

An Interview with CEEMAN Champions 2012



CEEMAN Champion Award cup

By Milenko Gudić

Following its continuous efforts to promote and foster excellence in the areas considered as critical for success in business education and management development, in 2012 CEEMAN launched the third edition of the CEEMAN Champion Awards.

The CEEMAN Champion Awards 2012 for outstanding individual achievements in teaching, institutional management, and responsible management education were given to the following individuals:

- Arthur Lindemanis, RISEBA, Latvia in the teaching category
- Peter McKiernan, University of Strathclyde, Scotland, UK and Murdoch University, Australia in the institutional management category
- Bernard Belletante and Jean-Christophe Carteron, Euromed Management, France and Nadya Zhexembayeva, IEDC-Bled School of Management, Slovenia in the responsible management education category

The awards were announced at the gala dinner of the 20th CEEMAN Annual Conference in Cape Town, South Africa on 28 September, where CEEMAN President Danica Purg and Jim Ellert, chair of the CEEMAN Champion Awards jury, congratulated the winners and delivered the award cups and certificates to those who were present (Jean-Christophe Carteron).

Given our practice of publishing interviews in CEEMAN News with persons from whose achievements and experiences our readers can learn, we have invited CEEMAN Champions to share with us some of their thoughts and ideas in this issue. We have asked questions that are relevant in the areas of their excellence - in business education, and in leadership development in general. We also wanted to find out how these awards were perceived in their respective institutions.

Milenko Gudić: Peter, in addition to your outstanding contribution to institutional management and change at St Andrews University Management School, your nomination for the CEEMAN Champion Awards emphasizes your role in developing two important management development associations: the British Academy of Management (BAM) and the European Academy of Management (EURAM). What were the main challenges in leading change in these networks?

Peter McKiernan: These academies were at different stages of development when I took over as president. BAM needed a lot of energy and effort to effect a turnaround and many people worked tirelessly for years to bring it back from the edge of its demise to being one of the most powerful national academies in Europe. The features of this strategy were a clear vision, a strong team, the development of exciting new products, the rebirth of key academic journals, and the

formation of SIGs, which became central to the annual conference and to engaging academics between events.

EURAM was a startup venture. It was a general management alternative to EGOS and a European organization like AoM, reflecting the great variety of European approaches to business and management research and method. The success factors were, again, a strong and committed team, a broad engagement with the national academies across Europe, including CEEMAN, a new journal, new products, as well as a selection of attractive conference venues, such as Paris, Rome, and Barcelona - to attract the interest of the key schools there and enhance the conference experience. Both academies are thriving now and, as they say, are "under new management".

MG: After leaving St Andrews, you have been engaged in several other management development institutions, which have experienced



Peter McKiernan

their own development paths and have gotten their own institutional cultures. What do you see as the main challenges that business schools worldwide are facing now, and how important are their institutional cultures (or the changes in them for that matter) in turning those challenges into opportunities?

PM: The main issue facing business schools today is the relevance of their work, both teaching and research. Western schools came under intense criticism after the 2007/08 financial crisis for having lost their moral compass. For instance, curricula had not developed to cope with the ethical side of business and most schools focused on the for-profit organizational form at the expense of public sector and third sector organizations. In essence, that leaves out the majority of organizations in the world. Moreover, business school academics had stopped looking inside organizations as they had done 20 years before. This left much of their work done at a distance and in danger of being irrelevant.

As a consequence, major social and economic topics went under-researched or not researched at all. Why is there obesity and starvation in the same place at the same time? How do terrorist organizational forms differ from capitalist ones? Why did CEOs assume that legal issues are similar to ethical ones? Why is the gray economy so successful in so many countries? Business-school researchers, with their multi-disciplinary heritage, were in a wonderful position to lead the social sciences with new work in these and related fields but nothing happened except more cases of how Hewlett-Packard, Apple, Dell, and Honda got it right! The research was myopic and so was the consequent teaching. It is no surprise that MBAs were churned out in their thousands to populate investment banks and boardrooms with very limited understanding of the broader social and economic problems facing the societies in which they plowed their lucrative trade.

At the root of much of this demise is the process of isomorphism. School and research rankings drove deans to copy the models of schools above them in the league tables. Accreditation agencies forced schools to conduct business

in certain ways and refused accreditations if unusual or different models emerged (eg teaching-only schools). These extraneous forces caused schools to mimic each other on a global scale with the result that many schools ended up looking exactly the same by product and by research. Elsewhere, in a 2010 publication by Wilson and McKiernan, we refer to this homogeneous process as "Global Mimicry". In a publication that came out this year, we have urged the profession to take the "business out of business schools" and focus on the many other rich organizational forms that exist in the world.

There is good evidence that some intelligent deans are taking this approach and turning their schools to face new research themes and new corners of the globe, and to adopt new disciplinary lenses, like history, anthropology, culture studies, and sustainability. Those schools that stick to the old models with old cultures will atrophy and become more irrelevant as the world stage evolves to the East.

MG: A recent global survey that CEEMAN conducted globally indicated that success in integrating CSR and sustainable development into the educational programs and institutional practices requires having (a) faculty champions, (b) supportive deans, (c) internal dialogue and team support, and/or (d) a combination of these. How did you and your institution manage to achieve the combination of the above mentioned factors that earned you a nomination for the CEEMAN Champion Awards?

Nadya Zhexembayeva: It is absolutely true that integration of social and environmental performance of business into the core business curriculum (rather than placing these topics into marginalized elective options) is a task for the entire school. Rarely do we see participants or students asking for this subject, and generally they have little tolerance and appreciation for this investment of precious program time. At IEDC, I had the luxury of having a dean (Prof. Danica Purg) and academic director (Dr. Nenad Filipović) who offered support from the beginning as they deliberately searched for a faculty member versed in

Nadya Zhexembayeva





Bernard Belletante

these subjects. Later on, both of them also made a huge effort to promote these subjects in all possible ways, from conferences to custom-made program proposals. The entire IEDC team continues to support this effort not only in the classroom, but also in the school operations and program management.

We still have to integrate these issues across all functional subjects. We had a number of discussions within the faculty and managed to find new ways to update the functional courses. Yet, there is a long way to the achievement of deep embeddedness of sustainability across the entire curriculum, and I see that as my next big agenda.

Bernard Belletante: As a dean, I always advocated the view that CSR should not be considered a marketing positioning choice, but a core component of our strategy. For instance at Euromed Management the school's mission has been adapted to "contribute to training and development of ethical and socially responsible managers (...) to help develop new management models" (Strategic plan 2009-2013 – CA 03/04/2009).

Jean-Christophe Carteron: At Euromed Management, we believe that higher education institutions should not only pursue excellence but seek coherence between their research, teaching, and exemplary performance in the social and environmental management of the campus. Specifically, this means that Euromed Management has allocated financial and physical resources to CSR actions and projects within the school. This can be seen in the creation of the CSR department in 2007 and the increasing amount of courses and projects across our campuses.

MG: What do you see as the main challenges, as well as opportunities, related to the role that business schools are facing to better understand and accept the very special role that they could and should play, promoting the idea of sustainable development and responsible leadership?

NZ: The biggest issue is the lack of connection between business schools and the real world. At one extreme, many companies are far ahead of

our outdated philanthropy and charity-oriented teaching. At another extreme, many companies are not able to grasp the relevance of these issues at all. So, most business schools do not serve either and fail to translate philosophical debates into practically relevant business outcomes. Aside from active consulting practices, what has been very helpful to me is being connected to business through the United Nations Global Compact, as IEDC serves as headquarters of its Slovene chapter, and thus stays deeply connected to companies pioneering new social and environmental solutions. What also made a huge difference is the active involvement in Challenge:Future. This youth think-DO-tank is a sustainability innovation initiative, which both IEDC and CEEMAN have been supporting since the beginning. As a youth organization, Challenge:Future allows young people to stay connected to the most relevant issues while being grounded in the global reality.

JCC: During the Rio Summit last June, the Higher Education Sustainable Initiative (HESI) represented more than one-third of the 700 voluntary commitments that came out of Rio+20. In his report to the General Assembly on June 28, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon also recognized it as one of the most significant achievements of the summit.

BB: One of the main challenges every committed organization faces is how to disseminate the CSR strategy into every level of operations. At Euromed Management, we chose to adopt a systemic and transversal approach to this challenge and in 2009 created a group of "CSR Officers" that come from every department of the school.

Currently there are 28 CSR Officers, nearly 10 percent of our staff, nominated by management members. In addition to their regular job duties, the CSR Officers are mandated to serve as a link between the school's CSR strategy and policies and the service they represent. This means that they are not only overseeing the infusion of CSR into their department; they also give feedback and bring to the table ideas and projects suggested by their colleagues.

Jean-Christophe Carteron



MG: You and other CEEMAN 2012 Champions have already received a number of prestigious awards and recognition for your past achievements. In this context, how do you experience the CEEMAN Champion Award that you have just received? Related to this is the question of how this award was perceived by your colleagues and the institution as a whole?

PM: The CEEMAN award is a major recognition of decades of institution building. But it is not an individual award at all. I see it as an honor bestowed upon the teams that helped me steer these key institutions to their current positions. In each case, the teams I worked in were exceptional and multi-talented individuals who cared greatly about their work and ambition for their organization. In fact, if there was any magic formula at all in these achievements, it was the selection of such a team and its motivation through time. A single person, despite their visionary ability, could not have done any of this work alone. I suppose the second feature of this success is the notion of "daring to fail". We learn more from our failures than from our successes and, in each institution, there were a whole lot of failed projects that we attempted. But each time we reflected and learned so that the next project had a greater chance of success. Finally, I think that our profession in the West has changed dramatically towards a more individual society and away from a collective one. Again, research rankings of individuals and the expectation that they do well in them have made them focus on their own career aspirations rather than the good of their institutions. That is very understandable behavior as organizational systems reward publications in A journals and promotions are based on such output. Teaching and service are demoted to subsidiary positions. Hence, it is no wonder that deans struggle to get staff to do service or community-based work in particular. That is why the CEEMAN institutional award sits right up there alongside any other awards. These acts are unusual and it is gratifying to be recognized for them.

NZ: I am deeply honored and moved by this award and thankful for the effort to recognize the challenges of teaching sustainability in a business environment. Teaching is an act of courage, and teaching sustainability is a kind of courage, which no one person can master alone as it takes great community support. I am very grateful for IEDC's courage to put it front and central in its work.

BB: As you probably know, we are in a process of merging with BEM (Bordeaux-France). For our new institution, Kedge Business School, we wanted to put CSR at the heart of the strategy and this award arrived exactly at the right time, helping us to reinforce this trend with our colleagues.

JCC: As a co-winner, I have to say that I now have a big problem. I have to fight with my dean as we cannot agree which of us should have it in his office... (laughs)