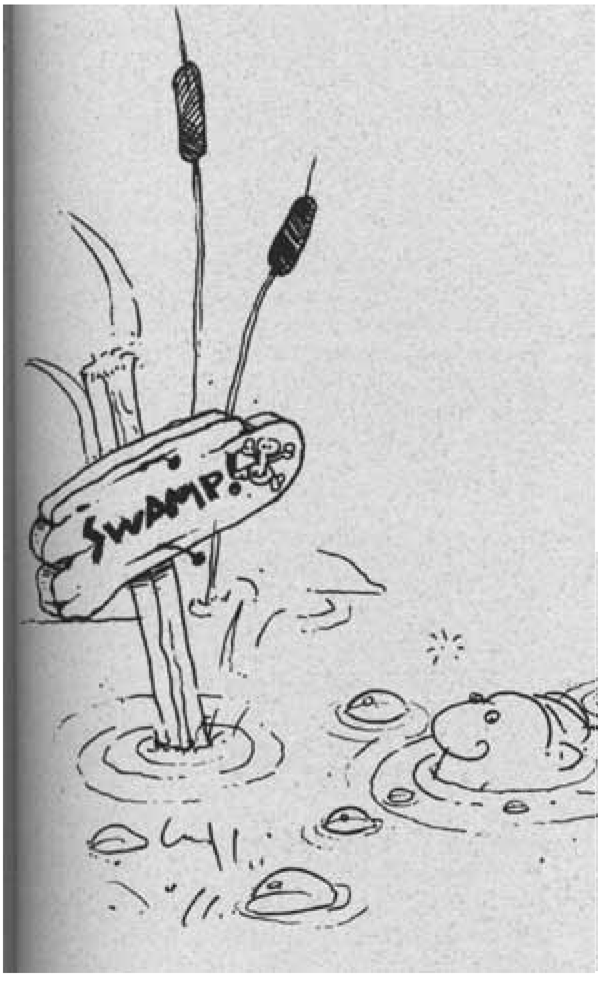
Graffito 78
Grim Reminders

If it all sounds like a lot of fun these past ten years, it has been. But there have been grim reminders. Grim reminders of what life can be like when there is no single goal to seek and institutionalisation saps the energy. And there's been a lot of hard work too, very hard work.

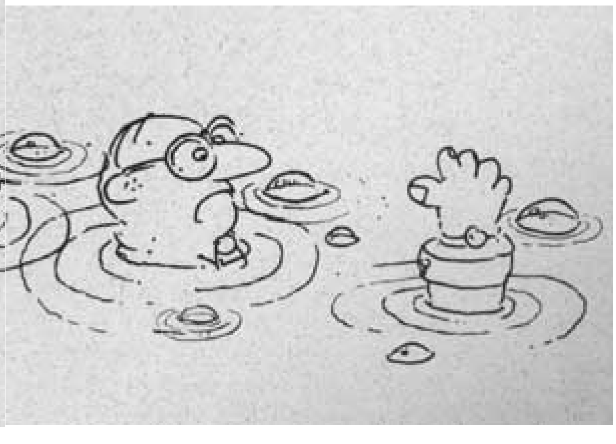
The grimmest reminders of all have come from well-established institutions; three I have in mind, which shall remain nameless. They lost their way. They have all the trappings of flourishing empires and all the latent potential to bloom. But it is a mirage. They are not in a state of aestivation at all. Yet, like the moth to the bright lights, I have been deceived not by them but by my own wishful thinking.

There are few sights more distressing than to observe a management or administrative team in charge of events which they cannot comprehend. It almost always happens when the environment in which they are operating, which has been stable for some considerable period of time, abruptly alters. The management in place is that which was carefully developed and is undoubtedly best suited to the purposes and challenges before that discontinuity. In team terminology, they will be upholders and maintainers. They will control and inspect, they will report and advise. The quest for the Presidency will be obvious, together with the satisfaction of sharing in social events and the warmth that recognition in office can bring.



A commercial enterprise with shareholders and a stock market valuation knows what to do. Either there is a takeover bid as performance wanes or the team is replaced with a company doctor or perhaps surgeon would be a better word. A profession finds it hard to know how to react. I have described in Graffito 59 how CIPFA and CIT bounced straight out of potentially depressing circumstances because of quality of leadership. It can be done. But consider the following scenario...

You were founded in a Brighton pub before the Great Exhibition by a clergyman who believed Mr Squeers was too prevalent among the untrained teaching profession. You gained a Royal Charter



from Queen Victoria almost directly and set to work to train teachers for primary schools and to provide an employment exchange/placement service.

In the late 19th century, you gathered together enough support to establish the first professorship of education in Britain and the Empire. The Prince of Wales opens your splendid new buildings in fashionable Bloomsbury - but your first major mistake is made. Rather than buying outright, you lease the premises for 99 years storing up trouble for your heirs and successors.

You campaign for years for the creation of a General Council of Teachers, a closed shop for the qualified, but fail. Your failure is not only legislative because with the advent of state primary education and then secondary, unionisation gets the controlling hand via the Board Schools. You find a number of important niches for your professional body which still offers widespread training services, most particularly by correspondence courses. Lecture notes for your awards become the foundation of one of the country's great but independent correspondence colleges flourishing to this day.

When finally the battle for qualified teachers is won across the nation, the prize does not fall to you. It falls to the teacher training colleges whose Bachelor of Education awards and the like are preferred. Within the school system you are able to create an effective examination for secondary modern schools before comprehensivisation, CSE and the GCSE emerge to swamp you out. As you gaze at the affairs of your professional institution, you can either conclude that it has all been done, i.e. we have qualified teachers everywhere and our Royal Charter should be sent back, or everything is still to be done from a new plateau. The only dilemma you face is that your student body in Britain is dwindling fast and those who remain are overseas students who are as relatively disadvantaged as their British equivalents were 50 or 100 years before.

CIPFA and CIT, and many more besides, faced the same dilemma. The way they went, and I believe it is sensible to go, is to become postgraduate, to go for post-qualification development. In the context of education, perhaps to look at the declared national priority areas and work on them. Oh that it could have been so.

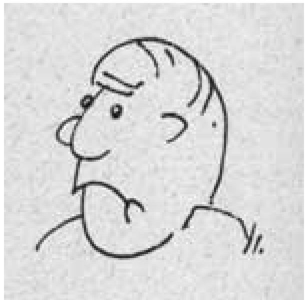
Then again, consider the late Victorian pride of the hospital administrator, who built and developed the necessary training programmes the better to serve the needs of the patient and the medical profession. A royal prince agrees to become your President. The hospitals in which you work are the subject of major growth, taken into the public sector in the 1940s but then competed with strongly in the sixties seventies and eighties. You reorganise several times but always you remain the administrator in support of the medical professionals in their support of the patient for whom they care.

But imagine how you feel when a senior executive from the retail grocery trade, Sainsbury's as a matter of fact, suggests that it is all wrong. The need is not administration; it's general management. The need is for tough minded CEOs, who rough up the medical professionals and force them to make harsh life and death choices. The sort of choices that take the more articulate directly to the emotional blackmail arena of the media, with factually correct statements of how many people will die because of poor cervical cancer smear rates or heart transplant facilities or whatsoever.

How do you respond when 3,000 or more of these general management jobs are advertised? Would you believe that you resolve to change the name of your professional body to remove the word administrator and instead place therein management? Well yes. It's a sign of the times. It is as pointless as the day the sales manager puts marketing manager on the door, or the accountant financial manager! Or is it? The journey of a 1,000 miles begins with a single step, but the distressing reality is that nothing will normally change until catastrophe overtakes us.

For the professional institution, there is little opportunity for such catastrophe to overwhelm one. It just slides slowly away. When the lease runs out, one moves to more modest circumstances, perhaps an old Board School. What could be more symbolic? W could redouble our efforts, of course, to sell more advertising space in our magazine for members. In the case of hospital administrators, this could he a good wheeze because there are very substantial purchasing budgets to be spent. A major source of revenue can come from medical suppliers, having the chance to influence within a professionally sponsored medium. But is this what members join for or expect?

My last scenario is much more magnificent and sad. Well over 20,000 members across the world with international branches of well over 500. But the central leadership falters, unable to decide what its own purpose is in Britain and failing to realise how very different the several purposes are, worldwide, in its branches. Even the magazine collapses unable for all sorts of reasons to cope with the professional and educational challenges of new opportunities, just as our teacher training profession had faltered before.



These grim reminders are not meant to be brutal, nor are they told I trust unkindly. I hope through them to focus attention on the most extreme difficulty that professional institutions have in staying young and alert. With none of the marketplace pressures to move mountains, I believe the greatest challenge, shared with the public service, is to stay young and to innovate.

The primary requirement is an R&D department as I have remarked of business schools in Graffito 44 And a leader who, whether he likes new ideas or not, encourages them because he believes that the secret of eternal youth is to see the world through young people's eyes. One does not have to be able to feel comfortable doing it; just disciplined. Henry's stratagem that anyone can have a go with their own idea for an experimental three years is omnipotent.

I suppose as a convinced action learner now it is not surprising I am distressed by professional institutions that deify or reify programmed knowledge rather than questioning: what next? I know they find me equally distressing, even worse.

Graffito 79

This Year Next Year Sometime Credible

Two adages, and acceptance that believable is a synonym for credible, together constitute the modest basis for a theory of credibility that I have been patiently testing since 1983. Let me explain...

1. If *seeing is believing*, all innovators should devote a maximum of effort to giving sight to their intended customers; which is not a straightforward matter at all. Potential viewers have many

other things in sight and finding space, or is it time, for them to see, is an art and a science of its own. There are none so blind furthermore, as those who do not wish to see.

2. If *beauty is in the eye of the beholder*, whether the sight of an innovation is beautiful depends on a cluster of actors that are present already before beholding that innovation, as well as the interaction process itself.

So my theory of credibility can be postulated as follows. Perceived credibility is a function of the extent to which a viewer's past and current experiences and future aspirations can be demonstrated to be consistent with the innovation.

Goethe would probably have settled much more simply for: "What we know is what is credible", but my theory offers more scope for action to manage credibility, which must be the purpose of the innovator.

Let me take a straightforward proposition, frequently advanced, that IMCB's innovation would be more credible if we were part of a traditional university established by Royal Charter or Act of Parliament. What such viewers of our innovation are saying is that their past and current experiences are that management education comes from traditional institutions, which are accepted in our society as fulfilling that role. The maximum perceived credibility for such viewers will arise when the most highly regarded of such institutions offer the programmes, e.g. Oxford or Cambridge or perhaps best of all, Harvard. I agree. The snag for the innovator is that they do not want to associate with or endorse IMCB's innovation, or even yet copy it themselves.

It is almost always thus with innovation. It is seldom if ever the exemplar of the way things now are that proposes that they should be changed, particularly as sales continue going well for the existing product range, as indeed they do during the early stages of most major innovations.

Essentially, successful innovation involves seeking to change the concept of the optimum. This is not best done I find by seeking to destroy the traditional but by offering an alternative in its place. We did not need to look far for such alternatives. Many senior managers were already articulating them and have been acting on them.

Let me again take a straightforward proposition but from the other extreme, and one frequently heard in Britain but much less so elsewhere. "We've tried recruiting MBAs but they have exaggerated ideas of themselves, their skills and their salaries and tend to leave within two years to go into consultancy or financial services. We develop our managers here on the job."

Such viewers no longer rely on broad educational norms to act as surrogates for credibility. They are describing their direct hands-on past experience of individuals who came from traditional institutions. From what they observe, the credibility of management development processes is now defined by its direct relationship with the job, *not* with the academy. To optimise credibility, these viewers would need to ensure that the job was deliberately and consciously made the source for all management development. One of my colleagues wrote a pathfinding book nearly 20 years ago on this very theme, *Making Experience Pay.*

I am of the opinion that the job itself can seldom if ever be sufficient alone. To optimise management development from the job rather than simply use it *en passant* requires the utmost care that the rush of events and the exigencies of the job itself do not permit. Mentoring is almost always required, job enrichment, broadening of horizons, off-the-field practice sessions to polish particular skills, and unashamed knowledge updates. All will frequently be required not to forget also reading journals.

I deliberately chose these two simple propositions to discuss rather than a dozen others because they encapsulate the schizophrenia which both our customers and we ourselves on the faculty have. Almost all our customers venerate education for its own sake but realise only too well it often misses the mark when it comes to making managers more effective. Wouldn't it be good if all our universities saw and cared for what we really need, whatever that is? Not quite so many but nevertheless a goodly number of our faculty admire the talents of entrepreneurs and executives, often with a touch of envy. But faculty realise only too well that such executives also often miss the mark in terms of understanding or caring for what they perpetrate on society, the environment or the world's resources.

Revans has hypothesised all along that such schizophrenia can be overcome by processes of action learning that are customer oriented. It is this which we are patiently testing against my theory of credibility. I have intended to show in this report that we subscribe to neither of the polarised views described above. We do not believe that managers will become more effective by IMCB joining either the traditionalists or the academic rejectionists. We simply want the best of both worlds in a single institution. Not much to ask for. It is we believe the right place for the Business School for Tomorrow.

The traditional academy brings scholarship, rigour, reflection and research to the process and these in their turn bring acclaim and credibility. The workplace provides the laboratory, the field of battle, the resources to manage, with acclaim and credibility from success. So we have positioned IMCB as an academic institution with a professoriate of both distinguished scholars and successful practitioners. But we also positioned ourselves in industry at work. It is from our customers in the short, medium and long term that our credibility can and must come as a business school that seeks to live and prosper by making managers more effective. Insofar as we have uncertain customers, those who are afraid to accept that the test of a good management education is that the marketplace finds it credible, and that hanker after traditional recognition not from our customers but from competitive suppliers or a collegiate consensus, we can only do our best and it will seldom be good enough for them. The best we can do is external examiners from traditional institutions. Our goal is not for compromising: collegiate consensus is a very elegant device for the maintenance of a cartel or restrictive practice but the less said about them the better They certainly resent much institutional innovation, and erect the highest promise barriers to entry.

We recently put pen to paper at IMCB to answer the question: "Why Choose IMCB?" We resolved to answer it by saying: ask our customers; ask our faculty and graduates; ask our external examiners; ask the British Accreditation Council; ask yourself.

The sequence that brochure took reflects the two adages I began with. Seeing beauty is believing. Blue chip enterprises from ICI to Du Pont, Ford of Europe to Pilkington, the Australian Post Office to the UK Manpower Services Commission, have seen us as credible. Professional institutes from CIPFA in the UK to the IPM in Australia and the Institute of Marketing in Finland likewise. Managers in their thousands in 16 countries worldwide have too. External examiners from traditional institutions have attested to our acadernic equivalence when qualifications are being awarded from IMCB. The British Accreditation Council has asserted that we are efficient in the conduct of our affairs worldwide. Captains of industry as well as Professor Parkinson of Laws fame have joined our Court of Honorary Members.

What more can one say? Wbuld it not be nice to be officially accepted by the traditionalists and the establishment? That's not possible just now. By our works and the company we keep shall we be known.

Graffito 80

Think Multinational

I have referred repeatedly throughout these reflections to the amazing speed with which we spread into other countries - and around the UK. We simply had no realisation at the outset that such a thing could or would occur. Now there's no stopping it.

We began with the export model, sending our home conceived services around the world to be received with different levels of enthusiasm in the various host countries. It was not long before we learnt much more about the realities in each of those host countries and began to adapt and adjust first the delivery systems and then the content. The adaptation was not fundamental in that we did not compromise our purpose, but we responded to local circumstances as any enterprise must if it is to develop.

The African delivery model came first with our MBA in Johannesburg and Kenya running on a basis of one-week blocks after a two-week start-up. This enabled us to resource all the formal tutorial inputs internationally if needs be, although increasingly they did not. The model was at once adopted in Vanuatu in 1987 and throughout the South West Pacific.

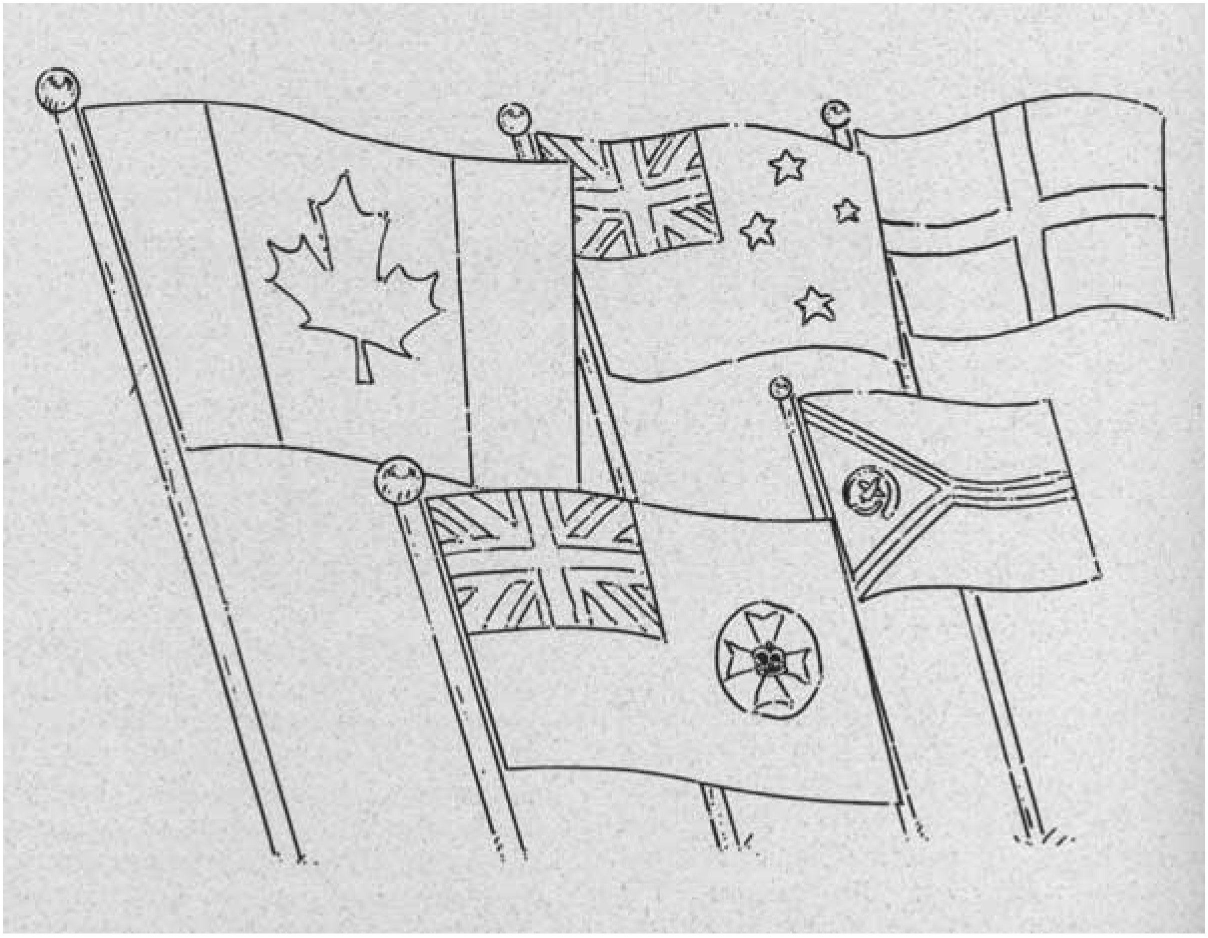
Hong Kong adopted a series of weekends, well above our original notion of six dealing with skills. This was copied in the UK when we began our dispersed model with managers from all over the country rather than just a single city. The Master of Education Management programmes for head teachers extended the weekend model to encompass the startup sessions as well, without any obvious lack of pace or effectiveness.

Content variations on all programmes are of course encouraged and required in every action learning set. The formal support resources and back-up materials are readily supplemented by the managers themselves and their local faculty. The Far East Region was the first to formalise a major change to the balance of action learning as opposed to core course materials. We had begun with 75/25 as the balance in favour of action learning and they moved it to 50/50. There was nothing defensible in 75/25, or 50/50 for that matter, except it made best sense for the managers concerned in the cultural context.

When Australia joined the scene of action in mid-1987, they were quick to want to adapt the offering in a distinctive way. Rather than what we had adopted in the UK where we enhanced the DMS from the Council for National Academic Awards to MBA over 12 months, they wanted to disaggregate our full 18-month MBA for ICI's in-company programme into two nine-month stages. The first would gain our Diploma and, if they did well on that, they would move on in the second half to the balance of the MBA over a further nine months. Vanuatu adopted the same model in the Prime Minister's Office there but took 2 x 12 months instead.

In the UK, Arthur Young wanted to integrate our MBA programme within the training of their own colleagues to become accountants. So the MBA was sub-divided into Parts 1 and 2, one before and one after the attainment of the ACA qualification.

Without exception, the developments that arose from our multiplicity of market circumstances made sense and fed back into the centre of affairs in the UK. It was sometimes potentially confusing but nonetheless it enriched our thinking. Because we allowed differences to be expressed articulately and modifications to be introduced, we were continually being exposed to new ideas. Sometimes, lack of good communication led to re-inventing the wheel but, almost always, the marketplace response made us wiser about how to achieve our objective of more effective management. It is difficult nowadays for a new country situation to come up with a range of problems we have not encountered in one form or another elsewhere. We bite our tongue and avoid saying so but, nonetheless, it is true. Most importantly however, we have learnt to trust our colleagues all over the world to honour those things that we all stand for.



So it was that in our planning approaches to 1990 for IMCB we were able to be relaxed about fear of fragmentation. If the Business School was to survive and develop, as we recognised it could in so many countries and so many locations even within the United Kingdom, we needed a philosophy and policies that not just responded well but welcomed and encouraged such diversity. Then we must positively add a system that managed it. We needed to identify now what would keep all the various countries and locations together within IMCB once they could all see how it worked for themselves.

It all boiled down to a commitment to a common philosophy of action learning that would be strengthened by international connections; the benefits from an educational viewpoint of sharing a common set of standards worldwide for various qualification awards; and the access to one another's research findings and new resource materials and ideas as they emerged.

The extent to which any of our host countries depend on international trade as such varies greatl~ but their concern for and involvement in the transfer of management knowledge and skills from wherever they are developed into their own environment are beyond question. Only frustration from a controlling centre could outweigh the obvious benefits of working together in an appropriate manner When we added in the opportunity for host country faculty to travel to tutor on a sharing basis with other countries, again as a development of the UK export model with which we began, yet another reinforcing element for future cohesion was added.

The catalyst that finally moved us on from this clearly discerned but quietly evolving pattern was the sequence of developments in the educational jurisdictions of Canada and the UK, which I have already referred to earlier I have described in Graffito 77 in particular how our awn Secretary of State in the United Kingdom put us in something of a quandary on 5 November 1987. He also clearly showed the way forward. Whereas he was incredibly determined to cartelise very strongly what he wanted to term recognised UK degrees, he was intent on allowing foreign institutions to continue to flourish in the UK. Furthermore, he wished IMCB well it found its way forward. This implicitly made it plain that any future structural innovators would need to go foreign to flourish at all. Prophets in their own country seldom prosper. It was a simple connection to make, particularly bearing in mind our transfer credit arrangements since 1983 with Northland Open University in Canada.

We resolved to pursue and manage the issue of educational jurisdiction on the same basis as a multinational company would; or indeed as Schools do in their portfolio of GCE jurisdictions for their pupils. In seeking to be innovators and indeed regular providers, IMCB would look to those countries worldwide which frankly were most friendly and supportive, not of shoddy standards of accomplishment or equivocation on our action learning focus, but friendly towards giving our idea a go. Accordingly, for each and every country in which IMCB offers its services in the world, we resolved to see if it was right and proper to move from a UK export educational jurisdiction to any other, including the host country itself. It will be recalled that our Canadian colleagues had faced and resolved this very matter in their dealings between the Canadian Confederation and the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec.

Our decision was to broaden the base of our activities and create the first Business School in the world with multinational jurisdictions. We have thereby once and for all been freed from any capricious turns of the wheel of educational fortune in any particular educational jurisdiction. The Secretary of State's notions had come full circle and, rather than being a constraint, afford us a much greater flexibility than we had hitherto enjoyed - not because we could not have done so hitherto, but because we did not have any pressing reason to turn our minds to the matter

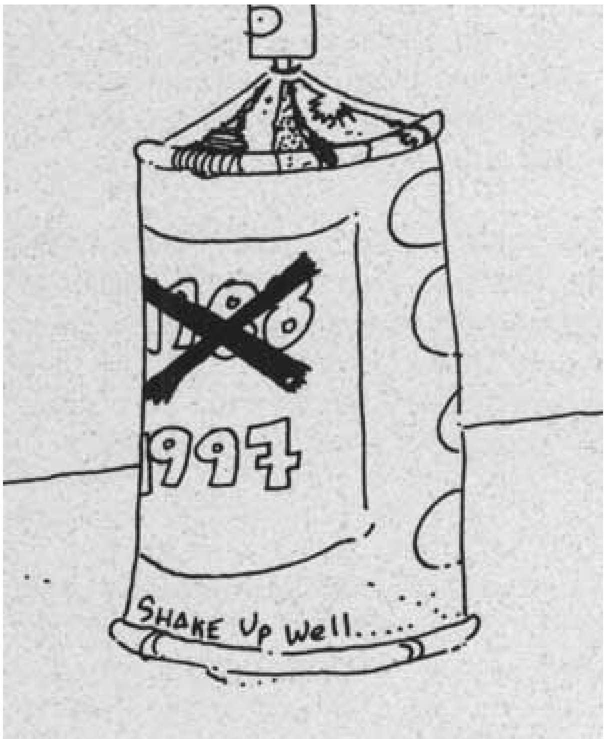
We have immediately added three new flags to the Cross of St George at Buckingham and the Canadian Maple Leaf, which have metaphorically flown since 1983. They are from the State of Queensland for Australia, the Dominion of New Zealand and the Republic of Vanuatu. They are the major host countries for IMCB 's Pacific Region managed from Brisbane, but each one of them has welcomed IMCB 's incorporation under limited by guarantee status. Each has its own indigenously elected Council of Management, pledged, as we hoped they would be, to working worldwide for everything that IMCB from England stands for. More will shortly follow.

Glad to tell each one now established within its own educational jurisdiction has agreed to share worldwide in a Common Multinational Academic Board (Co MAB). In this way we know it will be possible to ensue the maximum sharing and comparing on action learning matters. We will also maintain thereby the parity of standards and the widest possible scope for transfer credits. Many managers on IMCB programmes move around the world during their studies. Even more, in fact probably most, will move during their lifetime of continuing membership with us. In this way, local jurisdictions can readily offer most of the support services needed. Already managers from Malaysia have been supported in New Zealand and those from the UK in Indonesia and Australia.

As well as the Common Multinational Academic Board, MCB University Press has been appointed as Common Official Multinational Publisher provided, and it has been readily agreed, it makes a major contribution to the Region's development of management literature with Asia Pacific journals and texts.

Ironically therefore, I now put down my decennial pen until 1997 when I hope to write from Hong Kong, with a vote of thanks to the British university cartel and to their very own Secretary of State for Education and Science. If they had not given us such a hard time of it, where would we be today?

Finally, a deep felt personal vote of thanks to Henry of Byzantium who threw dawn his gauntlet in 1982. It's premature for me to return it because I still greatly value and need its magical powers; but, if he can find a more urgent or better use for it, he can always ask for it back.



Annex 1

Instead of the Lexicon of Management

When I assert that the teaching of the lexicon of Management is often inefficient and frequently ineffective as a way of improving managerial performance, I am seldom asked why. The question is normally: how else?

I have a theory of generalship in management that can hardly be unique to me, but it does not require an elementary knowledge of all the specialisms deployed in an enterprise. Rather, it requires an understanding of what each can contribute to the overall performance. This accordingly leads me to propose that effective programmes for improving management must:

1. Ensure that the managers understand how other departments conceptualise their contribution to the whole.

2. Create a trust amongst all management team members in one another to do their specialist job professionally.

3. Involve working together on real issues and trusting one another as the process develops.

4. Have a significant requirement for follow through action as a result that will reinforce what has been learned and make the whole programme worth while personally and for the enterprise.

On this basis a different curriculum emerges. It is not the lexicon. It is the future challenges for the enterprise, for the manager concerned and his colleagues appropriately involved with him. And it is the skill necessary to carry the enterprise forward. Ideally, managers teach one another.

Their first tutorials for their colleagues must be on what their specialisation can contribute and does contribute to the enterprise; for example, the finance director teaches finance for the non-financial managers. The need is a conceptual understanding and it is readily accomplished by answering the questions that most frequently puzzle colleagues. It has little or nothing to do with technique.

Next, friction between professional approaches in departments at their interfaces can be examined from both sides. What causes them? How can they be reduced?

Thirdly, how does the senior manager or the chief executive officer pull all the different contributions together, set priorities and allocate scarce resources? The pattern of corporate integration adopted determines the success of all enterprises.

Finally all management can best learn to be morn effective in real life applications. A major, strategically important project addressing an issue fundamental to success over the next two to five years can be worked at and acted upon.

I summarise this alternative lexicon in the following way. Understand the core concepts; analyse the interfaces and the corporate integration within the enterprise; identify and practice the necessary skills; and work hard on an action project that must be followed through. This is the new curriculum. It Is superior for the development of managers beyond a doubt and I have the evidence to prove that assertion.

Annex 2

How Managers Achieve Success at IMCB

IMCB's particular strength is in the design of management processes that enable managers at all levels to create greater wealth.

We expect at least ten times the return on the investment the enterprise makes within two years.

Wealth Creation

Management development creates wealth when the link between knowledge and its application is managed, not assumed to work on its own. IMCB shows how to manage that link:

- to make the enterprise more effective for its stakeholders.
- to make each individual's career more effective.

What Do We Mean By Wealth?

Wealth means creating better products or services which customers buy at a price and quality that repays the original investment at a rate of return that enables each manager to grow personally and develop his organisation - a double benefit.

What Can Be Done To Create Greater Wealth?

IMCB's approach is to get managers to study their own organisation and the customers they serve in more creative ways.

MCB therefore enables managers to identify opportunities for managing the assets of tile business more effectively.

The wealth creating management development process is implemented in a systematic and disciplined way.

Investing In People

IMCB's wealth creating management development strategy is therefore seen as an investment with quantifiable returns that outstrip many other projects. It invests in people who are the key asset of the enterprise.

However, people are freely mobile, none more so that the highly developed manager. IMCB's approach is designed to gain such a high level of commitment that job hopping elsewhere will be the last thought on anyone's mind.

How Can It Be Done?

IMCB invites senior managers to identify the key wealth creating challenges facing their business. Then key managers work on these challenging issues under IMCB's guidance. Not only do they seek professional advice but they work in cross functional teams. They lean from one another as well as gaining relevant input from IMCB tutors. And when the answers emerge, they move straight on to putting the plans into action. It is here the wealth creation pays off.

Typical recent projects have involved:

- implementing plans
- developing new products
- building sales
- developing channels of distribution
- improving productivity
- managing quality
- reducing real costs
- improving systems

What Investment Returns Are Required?

If a management development project has less than a ten fold pay back over two years on the investment up front, the enterprise has either nominated the wrong manager or the wrong project.

No manager under development creating wealth with IMCB may leave his job. Delegate more, yes; manage time better, yes; but the workplace is both the practice pitch and the field of play.

The IMCB Track Record

Over 200 companies have worked with IMCB in the past five years. Some 20 blue chip enterprises have run the Master of Business Administration (MBA) and other Master's programmes in-company, giving IMCB unchallenged market leadership in such wealth creating management development.

IMCB has become the world's first multinational business school now operational in 16 countries across Europe, the Far East, North America and the Pacific.

IMCB's blue chip clients exemplify the power of its approach, and include: Du Pont, ICI, Cummins Engines, Arthur Young, Seagram, Ernst & Whinney, ACI, International Distillers and Vinters, Jones Lang Wootton, NatWest Bank, Westpac, Allied Irish Banks, Grand Metropolitan, CASE, Pilkington and Ford of Europe.

What Is Action Learning

IMCB's approach is known as action learning. It is the process whereby managers systematically improve the organisation and create wealth by working together on crucial issues in the business:

(1) It inescapably requires that senior executives identify the major issues that need to be tackled.

(2) These issues become the business project for those nominated to work together in teams to develop creative wealth producing solutions.

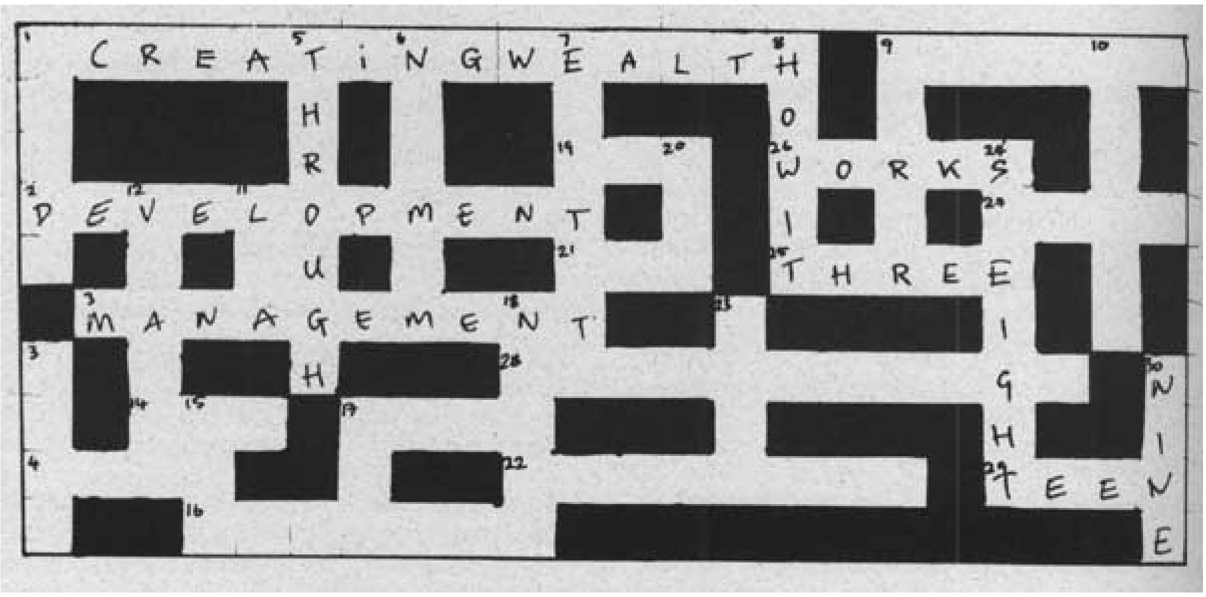
(3) IMCB's contribution is to design and manage the programme and provide the professional knowledge and resources required. However, the creative wealth producing solutions come from managers themselves as does the action to carry them through.

How Long Does It Take?

Wealth through people, is seldom, if ever, created overnight. IMCB normally organises programmes over the following time periods:

- 3 months for operational projects
- 9 months for executive projects
- 18 months for strategic projects

Participants are expected to give at least one day a week to the assignments in addition to their normal work. IMCB only wants to work with the best people who have a future with the organisation, not those who can be spared.



Three Months' Action Learning

Senior managers identify four to six key challenges and allocate four to six managers to each team to work on them. Each project needs an "owner" in the enterprise from the top, who will be mentor and sponsor. IMCB thrashes matters through with the owner of each of the key challenges then starts up with a briefing session, agrees schedules and arranges appropriate tutors who have a full command of the knowledge area involved.

Each team meets separately, normally one day a week i.e. nine times. IMCB's tutors attend some or all of these meetings which are held whenever it is most convenient for the team. IMCB also coaches the team as need be on team working, presentation and project management skills.

Presentation skills are put to the test at the end of the three months when a full report back session, all teams together, to all owners and other top managers, occurs as a prelude to the wealth creating action implementation along the lines agreed.

Nine Months' Action Learning

This is either identical with the three months pattern above with more tutorial knowledge input such as financial analysis appropriate to a key challenge; or managers work on more than one project. Each team can tackle two or three projects so that at the final presentations more than one alternative would have emerged and have been considered in depth.

Again, meetings normally take place one day a week or two days a fortnight if the team is dispersed, using normal working days or weekends, depending on enterprise culture. Nine months of action learning in multiple project teams will always include tutorial inputs by IMCB as on the three month programme but to greater depth and, as required, greater breadth. Nine months of action learning affords the opportunity for any manager who so wishes to submit written assignments to gain IMCB's Diploma in Business Administration.

Eighteen Months' Action Learning

Eighteen months enables any key manager to gain a comprehensive personal understanding of general management by working in teams on a wide of strategic issues that create wealth for the enterprise. It is a contribution that IMCB equates with its Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree of membership qualification, but that the personal satisfaction of the manager concerned. The enterprise gets a deliberately constant pattern of wealth creation.

The multi-project approach adopted over eighteen months extends across all the key areas of enterprise - finance, marketing, operations and human resource management, together with business policy and strategy formulation. Finally an individual project on a key issue is undertaken with a major report and action plan.

Building from Three to Nine to Eighteen Months' as Required

IMCB deliberately tailors its contribution to wealth creating management development to suit customers' requirements. This not only includes logistics of support and the sequencing of relevant curriculum, but also a build up from three to eighteen months of action learning. Enterprises frequently make an initial commitment of three or nine months for a score or more of their managers then a lesser number proceed to greater depth.

There is absolutely no requirement from IMCB that any manager should be assessed formally for Diploma or MBA simply because he was involved on an action learning programme. That choice, we believe, is for the individual and then the enterprise to make as is most appropriate. It must not distract the proper purpose of management development which is to create wealth through higher levels of effectiveness.

Gordon Wills believes enterprises should raise their investment in management development sky high; and at once. It is one of the vital frontiers of opportunity for creating wealth. The returns available are staggering if the process is linked directly to the commercial goals of the enterprise over its next two to five years.

Creating Wealth through Management Development is an idiosyncratic but compelling report from Gordon Wills. He describes how such investment decisions have already been made in some 200 companies in 16 countries, with little or no encouragement from the traditional purveyors of management courses or from Government. His allies have been his customers, Chief Executive Officers and far-sighted Personnel Directors, who have helped break the mould of management education that Britain inherited from the US in the 1960s.

The American model has failed its British benefactors and customers. After 20 years, only a fraction of Britain's managers are professionally educated and the services offered by the traditional suppliers remain all too often irrelevant and academically arrogant.

Wills confesses his own original guilt. But as a marketing researcher at Cranfield and Buckingham, he developed new products and services that have now outsold the traditional approach. They have brought enterprise directly into the specification and design phases of management development. They have required enterprise to follow through with application. Blue chip companies have given the ideas, strongly based on Reg Revans's action learriing models, a colossal vote of confidence.

It is not too surprising that once one of Europe's leading marketing professors became Principal of a British Business School it would be driven to meet customer needs. What is much more surprising, perhaps, is that it should have spread across the world, creating the first truly multinational Business School.

The Wills Report is an impertinent insider analysis. It leads the reader down the thorny path of innovation that has been followed, with introductions to friends and foes encountered along the way. It's a book that all who care to think about the more effective development of managers should not miss reading. It sustains the iconoclasm of *Business School Graffiti,* indeed picks up where that book left off in 1976. It will be even more widely read and acted upon.

Gordon Wills is Principal of the International Management Centre from Buckingham, Britain's major new wave Business School. It is a School that deliberately set out in 1982 to break the mould that he had helped to build at Bradford and Cranfield from 1982. He was successively Professor of Marketing at both institutions.

His career spans industrial marketing research and advertising with ICI and Foote Cone and Belding. He has also had a lifelong interest in electronic printing engineering and publishing. With colleagues from the University of Bradford Management Centre, where he became Foundation Professor of Marketing in 1968, he helped build the world's major academic management serial publishing house, MCB University Press, with more than 50 serials in print and offices in North America, the Far East and Australia. He has authored some 30 books published in six languages on topics as diverse as technological forecasting and fashion marketing but the text *Introducing Marketing* outsold all others in Europe for five years.

Since 1976 he has been primarily associated with the movement for customer orientation in public enterprises most particularly education, and with the marketing revolution in banking and financial services. He has assisted Natwest, Westpac, Midland, Chase, Allied Irish Banks and Standard Chartered, as well as the Australian Credit Unions and the English Building Societies.

He has worked for the UN in Cyprus and Mexico and taught in more than 40 other countries, holding Visiting University Chairs at Alberta, Western Australia, Queensland, Tulsa and the Helsinki School of Economics.

He was educated at Reed's School, Slough Technical College, Reading and The Open Universities and gained his doctorate at Cranfeld Institute of Technology. He was commissioned in the Royal Air Force during his National Service.

His hobbies are canal narrowboating. decorating, vegetable gardening, writing and restoring old properties. He is married with three sons.