

# An Interview with CEEMAN Champions 2011

**By Milenko Gudić**

CEEMAN's efforts to promote and foster excellence in the areas considered as critical for the success in business education and management development continued through the second edition of the CEEMAN Champions Award. In 2011, the Awards were given for outstanding individual achievements in academic and practice-based research, teaching, institutional management, and for the first time, also in the area of responsible management education.

The winners of the CEEMAN Champion Awards 2011 are:

- Michael Netzley, Singapore Management University, Singapore (in teaching category)
- Ruth Alas, Estonian Business School, Estonia (in academic research)
- Sean Meehan, IMD International, Switzerland (in practice-based research)
- Andrzej Kozminski, Kozminski University, Poland (in institutional management)
- W Michael Hoffman, Center for Business Ethics, Bentley University, US (in responsible management education).

The awards were announced at the gala dinner of the 19th CEEMAN Annual Conference in Tbilisi, Georgia on 23 September, where CEEMAN President Danica Purg congratulated the winners and delivered the Awards to those who were present (Ruth Alas and Sean Meehan).

Traditionally, CEEMAN interviews represent opportunities for CEEMAN readership to learn more from those whose achievements and experiences could offer learning lessons of a broader value. CEEMAN Champions are among those from whom we get food for thought and who inspire us for continuing our own strives for excellence and outstanding achievements.

For this reason, we asked the Champions to respond to the questions that were relevant for the respective areas of their excellence, business education, and leadership development in general. We also wanted to understand their perspective on how these awards were perceived in their respective institutions.

**Milenko Gudić: Ruth, the Estonian Business School emphasized in your nomination for CEEMAN Champion Awards in Academic Research your contribution to a better understanding, and managing (or preventing) the crisis and organizational change management processes in different cultural and institutional contexts. How relevant are your research findings for the current crisis and change that many businesses and societies at large are facing globally?**

**Ruth Alas:** Changes taking place in the global and local landscape continuously force organizations to change and therefore, require change management. The triangular and process models, which resulted from my research, provide useful tools for planning and implementing changes, as well as, for preventing a crisis and for recovering from it. However, there are also some broader implications of our research that I have been working on.

A paradigm shift is needed to move our focus from technical systems to social systems in management; more emphasis should be laid on teaching human resource management – including diversity issues; change and crisis management should be guaranteed as a secure and definite place in the curriculum; in our teaching, the theories of individual and organizational learning should emphasize the differences in the factors that influence learning in groups with different backgrounds and demographic data; management by values should be more emphasized.

**MG: Academic research in CEE and dynamically changing environments is still lagging behind management research in established economies. How do you see the research potential of the region and what do business schools and their associations need to do to close the gap?**



Ruth Alas and Jim Ellert, CEEMAN  
Champion Awards jury member

**RA:** Researchers from CEE should be more actively involved in the European and broader research. The potential is there, but more efforts are needed to activate it and focus on some of the key questions that we all are facing. My personal experience with organizing a research community in several countries in change and crisis management and business ethics has been quite positive. By representing Estonia in international research networks such as GLOBE society, Cranet network and others, we have succeeded in organizing conferences and symposia in different locations, from Tallinn to various Academy of Management meetings in the US, as well as a workshop series on Organizational Change and Development under EIASM. In 2011, Estonian Business School organized the EURAM conference with almost 800 participants in Tallinn. These are only some examples of how we could further promote and mobilize the research potential of our region.

Associations like CEEMAN could play a role in global projects, and also in the development of research and publishing capabilities (eg, IMTA Module on Research and Publishing) and infrastructure (eg, *Baltic Journal of Management*, etc). Good examples for this are CEEMAN's research projects on poverty related issues.

**MG: Sean, in your nomination for CEEMAN Champion Awards in Practice-Based Research IMD Lausanne stated a high value of your research output for the school's educational programs and its international prestige. What are the key features of your research approach and philosophy that enables you to produce innovative ideas and action-oriented frameworks that managers around the globe appreciate to learn about?**

**Sean Meehan:** There are two features: Firstly, a guiding principle thus far has been to stay as focused as possible. I came into academia to address one topic I believed was valid based on more than a decade of managerial experience in global organizations: customer focus - does it really matter? How do you make it happen? Why do many companies struggle to make it a reality? I have confined all my research projects to contribute to the growing body of literature in the

area. The focus is not confined to topic - but to the activity as well. I try to keep all my teaching, public speaking and consulting on this area also.

Secondly, I use the classroom as a research laboratory. I am lucky to work at an institution where working with executives is a passion not a sideline. Every week, I can take my current ideas to the classroom, share them with executives and hear their challenges, objections and vivid examples illustrating the strong and weak points of frameworks I have proposed. This feedback loop system at IMD amounts to an example of the rapid prototyping model so in vogue today in innovation circles.

**MG: How do you see the future of practice-based research in the context of dramatic changes taking place in the world and our inability to either provide good answers for the pressing issues or to ask the right questions that would enable us to better understand the changing business and social landscape, and the need for management development industry to respond to all these changes?**

**SM:** We live in interesting times. Really, for academics, and particularly for academics wishing to contribute actively to finding a way forward in a situation where there is no relevant historical reference, this is a hugely exciting moment in history. This is an opportunity to really have impact. Impact can only be defined today by helping a company (not an executive) bring survive and thrive strategies to life. Boards need to understand how scarce investment resources are contributing to short and medium term goals. Business schools need to be able to demonstrate they can make this contribution. If we cannot show that our insights will impact practice, boards will decline the 'opportunity' to support us. The days of soft support for business schools are over. Government support and subsidies do not look as realistic option. We all have (or will have to) pay our way in full. We will be market-tested to the hilt. Yes, practice-oriented research will thrive in this environment.

**MG: Michael, your nomination for the CEEMAN Champion Award in Teaching stresses your inno-**

Sean Meehan receiving the Champion Award  
from Jim Ellert and CEEMAN President Danica Purg





Michael Netzley

**vative teaching and pioneering efforts in the use of social media as a teaching tool at SMU. What are the key elements of your teaching philosophy and how does the use of social media fit into the learning that you hope your students to achieve?**

**Michael Netzley:** I rely on three principles: 1) hands-on connection with the business community, 2) self-directed learning, and 3) creating new experiences for learners. I believe social media aligns beautifully with these goals.

First, learners come into contact with business people around the globe via tools like Twitter and blogs. Additionally, some of the corporate uses of social media that we learn from are happening in real time and we can watch events unfold.

But more importantly, learners come to experience social media as something far more than a tool for socializing. They interact directly with professionals and follow the corporate campaigns online. I then encourage learners to emulate what they see as they source for content to complete their final wiki-based project. They see how social technologies are not just reshaping communications, but also how leading companies innovate, gain access to resources, market products or services, build reputations, and deliver customer service.

Social media brings the learner's classroom experience onto the world's stage. This certainly raises questions about psychological safety in learning, but once that issue is addressed the students then have an opportunity to crowd-source ideas or curate content, to name just a few, in pursuit of their educational goals. And to be honest, positive feedback from the global business community can be extremely motivating, too.

**MG:** How do you see the future potential and value of the digital media portfolio in management education and what are the respective requirements related to research, pedagogical materials, faculty development and institutional support? Here we also refer to the learning culture and expectations that come with the new generations of students and youth in general.

**MN:** I believe interactive digital technologies present an immense opportunity that we have only just begun to explore. Networks allow us to harness resources that lie beyond the classroom walls or library databases. The norms inside these networks, Twitter being an excellent example, favor openness and sharing. Consequently, students and faculty can engage in collaborative problem solving, global relationship building, and broader resource collection which enhance university work in many ways.

The greatest challenges I believe are inertia and culture. By inertia, I mean the academic tradition that we contribute overwhelmingly through an elitist system of peer review. Open networks, however, distribute power into the hands of average people and ethos becomes more about peer-to-peer rather than expert-based credibility. Can we find productive ways of valuing both the elite and populist traditions, and build this diversity into performance evaluation and renewal processes, so that we harness every available learning opportunity or research question?

Culturally speaking, I am acutely aware of different values by which people interact. In Singapore, three examples would be the tendency to blend in and not stand out from the crowd, to keep quiet until you have something meaningful to say and the timing is right, and to never cause someone to lose face. With just a little imagination we can see how these cultural patterns can sometimes lead people, whether undergraduates or experienced professionals, to feel a bit reluctant when using social media and open networks. Considering that people are socialized into these value sets since childhood, embracing these new technologies for learning and research will not always be easy.

**MG:** Kozminski University is the first institution in CEE that received all major international accreditations and high position in international rankings of business schools. What were the main features of your institution-building and institutional management philosophy and strategy that enabled such remarkable results and outstanding achievements?

Andrzej Kozminski



**Andrzej Kozminski:** A group of people sharing the same vision and the same ambition. Long term orientation. Strong academic culture blended with strong business culture. Openness, international orientation and international contacts.

**MG:** Knowing your outstanding ability to anticipate global changes and their implications for business education and leadership development, what do you see as the main challenges and opportunities when it comes to leading and managing business schools in the coming decade? What are the most important things that we could learn, or even unlearn, from the past?

**AK:** Combining creativity with meeting international accreditations and ranking standards. By broadening the profile of business education through including social sciences, humanities and art, stopping the skyrocketing costs of business education, and adjusting it to new environments in the emerging markets.

**MG:** In your nomination for CEEMAN Champion Awards in Practice-Based Research, Bentley University emphasized your pioneering role in increasing the place of business ethics in the business school curricula. How do you see the past and future global development trends in this field, and what other areas could be instrumental for an effective implementation of the principles of responsible management education in general?

**W Michael Hoffman:** I am very optimistic about the future trends in the global development of business ethics, and this is especially true in the development of global business school curricula. We have to keep in mind that business ethics is only about three decades old; that said, there has been tremendous progress with organizations around the world building extensive ethics and compliance programs which were essentially non-existent twenty years ago. This progress is also evident in business education with strong ethics initiatives within PRME, EABIS, and CEEMAN itself, among many others. In Bentley University's Global Business Ethics Workshop, which has the mission of developing faculty to better integrate ethics into their core business courses, we have attracted faculty from literally all over the world.

When I speak of business ethics I certainly am also including CSR and sustainability, areas which are different from business ethics but intrinsically interrelated. Principles of responsible management education must include all three. And another area which I think is fundamentally instrumental for the success of this effort is ethical leadership – in terms of what it means and how it should be developed and implemented.

**MG:** We in CEEMAN believe that in order to have a new generation of responsible business leaders we firstly need a new generation of socially responsible management educators. Faculty



W Michael Hoffman

**development is therefore critical. What do you believe should be in the focus of faculty development programs aimed at developing capabilities for teaching business ethics, CSR and sustainable development?**

**WMH:** In addition to teaching management educators the essentials of these topics and how to embed them into the minds and hearts of our future business leaders, we have to ask the question about the purpose of business and business education, but the purpose of business is not profit maximization and self-enrichment. Unfortunately this has been, especially in recent times, the paradigm of business, and business education has followed suit. The true purpose of business is to offer goods and services which will benefit society, and when this happens, profits and enrichment will follow. Only until business, and the educators who develop its leaders, recognize this can we label this area a profession with a meaningful calling.

**MG:** You and other CEEMAN 2011 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 on how this award was perceived by your colleagues and the institution as a whole?

**RA:** It is a great honor for me, for Estonian Business School and for our small nation of Estonia to receive the CEEMAN's Champion Award 2011 for outstanding achievement in the area of academic research.

While expressing my gratitude to CEEMAN, I am also taking this award as recognition that belongs not only to me, but also to all collaborators from the Estonian Business School and other schools and research institutions with whom we collaborated in this research. I owe special thanks to the Estonian Business School for creating an environment that enables faculty to conduct various research projects and publish research results, while I also highly appreciate the contribution of all respondents from Estonia, China and other countries, who devoted their time for answering surveys and interview questions.

This award encourages me to continue my research in the field of change and crisis management and to involve even more countries to contribute to the comparative research.

**SM:** I was truly excited and honored to be nominated by my institution as a candidate to be considered for the CEEMAN Champions Award. I was thrilled and surprised to be chosen by the committee. Research is a special endeavor. It is sometimes a lonely road. It is certainly a special career. For this reason when a jury of respected experts and peers review an entire body of research and conclude that of the high quality of candidates considered one's contribution merits distinction, it is a very special endorsement. It is enormously encouraging. My colleagues were delighted. I regard the honor as an opportunity to bring my research to the attention of the many great institutions that comprise CEEMAN. While they operate in challenging environments, they are very much a part of the new global dialogue and it is important that researchers like myself are fully cognizant of the markets represented, integrating these in our research plans. The award certainly heightens my interest in CEEMAN markets.

**MN:** The CEEMAN Champion Award is for me the most fulfilling and gratifying recognition I have received. Knowing the caliber of people working with CEEMAN-affiliated institutions, and also that CEEMAN is an accreditation body, makes this an incredible honor.

I do think an opportunity remains to raise awareness within CEEMAN-affiliated institutions about all the great work happening throughout this organization. Certainly our University President recognizes the importance of CEEMAN and was one of the first to send congratulations. The opportunity therefore lies at the school and individual faculty level. I believe that helping our colleagues to understand the many ways CEEMAN can enrich both their teaching and research is something we as recipients could perhaps raise the awareness of.

**AK:** I am proud of the CEEMAN Champions award. CEEMAN played a key role in internationalization of our university and the award was received by our academic community as one more symbol of close ties to CEEMAN and business schools in Central and Eastern Europe.

**WMH:** I am greatly honored to have been selected to receive the CEEMAN Champion's Award 2011 for Responsible Management Education. To receive an award from such a prestigious international association as CEEMAN for work on which I have devoted a significant part of my life is very gratifying indeed. In 1975 I applied for and received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities in the US to begin research on and teaching of business ethics at Bentley University, and that passion and

effort continues to drive me now. I can think of no more pressing need in management and business education than to develop strategies for the appropriate integration of ethics and corporate responsibility into the business curriculum. This is what we have done and continue to do not only at Bentley, but also with faculty at universities throughout the world. For CEEMAN to recognize this through the Responsible Management Education Award will always be one of the highlights of my career.

This award was received with much enthusiasm and excitement at Bentley. I received numerous emails of congratulations from my colleagues after it was announced internally. I am indebted to our Provost Mike Page who nominated me and to CEEMAN for judging me worthy of its award.