepted in toto by

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Sir Alec Douglas-Home; we have fallen back relative to others in Europe and elsewhere. Furthermore our own output as universities, the students, have turned against many of the economically productive, wealth producing activities in our society. It is not surprising, therefore, that social priorities have shifted in government spending to the aged, to housing, to health and welfare ~ all of which had perforce to take second place in the sixties. Within education a fascinating exercise is also in progress to reallocate its declining share of the total cake as between the university sector and almost all others. It is impinging on everything from salaries to the quality and quantity of university research and the life styles to which we have become accustomed.

Entrepreneurship, however, went well beyond the pale of the university or school itself. It extended to the Business School's natural market place, to its client publics in business and government. The air was rent in the mid-sixties with wailing and gnashing of teeth by academics who believed gaining access to confidential company data would be an insuperable problem in the short and medium term. I suppose it must have been my own experience in marketing research as an external consultant that convinced me that such reservations were unfounded. Nonetheless, I must confess that some of the early faculty who sailed under Business School colours scared me so much that I guess they would have scared any businessman whom they approached with a view to gaining access to data or funds.

However, the solution for building a permanent and mutually satisfactory relationship seems to turn not simply on an aptitude for positive thinking. It requires an attitude of mind some university dons find it hard to adopt towards their clients but which marketing folk seem to hold instinctively. First recognise the legitimate needs of the client, respect them and serve them well. Then, since almost all businessmen have participated at one stage or another in the university life and/or aspire to its groves themselves, they will respect one's own objectives. Most businessmen I know are completely familiar and at ease with the notion that they pay money for the benefit of useful ideas. Furthermore, they know well enough that in the university world we are especially interested in ideas *per se*. Few, and these more often than not are subsidiaries of North American parents, are secretive about their ways and loathe to recognise that the university world communicates openly by means of conference table, research paper and book.

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I cannot recall one single occasion on which respect for and acceptance of the ivory tower objectives were not present with businessmen or government officials with whom I related, *provided* that I accorded their legitimate goals and objectives parity of esteem and clearly demonstrated my sympathetic understanding of them. I did not find this at all difficult since it was my conceptualisation of what Business Schools were all about. Many, however, have found it difficult, and still do.

My bosses at Bradford and at Cranfield operated well on these dimensions in so far as the fabric of the Schools was concerned. They both left it to the infrastructure professors to get the research funds in. Bradford raised industrial support for a fine new library from the family of Sidney Jacobson; from Ralph Yablon for extensive development of facilities; and under the aegis of Lord Barnby, a distinguished wool magnate, very considerable resources for accommodation of students on the Business School campus. In addition, proven success and industrial support meant that a worthwhile slice of the second bundle of PMF millions came to Bradford. Bradford also gained three sponsored Chairs, although one failed to materialise due to boardroom changes at Viyella.

Cranfield's performance was less spectacularly presented but nonetheless a very real achievement. Close on a million pounds of capital resource has meant that by the end of 1976 it will have perhaps the first custom built School of Management in Britain. In addition, FMF resources were attracted to support teaching Fellowships, case writing work and the development of the library service.

Academic entrepreneurship as manifest in raising research resources for the various schools differed enormously. The doyen of them all was indubitably to be found at UMIST in the chair of marketing. In comparison all others must look pale. His strategy of complete respect for legitimate client aims matched by a mutual acceptance of the role of the university again proved extremely effective.

My own experience has been patchy if financially respectable. Since 1965 I have been able to attract just over quarter of a million pounds of external resources to develop advanced study and research in my group. It has come from sources as diverse as NEDO, the Social Science Research Council, the United Nations, the British Library, the Meat and Livestock Commission, the Industrial Advisors to the Blind, the Transport and Road Research Laboratory, the Wool Industry Research Association and from not less than a hundred industrial and commercial enterprises like KLM, Noble-Lowndes the insurance brokers, ICI, United Biscuits and Dunlop.

None of these moneys have been for consultancy assignments, of which more later. Here I am talking about generating industrial and governmental involvement, often on a Rothschild customer-contractor' principle, in the academic work of the Business School.

I shall, of course, always remember my first research grant and the excitement that went with it. It came from NEDO and the fact that I got it I suspect was due to support from two individuals both of whom today lead major Business Schools in Britain. It was for just over £4,000 to prepare cast materials for use in teaching retailing and

way through. Finishing anything involves exposing the outcome to criticism especially by those who seldom publish themselves, but I resolved ab initio that if we did only one thing it would be to produce results that *could* be evaluated!

My boss at Bradford sometimes reminds me that the cost of gaining my first contract with NEDO, and administering it, was undoubtedly far greater than the £4,000 they awarded. He was right but the psychological effect of gaining that first award and its conspicuous consumption effect far outweighed the investment. We went on with confidence to offer an evening programme for practising managers in Yorkshire retailing for two sessions, and published the case studies in 1971. Whilst to this day I cannot claim that we have made any very widespread impact on the quality of retailing management then or now, my colleagues have kept up the initiative in this area and our offerings and contributions are perhaps only second to Manchester albeit of a considerably different variety.

A major enduring lesson I learnt about academic entrepreneurship was just how long it takes to get momentum going but how that, once the wagon train is rolling, patience is rewarded provided one never fails to deliver what has been promised. As I remarked earlier, I think the discipline learnt as a marketing research consultant and in the advertising agency/client relationship helped considerably in consolidating this sector of my Business School affairs.

*Graffito 12*

## IDOLATRY

Idols are at once both invaluable to a discipline, and a danger. Their value is in their power to capture the imagination of their followers and to sweep them forward not necessarily by the power of reason or logic but with an enthusiasm that can even move organisations to bend or change. The danger is that they will run out of momentum and leave their followers high and dry, stranded with no real sense of understanding how they have travelled to where they have arrived. The challenge we faced in the ten year cycle that our European Business Schools have so far lived through was how to harness the strength of the idols to our chariots.

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The most vital contributions that idols such as Ted Levitt in the marketing area made was to focus attention on an Issue. With reference to the railroads' and buggy whip manufacturers' definitions of their businesses, thousands of teachers can stand before their audiences and lead them into a careful evaluation of what a marketing orientation means for them, what real basic needs the customer was seeking to satisfy when he or she acquired a given product or service. Such a starting point, I would venture to suggest, has become an almost universally recognised coda for the great majority of articulate marketing managers and teachers in the English speaking world.

Levitt's achievement was based on a single article in the *Harvard Business Review*, entitled 'Marketing Myopia' which has sold nearly a quarter of a million offprints and been reprinted in myriad volumes of readings. His expansion of that article to book length, and his subsequent writings on allied topics, have added little or nothing to the force of his appeal as the apostle or the marketing orientation for a business.

Personally, I have always found Ted Levitt's contribution unsatisfactory except as a basis for defining what needs we are meeting with our product. The managerial need is to go far further forward than assessing the need. It involves deciding what one should do about it when the need is threatened or undermined by technological or social changes. The railroads and the buggy whip manufacturers were both in the transportation business. As their more conventional applications declined what would the marketing expert propose?

I found I needed to turn to a different idol for an explanation, Igor Ansoff, the archpriest of early corporate planners. Ansoff's gem was not in a phrase, it was in a matrix. It showed, with elegant but telling simplicity, that any organisation had two key dimensions on which it depended for its continuing existence-its *technology* as incorporated in the products or

Galbraith indubitably made more impact than either of the others, but in an idiom that resembled Vance Packard's communications about the advertising industry in such books as *The Hidden Persuaders*. Galbraith and Packard both so overstated their cases that they appeared as critics of the practitioners and of the teachers rather than as philosophers. As exercises in seeking to influence the pattern of communication and the attitudes and behaviour of business, Packard and Galbraith were as nought in comparison with Levitt and Ansoff

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At Bradford we made a massive effort to attempt to put technological forecasting (TF) into a managerial context. It was, and is, my own contention that TF held as considerable a potential for further development of an effective business in times of rapidly changing technology bases for many products and services, as sales forecasting had in the thirties and fifties. The sales plan with its targets based on forecasts for different market segments or sectors had become commonplace in business by the

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late fifties, and the superimposition thereon of a marketing planning process which embraced the sales forecasts within it was a natural progression. We sought if possible to inculcate a similar concern with and competence at forecasting in technology. We were not, of course, unaware of the inherent difficulties involved but they were surely no more indomitable than those involved with forecasting market circumstances three or five years hence.

In association with the Ministry of Technology and the *Financial Times* we embarked upon a series of major conferences and seminars, consolidating the work with a pattern of one week workshops and courses for practitioners. We introduced TF into our standard patterns of teaching in industrial and consumer workshops. I myself proceeded to write a Penguin book, *Technological Forecasting: the art and its managerial implications*, which to this day remains the only attempt at a simple statement of TF's significance in business affairs generally, as opposed to within the research and development department exclusively. We created no new idols. We did create for a fleeting moment something or a fad but not a fashion. I think idols create fashionable ways of looking at things rather than mere fads. Our efforts at Bradford were technically necessary and I believe of considerable value in generating interest and enthusiasm in a sector that needed to coalesce in order to advance. The collection and refinement of techniques of TF alone, from the Delphi approach and scenario writings to normex reconciliations, was useful and timely; but taking TF to top management was premature. They did not feel by and large that they needed it nor did our presentation convince them that they needed it on their boardroom agenda or at their annual think tank. I understate to some extent our success within industrial research associations and some dozen or more major enterprises, but I cannot claim in all honesty that we achieved the goal which we had set ourselves.

My allusions to fashions and fads were not casual. One of my most intriguing research investigations in the past decade was a series of explorations into fashion marketing. Most particularly, the Social Science Research Council funded a three year examination of fashions in men's outerwear. The conventional wisdom amongst designers even when confronted with a plethora of statistical analyses is that the fashions that succeed are those that interpret the spirit of the age. They do not precede the spirit of the age; they mirror the social and cultural setting. For me idols are men of fashion, not haute couture but mass fashion like Mary Quant's which made London swing or Carnaby Street's which made London a centre for male fashion.

Beyond the reaches of marketing I look especially at men like Hertzburg and Drucker, I have already described in Graffito 2 how I actually applied a chapter of Drucker's *Managing for Results* to a problem. His philosophical presentation of ideas and his demonstration of their applicability gives them a universal appeal he they about the management of a product range or the discontinuities of the age in which we live. As I shall discuss later, a chapter of Drucker's *Age of Discontinuity* was inspiration to me in the development of a modest and ultimately unsuccessful merchant banking operation in Yorkshire.

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Similarly, with Hertzburg, whom I have often heard describe himself as the father of job enrichment. His teachings about motivation come to a society troubled with the problems that the breakdown of traditional patterns of sanctions and authority create. Motivated is what we feel we want to be, and what we want to bring others to be. From a host of possible theories he distilled the simple concept of job enrichment. He overturns the plausibility of Adam Smith's picture of the division of labour with a broad sweep of his brush. He conjectures that individual output is not monotonic in response to increasingly sub-divided work. "The only folk fit to use a monkey wrench all day," he opines, "are monkeys". His inquiry

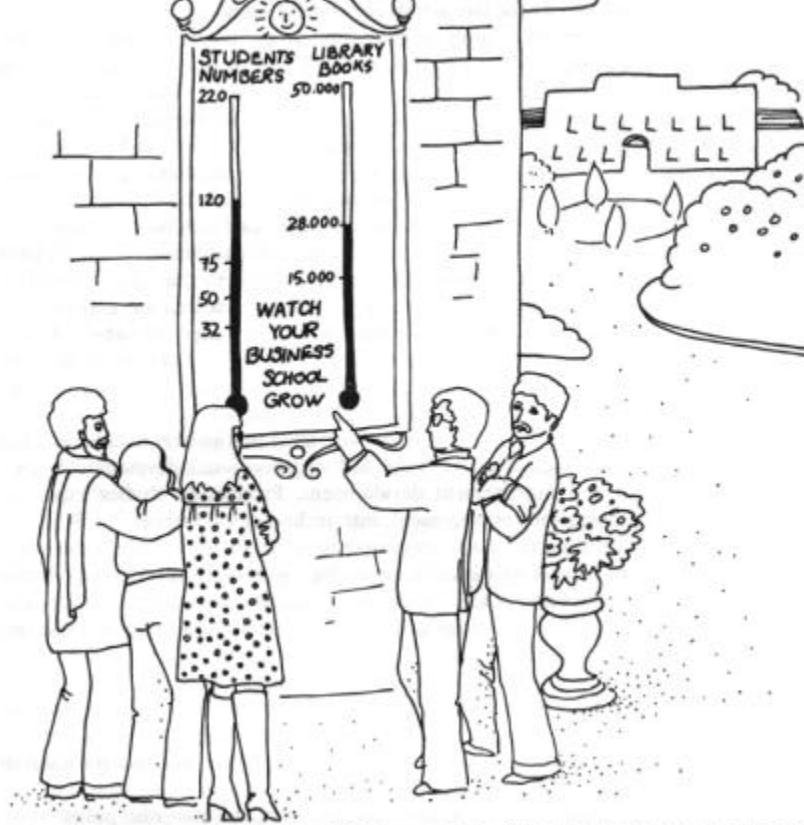
aspire to become idols ourselves but to learn a little from some of the most powerful communicators or the decade idols capture the imagination and motivate us to act.

*Graffito 13*

## **NUMARACY: STUDENTS AND BOOKS**

I have already indicated that numbers played an important political role in gaining resources within the rapidly burgeoning university sector in the late sixties. There was really one basic set of numbers from which most of the other resources flowed i.e. student enrolments. If one had the students on strength one could gain the resources for teaching staff and for books and consumables.

There was also, in a very real political way, a sense that the decade we were in was of crucial importance in delineating the shape of university Business School work for many years to come. Although I can still foresee an almost infinite need to expand provision in Britain for the training and education of managers and business specialists, the years 1968-1970 did I believe lay down the pecking order within the university



sector. This can be seen very clearly in terms both of the FME's disbursement of it

sector. This can be seen very clearly in terms both of the FME's disbursement of its second tranche of appeal funds and in the UGC's encouragement by specific endorsements in its grant letters for the quinquennial period commencing in 1972. The policy of concentration of encouragement which the UGC is now pursuing ~ it claims not so to do or to be capable of so doing-has and will pre-empt priorities for at least twenty years. The only unforeseen event that could disturb the present pattern would need to be on a similar scale to that which industry mounted via the Franks' twins in the early sixties. In all sincerity I do not see why they should either need to or feel so incline

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The cutbacks in the university world's resources associated with the mid-seventies' economic crisis in Britain have only added further strength to the hands of those who pursued a growth strategy in the late sixties for student members.

Student numbers were not simply a goal for the political purpose of gaining resources, There was, and still is, a widely held view about the minimum critical mass for a multidisciplinary enterprise like a Business School in the university sector. As I have already indicated in Graffito 5, my chosen subject was itself multidisciplinary as were a host of other business functions we sought to represent in our Schools. At a very minimum one normally wanted to see finance and accounting; production studies (although this neither was nor is yet especially fashionable despite several excellent scholars in the field); personnel management; and marketing. Because of their origins, however, and/or if also involved in undergraduate studies, most Schools would also include staff cells of economists; statisticians/mathematicians either in a purist form or sailing under the colours of operations research or management science; sociologists; and psychologists. To these had to be added the sub-disciplines and associated functional activities with which we have all grown increasingly familiar. In marketing we added marketing research, marketing logistics, retailing and consumer behaviour and have since added industrial marketing specifically, educational technology in marketing, and the marketing of services, most particularly in libraries, The personnel group added industrial relations and organisational development, then manpower planning and management development. Production studies expanded into what it termed operations management, into technological forecasting, R and D management, and in certain circumstances into procurement. At Cranfield this came up as an off-shoot of marketing's involvement with logistics. It also developed considerable expertise in the fields of OR applications through management services and Systems engineering. A senior colleague at Cranfield focuses much of the work in this field under the title Business Systems,

Finance and accounting were quickly seen as two very separate areas, the former looking increasingly like an applied version of much the economist taught. Economists for their part often moved off main stream theory whereon they were challenged by more applied faculty members at almost every turn, to espouse cost-benefit analysis and more typically corporate planning.

The last breed to appear was the business policy expert, the man who pulled us all back together again He was the logical successor to the corporate planner in that he concerned himself with the strategy that gave the corporate planner his overall sense of direction, Business policy in turn has spawned entrepreneurship and venture management as specialist topics of its own.

When we realise that all this specialisation can be overlaid by industry or regional segmentation for the faculty, it can be seen that bigness to a certain degree could well mean opportunity to become an exciting centre. What I have described is in fact an almost complete rundown of the various professional and specialist tasks plus the underlying disciplines of a major business. The Business School which grew to possess

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and offer expertise inmost or all of these sectors became in very real terms comparable with the clients which it was designed to serve in its own unique way.

The contrasting argument is, naturally, that 'bigger' does not mean 'better'. In fact, it can mean a greater opportunity to be worse. One of my very big bosses once received a letter of formal complaint from the director of one of the competing major Schools. All this talk about numbers was not cricket. Well, of course, it wasn't. We were not playing cricket. As I saw it we were seeking to establish the resource base that would allow a fine School to evolve and flourish over a score or more of years, and the time at which we needed to take the crucial steps to secure the resource base was then. One of the most effective ways to do it was to emphasise what very considerable commercial contribution the School was making both within the University and on the national scene.

You see it was true then and I believe it is still far too soon to evaluate the impact of what we are doing. It was, as I have observed before, an act of faith; one I still believe in. For the alumni we produce to work their ways to the commanding heights of British industry in sufficient numbers to make a perceptible difference will I suspect take another decade at least. Which is not the same as saying we were not in a position to apply academic tests of their performance before they left us. We had centuries of tradition on which to base how that could be done. I am referring rather to the relationship between such tests if any and performance in the students' chosen walks of life.

I linked students with books in this graffito rather than teachers because the relationship was less direct when resources came to be added to a subject area for books. Librarians had as much excitement in the general growth fever of the universities of the sixties as did management scholars. Almost every university in the land either built de nouveau or added extensively to their existing facilities. Even the Open University with but a handful of residents managed to build a library facility. Cranfield alone did not.

Books join libraries as do serial publications because faculty members see themselves as having a role in specifying or helping librarians to know what to buy in. The late 1960s were fertile years with new shelves to fill and verbalised goals like: 'We want to build our library up to 500,000 volumes'. The enormous inflation which hit us all in 1973/1975 has, of course, decimated many library budgets in real terms but most still stand at between 3.5% and 5% of total university income.

We were fortunate at Bradford that the Business School was designated by the old CATs as the specialist centre for marketing books. Thus I and my group were able to build up a very strong collection. Furthermore, the strong arts and social science traditions of many of the faculty members there from the boss downwards meant libraries and reading by the student played a very significant role in the total educational process.

The Cranfield experience is quite different. Many of its origins and of its senior faculty are from the Harvard School. That is one of Cranfield's very considerable

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strengths, but for the library it means a much less important role in the total pattern of what goes on. Where books and journals are used it is very much as a directed tool within a highly structured learning situation. The arrival of doctoral candidates and research staff at Cranfield in the early seventies has made dramatic demands for a considerably strengthened browsing and research stock which the current resource pattern makes it virtually impossible to fulfil.

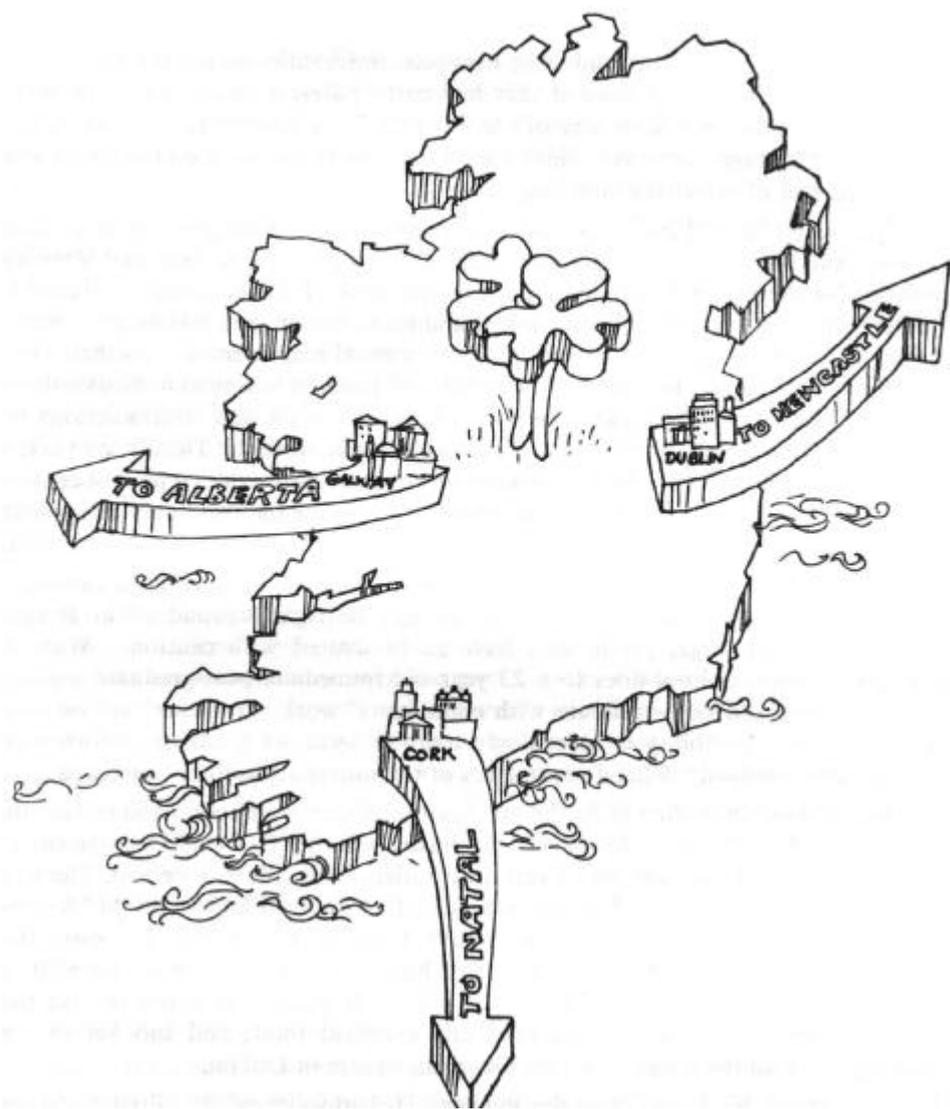
The problems of the Cranfield library service lie in neither needing, nor perceiving the future strategic need, to secure for the library and information service a requisite level of support whilst resources were plentiful. Cranfield performed well on student numbers but alas went strategically adrift on library service. The failure was in resource strategy in the middle/late sixties.

*Graffito 14*

## EXTERN IN DUBLIN, CORK AND GALWAY

Aer Lingus flew Viscounts from Yeadon to Dublin direct when I first made the trip to Ireland and came in contact with the work of the Irish Management Institute (IMI), and of University and Trinity Colleges Dublin (UCD, TCD). My involvement with TCD was never close and it is currently intended that its work as a Business School should be absorbed by UCD in a grand re-organisation of university education in the Republic that will produce an Irish Business School. Today Yeadon/Dublin is done with Boeing 737 technology. It is an exceedingly short trip from Bradford, shorter than to London. Not only was it convenient therefore but it was a privilege to be asked to become external examiner in Business Administration for the National University of Ireland, which took in Galway and Cork as well.

My ignorance about Irish universities both south and north of the border was total, but I assumed they would be rather like those on the main island. I was accordingly delighted to find that the Republic, since it employs a pay-as-you-go approach to university education, had inevitably developed a distinctly different approach to its MBA work. It was, nonetheless, a coherently organised School meeting the basic rubrics I explored in Graffito 9, except for the accountants who had a department of their own but no separate degree programme. The key difference was that all the MBA students were part-timers, attending in late afternoon and early evening twice weekly for two years with a final short dissertation requirement over six months. In age and experience therefore the student matched the type of participant ~ have at Cranfield today, as he did in abilities. UCD and Cranfield are to my own experience the two most impressive bodies of MBA students in the British Isles.



The job of an external examiner, dubbed Extern in the Republic, is to vet the questions and answers set by autonomous universities and to report to the Senate of the University what you think of the work going on thereat. In practice, you sort things out at department or School level with the teachers there, simply expressing your frank opinion about the work. It is a role similar to that of an auditor of a company's accounts, where he is ultimately responsible to the shareholders who, of course, appoint him in the first instance.

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North American universities and some European universities do not use this device, which I think is a pity. It is done at very low cost ~ purely expenses and a nominal fee ~ and if you take on a large School's work it can be very time consuming. It has three major advantages, however, which I have felt very keenly both on the giving and the receiving end of external examining of work.

Firstly, it is by far and away the best way to get to know what goes on in another institution and to be able to assess how good it is, simply as a professional learning experience for the external examiner. To read the work of students and to discuss it with their tutors and mentors is an excellent and rapid way to gain insight and understanding. Secondly, the process ensures that the internal examiners stay on their toes. It is all too easy to neglect to attend to the process of question setting as meticulously as one should. The outsider checking over the questions often sees contradictions or ambiguities in the written word that one's own closeness prevents. Thirdly, and often rated as the most important benefit of external examining, it provides a pool of central awareness of standards across the whole system. Except for the inevitably delinquent few, a class of degree tends to mean a similar standard no matter where it was gained.

I personally find that all three are of importance and that the learning is two-way. Comparability of standards is something we can be rightly proud of in British universities by and large, yet it does have to be treated with caution. What a University Business School does to a 22 year old immediate post-graduate student and to a 30 year old post-graduate with eight years' work experience will be very different. The comparability is accordingly more in terms of levels of performance within the autonomously defined parameters of the university system concerned.

An external examiner often gains the most extraordinary satisfaction and frequently has the most odd surprises. The teaching of business in the Dairying Department at University College, Cork was, and I certainly anticipate it still is, excellent. The trip to Galway to discuss and explore the nascent effort there to launch an MBA programme by a professor for whose appointment I had been an external assessor the year before was equally delightful. My most exhausting task was to read some 30 or 40 Dublin MBA dissertations within two weeks each summer in order to viva the candidates through a haze or Irish Mist and excellent food; and snooker in the University Club on the finest surviving Georgian square in Dublin.

The Irish externship lasted three fleeting years. It had followed my initiation to the role of external examiner by good friends in the world of agriculture. Contrary to much popular hearsay, and to the gospel according to the Institute of Marketing and the University of Lancaster, Britain's first Professor of Marketing was at the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and his area of special interest was agricultural marketing. The department of marketing there – it had no Business School since Newcastle formally broke away from Durham University which had fostered it – was and remains the only university activity at that level in Britain, Wye College, London concentrated more on horticulture at the time and still retains that scent.

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My own interest in pigs from Exeter University days made me intrigued with Newcastle's work, and as with Dublin I was invited to give a lecture series to students and faculty as well as simply doing the external audit work. Newcastle was doing fascinating but somewhat unusual work at times in marketing, unusual to me that was. The industry sectors on which they focussed tended to be commodity marketing for meat or dairy products. Furthermore, the main organisational patterns dealt with seemed to be statutory boards, co-operatives and the like. I oversimplify, but it was somewhat off my own beaten track.

As I tread studies of pineapple marketing strategies in Britain, of bacon co-operatives in Ulster, of yoghurt marketing processes in the UK, I realised I had to get distinctly inside the objectives and work of the folk who had asked me to audit their work if I were to be of any help. My own predispositions and prejudices could not be, and what was more I felt should not be, applied. My philosophy as an external examiner emerged. It consisted of seeking to understand what the academics concerned had in mind and then forming an independent judgement as to how well they seemed to be doing it.

Most of my external examining work has not been of the continuing kind. It has been as an occasional examiner for Masters' and Doctoral theses for universities from Surrey to Strathclyde and from Alberta to Natal. As director of studies for a score of doctoral candidates over the past decade, I have frequently been on the receiving end of external examiners' comments in a similar sector. It is herein that I have and the philosophy that Newcastle evolved for me of the greatest significance. As I suggested in Graffito 5, business management in general and marketing in particular is a synthetic focus or construct. The process of synthesising can often be ill-understood especially where the synthesis is perhaps between sociology and distribution channels analysis. A student might well be looking at power relationships in such circumstances. The thesis would ideally be both good sociology and good distribution work but typically its excellence is derived from the simultaneous blending of the two which either sector of study could regard as unsatisfactory in singular terms. In short,

many of the familiar problems of additively measuring the performance of candidates with joint subject degrees are present.

Equally the emphasis which much Business School work will place on the application and development of ideas and concepts in industry, for example, will be unimpressive to some of the purists amongst us. Finally, since our subjects are very much in their infancy, several Schools have adopted a strategy, including my own at times, which seeks to describe and explore areas of interest and concern within rigorous research programmes rather than necessarily to restrict the focus of research to such a degree that experimental and ~ or predictive rigour becomes the essence of a student's output. For me both paths, and others besides, are valid routes for both my own and fellow autonomous University Business Schools. The role of external examiner seems to me best fulfilled by understanding what a School is trying to achieve before making

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judgements. Alas, because we are still such a small world the Business School scene has more than its fair share of members who do not see it my way. Rather they see the job as a licence to challenge the goals of the host institution and the curricula it pursues. The tragedy of such an approach is that the hostility it generates prevents learning either way, and it wastes the opportunity for the two-way learning I believe can be obtained.

*Graffito 15*

## I'D LIKE YOUR ADVICE

Since before they began and to this day, Business Schools have sought to elicit advice from businessmen about the sort of things they should teach and what sort of finished product most sensibly should be turned out. It has proved an insuperable problem thus far to structure a relationship which is both successful but not unduly interfering.

The dilemmas we have faced seem to stem from our inability normally to identify advisors who have a sufficient understanding of what a university can offer and its relative worth within a business, commercial or governmental context.

The Fulton Report on the Civil Service led inter alia to an establishment for the management training of civil servants away from industrial and commercial leaders, a development I completely deplore. It was nonetheless a far more thorough attempt to identify the management training and educational needs of civil servants than anything industry has contemplated. NEDO, the CBI, the BIM and the Institute of Directors have each produced partial or specific statements and advice but nowhere can we turn for a detailed or comprehensive analysis.

The emergence in the past five years of a specialist group of management development experts in companies parallels our own internal efforts in the Business School world to develop a category of study under the same banner. Maybe until these twin developments had occurred we could not hope for anything more articulate than statements frequently expressed that good businessmen "know how to think", or '~are numerate' or have to "understand people".

My own experiences of structured attempts at seeking guidance range from an initial advisory group on marketing in 1966 to much grander concepts of Councils, Advisory Boards and Industrial Visitors. In each and every experiment at asking for advice I have personally sensed a lack of real involvement or commitment to the concept on either side. All of which sounds somewhat depressing but none of which is intended as a slight on the individuals involved from business or government. I've come to the conclusion ten years after we began asking for advice that a much clearer

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statement of objectives and a much more careful approach to organisation structures is required for any really useful as opposed to enjoyable intercourse to take place. Unless we can and do develop an effective pattern of dialogue there is a very grave danger of alienation.

Most importantly, we need advice in the Business Schools from our customers on what sort of products we should produce ~ not in general terms but in specific detail.

At the risk of taking the "are we educating or training tomorrow's managers?" debate by the horns, let me suggest we are seeking to do some of each. We do want the student we produce to find a worthwhile job straightaway where he can apply much of what he has learnt or, our experience tells us, he will not be too pleased. Equally, we want our students to be equipped through due educational process to respond to unusual and untaught problems and situations and to have acquired the intellectual apparatus to think thereon for themselves.

Such a statement from the Business School groves will normally win ready acceptance with businessmen. "Good," they say. "How much time," I ask, "should we spend on each and what are the best ways of inculcating the motivation and ability

required to carry on thinking? And perhaps more pressingly what evidence is there and/or how valid is such evidence as does exist, about our manpower planning needs for industry, commerce and government in the next two, three or even four decades over which today's students will be operating?"

"Ah," I hear, "that's much more difficult." We've had a bad, no, appalling track record in relation to teachers' and doctors' manpower planning in the past decades. Although we might have needed the scientists and technologists we geared up the universities and polytechnics to produce in the late sixties and seventies we were unable to motivate the students to enrol at the fine facilities provided. Nonetheless, we are enjoined by no less an authority that Lord Crowther-Hunt, the current Minister of State at the DES, to keep trying; and so we must. At least it is now clear that we must not only identify the numerical requirements, as we perhaps did nearly correctly for scientists and technologists, but also motivate potential applicants to come forward to particular aspects of scientific and technological study. The same issue stands before us presently in the Business Schools. We have learnt little in the first decade. In our defence, I think we can argue that so little has been done so far in volume terms that no harmful misallocation has been made. As the volume of our activities grows in the next two or three decades, however, much clearer manpower plans are required.

The diagnosis we have been offered thus far is that we do not have enough good managers. I am not at all clear whether that hypothesis is valid or invalid. There is frankly far too little evidence of what makes a good manager to know if we have enough of them or not. Anyway is our failing a technical one or have we a psychological malaise?

If it is technical then a fairly obvious set of skills and techniques can be taught. If the problems are economic performance have their roots in a psychological or social malaise, what on earth can Schools of Business do to alleviate it?

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I have heard business advisers as well as simple conversationalists bemoan the problem as they see it: that students are alienated from business. Not, I hasten to add, the typical students in a Business School but the students who choose to take social sciences or those who take engineering and pure sciences but do not want to apply their work in industry. The issue seems to be completely wrapped up in the role the economic wealth-producing organisations, our companies, play in society as young people perceive them today.

We can be rightly proud that in many western societies the yoke of endless work to stay alive and clothed has been lightened but we gibe at the opportunities with which such liberation presents us. Young folk see the opportunities very clearly and perceive many of the processes and structures we have as inappropriate, even anachronistic.

So we see protests in sector after sector of our society, from student revolt against the very structure of universities to consumerist complaints against product ingredients, puffery in advertising or environmental pollution in manufacture.

Such young people are not sick or unwilling to throw themselves into action ~ they just seem to do it for causes that create disruption in the present system. Our need in the Business School world to cure the malaise which seems to haunt our economic activity is to reform the pattern and structure of our work. In North America it has been dubbed social responsibility in industry; in Europe we recognise the movement more typically as socialism in contradistinction to capitalism or free enterprise. The issue is how to facilitate the self-actualisation of individuals in a relatively affluent society whilst preserving an adequate flow of economic wealth to meet our needs. The requirement is, in my view, less one of adding a social responsibility to business decisions; rather we need to reshape our perception of the tasks a business does in our societies. Where exactly does economic progress and development take us either as individuals or as a society? Observe the North American phenomenon. Business, commerce and government play a role in the life of individuals and societies which cries out for redefinition, as a subsidiary but vitally necessary activity. Instead of constructive discussion we get polarised polemics which young people have no difficulty in seeing for the cant they really are.

There seems to be a growing consensus that Business Schools should teach business not as an end in itself but as a contributory social activity. If and when they manage it with a coherent philosophical basis to match that which both free enterprise and communism have developed then we can perhaps fight off the malaise which has seemingly demotivated the British economy for thirty years.

For me these basic issues are those on which a significant dialogue should be taking place between industry and the University Business Schools. Together with the world of economic wealth creation and social administration, we should be seeking an adequate philosophical redefinition of the economic process we know as business. Within that redefinition it behoves us to develop as well and as effectively as we can the education and training of individuals to play the roles of managers in the countless specialisms and their integrated functions. This calls out for a closer and more intimate collaboration with the management development specialists and manpower planners in companies and government to refine techniques and to produce best

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current answers. We cannot expect perfection in such efforts but we can at least strive in these directions more vigorously than hitherto. Some little progress has been made in the series of consultations which have been convened at Windsor Castle between the Church, industry and the Business Schools but so far they have made little or no impact on our working lives. As a participant in these St. George's House meetings I am as guilty of procrastination as the others.

# CONSULTANCY TO ACTION LEARNING

Consultancy activities by Business School faculties have been traditionally viewed by their colleagues and letters with approval, unless or until any individual or group makes a major success of it. Then, quite rightly, alarm bells ring to warn of possible dilution of the main stream of responsibilities to the university and particularly to its student body.

Consultancy is regarded as a good thing, officially, because it helps keep an academic's feet on the ground and in touch with real live problems that can be fed back to classes. In addition, the beneficiaries of the advice proffered can hope to receive the latest and most sophisticated ideas that their problem can use. Provided that a faculty member knows his subject and has had some experience of how to apply ideas in on-going situations, there is a very real opportunity for such interaction to develop. Typically, however, the faculty members who attract consultancy work are those who are already very much in touch with industry; indeed by and large it is closeness of touch which acts to generate the enquiries. Hence, unless a process is employed which uses the faculty who are closely in touch as gatekeepers who then pass through the various assignments to those less well acquainted with industry, the sought for effect does not really materialise.

Equally, the tendency to bimodality in the distribution of consultancy activities amongst faculties means that those most frequently so engaged run foul of their academic superiors as well as running the danger of not being sufficiently in touch with the latest ideas in their disciplines to make the unique contribution that industry quite rightly anticipates it can expect. Finally, unless some form of infrastructure or support services are available to a Business School academic he inevitably ends up doing the entire job of work, selling it, executing and analysing it, and reporting upon it. Only the most modest assignments can therefore be accepted which will not normally give full scope for learning and staying in touch with what business is all about.

As early as 1966 several of us identified these problems at Bradford and resolved to establish a consultancy co-operative. It was to be an open-book affair where all jobs gained must be brought to the company and, when help was required, other members

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of the co-op would be asked to collaborate. The company employed from the outset either part – or full-time secretarial and clerical services so that the routine parts of any job could be delegated, the direct costs of which each project would meet. In addition, five per cent of gross income was retained for overheads, mainly financial services and a first class AUM. The numerical strength of the co-op grew to more than fifty during the decade.

The competitive model which was widely practised both at Bradford and elsewhere was that of the journeyman and cottage consultancy. Rather than offering an open discussion of the total job to all colleagues, small parts were sub – contracted blind, i.e., for a fixed fee.

No matter which approach was employed the problems discussed earlier remained. Just a few members of faculty attracted the consultancy assignments and these were the well experienced industrially and/or the most senior members of faculty, ex officio. They all felt a very keen limitation on their ability to commit themselves. The norm became not more than one day each week. If they accepted jobs that they then delegated to more junior or less industrially experienced faculty members they were faced with a major problem of supervision if their own reputations and that of the School were not to be jeopardised.

Consultancy as a way to supplement one's income was and still remains highly attractive to us all. As a way to ensure that the faculty member stays in touch with industry I am now unconvinced. I believe it can play an important role if it is more carefully structured into the development of faculty members in parallel with a range of other activities such as contract research, industrial attachments and concerted participations on in-company courses, action learning approaches, post-experience teaching in general, and if possible a deep association with industrial concerns over a longish period of time.

Our co-operative grew rapidly to become by far the most extensive operation of its kind in Britain. We diversified into journal publishing, books and monographs, training materials and advisory services as well as ad hoc consultancy. We acquired our own premises nearby and demonstrably took the whole affair most seriously. We invested our own capital in developing our own small business for communication and dissemination in ways not generally perceived as within the purview of the Business School itself. As a consultancy activity however we did not succeed. We failed to attract into our ranks new senior members as they joined the School; they preferred to keep their own previous arrangements. As faculty left to go elsewhere, although their equity investments in the serial publishing companies were normally maintained, they transferred their consultancy allegiance to the new groups with which they worked I must not neglect to mention also, of course, that the boom years of consultancy were the mid-and late-sixties. By the seventies the boom was past and little general consultancy was to be found. The specialist market still existed, but many of the skills we offered so widely in the sixties in terms of marketing research experiments or corporate planning activities could now be provided by internal

expertise. Even in a prime area of our activity, the training and education of managers on an in-company basis which many Schools had classified as legitimate consultancy, our

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edge was whittled away. We more frequently took on a complementary role to the internal company management development advisor than an initiating role reporting directly to the marketing director.

If all this sounds defeatist, it surely is not. We enjoyed many fascinating assignments and a good deal of learning took place both for the more industrially experienced and the less so. We deployed our skills in pricing research, new product testing and test marketing a great deal, in markets as diverse as textured wall coverings, domestic central heating, precision instrumentation, transistors, office equipment, and pre-packed vegetables. We worked on strategic analyses of the baby food market, of grocery retailing and of industrial chemicals. We devised and implemented marketing logistics systems, including experimental patterns of costing, for a tool manufacturer and for meat and livestock sectors. We worked with, to learn and to influence their marketing communications activities, more than a score of major industrial and utility companies for five years and more.

It is this latter pattern of relationship that I have come to espouse most substantially now and I do not think I shall offend those who invented the phrase 'action learning' if I use it to describe what I mean. I am persuaded that a continuing and deep relationship between industry and the Business Schools is vitally necessary for both sides. For that relationship to flourish there must be, however, what I have earlier termed parity of esteem at the interface. The Business School academic has got to get himself truly inside the problems confronting the practitioner if he is to be heard and the practitioner must learn to keep his mind open to new ideas. It is, I would repeat, parity of esteem I seek, not dependence one way or the other. The practitioner who looks to the Business School academic to come off the fence and say what's best quite misses the point, does he not? It is not the Business School academic's basic job to provide solutions to industrial problems. If he is a good university man he will be presenting the case for and against the various courses of action available, helping to identify them too. Decision making is the preserve of the practitioner, the manager.

The line of my argument I hope can be well illustrated by two major research or action learning initiatives we took at Cranfield. The first is in the field of advertising effectiveness and the second in the costing of distribution systems. Both these areas are largely uncharted but it was also widely accepted that improvement was urgently needed. Both sectors of marketing activity absorb large slices of most organisations' budgets. We could have set ourselves down to write theoretical articles about the two problem areas. We shied away from that notion. Instead, we determined to find a group of organisations that felt sufficiently strongly about the problems to be willing to open their files and their minds for a minimum of a three-year dialogue with us about them.

We deployed full-time research staff to establish initially the basic patterns of current behaviour in each area; the studies are incidentally totally separate. This audit of current performance was next compared with textbook and learned journal norms. Major discrepancies were observable and we devoted a considerable amount

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of mutual effort exploring just why that was so. Were the textbooks wrong or was the practice laggardly? *Verdict*. Some of each if not quite six of one and half a dozen of the other!

By now we know the organisations really rather well ~ sometimes better than our counterparts within the companies since there is a higher propensity to move staff around in many companies than in our research centres. The next step was to agree to a pattern of present and future behaviour within the companies concerned which sought to implement viable marketing strategies in a more effective way. And the results of the learning experiences throughout the two consortia of over thirty companies are shared with one another, albeit anonymously.

Our most successful outcome to date has been within the field of marketing communications. Two of my colleagues have enshrined what they learnt at an action level into three volumes of which one, the practitioner's manual, is already a best seller under the title *Managing Advertising Effectively*. It has the sure authority with its readers that it is based on both our own academic knowledge and their practical experience. Most importantly in the context of this graffiti, it has taken three faculty members with widely differing levels of industrial experience and put them very much in touch with industry; and, as significantly, industry is very much in touch with us.

*Graffito 17*

## PUBLISH AND BE DAMNED

Not too long ago a reviewer implied that a collection of essays I had had published both in Britain and North America were only in print either because I was publishing to avoid perishing or because it was easy to get things published if you're at the top of the promotion ladder. He went on to say that he found many of the essays were full of jargon and in any event its intended readers knew it already. I think it could be classed as an unfavourable review of my book but it also demonstrated several of the misconceptions that I have found about publications in academia.

As I understand the act of publication, it is like conversation or debate, but in a different, more durable medium that can reach far beyond the distance one's voice can carry even if one shouts. I believe in using it that way because I like to discuss and argue ideas with other people, and to propagate views or opinions I might hold, either as a result of research or simply from thinking on my own.

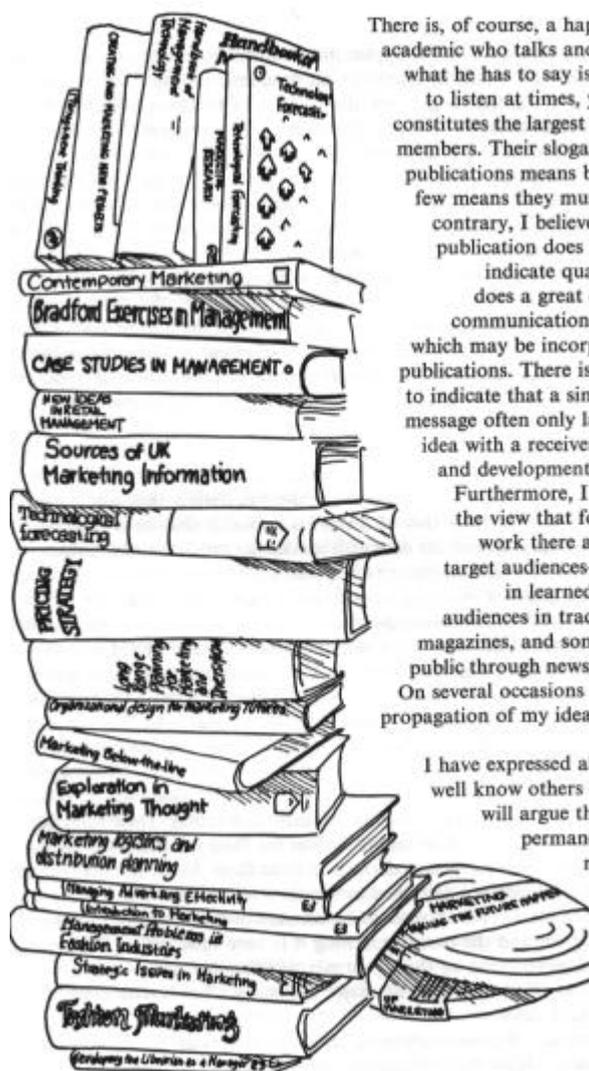
In precisely the same way that in any small discussion group there will be folk who hold their tongues for fear of making themselves look foolish, so there seem to be in publishing. The logic for silence remains the same: if you say nothing you cannot be wrong. Equally, the nothing-slated academic can engage in criticism of others without himself suffering the blows and frustrations that speaking out oneself almost invariably brings in its wake.

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There is, of course, a happy medium in the academic who talks and writes only when what he has to say is worthwhile. This, to listen at times, you might imagine constitutes the largest category of faculty members. Their slogan is that too many publications means bad publications; a few means they must be good. On the contrary, I believe that frequency of publication does little or nothing to indicate quality of work but it does a great deal to accomplish communications impacts for ideas which may be incorporated within any publications. There is so much evidence to indicate that a single impact for any message often only lays the seeds of an idea with a receiver so that repetition and development must work better.

Furthermore, I adhere strongly to the view that for most academics, work there are several different target audiences – fellow academics in learned journals, business audiences in trade and professional magazines, and sometimes the general public through newspapers, TV or radio.

On several occasions I have pursued the propagation of my ideas on all issue in all these media. I have expressed above views which I well know others do not share. They will argue that publication in a permanent form should be reserved for polished works only, not used as a ship for floating ideas or preliminary research results. I recall



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being criticised for a short piece on the application of ideas from anthropology to gift giving practices in Britain which appeared in an academic journal. My reason for publication was that I wanted to get few dimensions of thinking about customer behaviour into the minds of fellow marketing academics. The concept, for instance, of reciprocity which is emphasised in anthropology was one to be toyed with in contemporary society. It held up within certain age groups but not all. I unashamedly probed and sought through publication to share with others several areas of the behavioural sciences. I extended my mind to look at Rogers' work on diffusion of innovation, and at geographical studies by Berry.

Nonetheless, it remains true that an academic's work is often judged by the volume of his or her publications rather than by their quality, and although publication may well invite damnation from reviews or critics it can work to the author's advantage.

Promotion criteria almost inevitably include evidence of research work as a necessity, and the most tangible manifestation of research work is publication in reputable journals which in their turn will have put out articles for external assessment.

In management studies, and particularly within subsidiary areas like marketing or personnel management, that created very real problems for academic staff. The reputable journals are almost invariably controlled by one school of thought or another, and for authors to gain publication for their materials they are forced to conform to the accepted orthodoxy. Indeed, if there is a notable absence of professional learned journals in an area, as was the case with marketing until recently, publication could only be acquired with the originating discipline, such as economics or sociology. That again in its turn imposed more rigid constraints, particularly when competition was already hot for space from deliberately conventional economists, sociologists, statisticians or whatever. Furthermore, when the professional learned journals of management did arrive, they occurred within a very small community of scholars some of whom I judged their colleagues more on a competitive basis than as fellow scholars. Not surprisingly, therefore, it seemed to me that it was logical to commence our own journals within our chosen subject areas. Accordingly we launched, in 1967 and 1970 respectively, the *European Journal of Marketing* (EJM) and the *International Journal of Physical Distribution* (IJPD). Both came from professional publishing houses in London and both proved to be economically unexciting. Their sales barely touched 1,000 copies per issue and no major market for their treatments emerged at low tariffs. Accordingly, their publishers decided to close them down, but through our consultancy co-operative activity described in Graffito 16 we were able to continue them let's face it: the market for an academic treatment of marketing or distribution management is not great and the cost of reaching it is very substantial. With higher tariff the continued publication of these journals was feasible nonetheless, and we have made a consistent effort to involve all major European schools with the editorial advisory boards in each field.

The control of two key academic journals, needless to say, gives any one School very considerable scope either to propagate its own works, good or bad, and/or to

determine the criteria of what is to be circulated by way of ideas from outside authors. We have studiously sought to avoid such judgements until such time as alternative centres of publication exist.

Our criteria have been so far as possible to give maximum exposure to well thought through ideas, whether or not we agreed with either their direction or their purport. The only embargo placed by and large has been on carrying non-European papers in EJM unless they have a demonstrable relevance for Europe. Its pages could so easily be filled three times over with 'long-shot' contributions crossing the Atlantic, one suspects after rejection there.

My own publications during my first decade of Business School life are somewhat plentiful, as might perhaps be supposed from my opening comments here. In general I have taken nearly ten years to become effectively reader oriented in what I write, by which I mean to say I attempt to write for what I perceive as a market segment in the language that that segment uses. I am happier now that I am closer to a marketing and customer orientation in my texts and collections of readings than hitherto. Nonetheless, there remain occasions such as in research books or in whimsical excursions like this title where I am vain enough to believe the reader will want to enter under my skin to learn to speak my language, and share my thought processes such as they are. Naturally there are particular articles and books with which I am far less happy now than I should like to be but by and large I would publish most of them again. My greatest regrets are associated with my failure to master film or tv as media of communication. I was fortunate to be invited to assist EMI with a twenty minute film some years ago on *Marketing: Making the Future Happen*. It was an integrated pack of film with commentary by Trevor Philpott and overhead transparencies I chose the case examples badly enough to include Rolls Royce's RB 211 sales efforts to Lockheed. Two weeks after its premiere in the Queen Elizabeth Hall on the South flank, Rolls Royce collapsed.

My involvement with the BBC's Further Education Advisory Council's Programme Committee in the late sixties led directly to my being asked to chair a series of ten half hour BBC 1 tv programmes on *Management in the Seventies*. Such a novice was I that I ignored until too late the proclivities of the famous figures assembled to score points off one another and, most importantly, to refuse to stick to the topic of concern. As an educational escapade I rated it about three out of five, but of course there was no chance again to apply my learning.

My decennial conclusion is that Business School academics should be encouraged to publish as widely as possible as part

of their work as communicators in the present as well as for their memorial. To sanctify publication in the way so many pundits do anathema to me as a marketing man. There is a role to play in the publication of ideas and research findings in text book form, as selections of readings, in research monographs, in popular and mass media. Let's encourage the ferment of ideas. Whether or not any particular avenue is worthwhile or not I believe becomes clearer to him who travels the road. I sincerely believe I am wiser about what the market