

Professional practice

The new generation of corporate universities – co-creating sustainable enterprise and business development solutions

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Abstract

Captures the researches, experience and current thoughts of two leading professional corporate university and corporate academy solutions designers and developers. Provides a provocative commentary on the quality of current management perspectives and practice in the area of corporate university management and comments on some of the popular misconceptions of what the corporate university is all about. Moves forward, from a critique perspective, with comments on a proactive modality for configuring intellectual properties and implementing intervention programmes. This process involves the development of dynamic scenarios around "thinking schools" properties and their manifestation through management processes defined as the BLU way. Emphasises the vital strategic management role being undertaken by the new generation of corporate university managers and the nature of the skills and competencies necessary in renewing and sustaining intelligence based enterprise cultures in organisations.

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Searching for survival solutions in a precarious environment

Everything we know about the nature of business and management lifestyle in organisations today indicates that classic management theory and organisational paradigms are no longer capable of providing effective frameworks for the cultural and structural adjustments that are necessary in a modern, highly competitive global business environment. Everyday we see both operational and functional managers who are trying to achieve outcomes from "half-understood" organisation situations that are almost untenable. All this is happening against a backcloth of increasing concerns that grow more intensive by the day due to global social turbulence, complexity due to institutional arrangements that are far from perfect and deep-seated troublesome corporate ethical matters.

At one time the solution put forward was that managers should be developed to have a high tolerance for ambiguity. They would have to learn to live with the chaos engendered by obsolete organizational paradigms rather than face much needed structural adjustments and the intellectual and political challenges encountered by top management when innovating new, proactive frameworks and constructs that would provide managers with the capacities to tame the irrational.

The famous quote "think global act local" is a useful mantra for defining the nature of successful management action and also indicated the basis of solutions. Its underlying imperative was, and is more so in the present day, that in order to think global a manager has to have the capability to do that in a globally competitive sense; he or she needs to be at the top of the international league table in managerial competency.

Consequently, there is a real need to find new management solutions for multi-based business environments that will enhance one of the most inspiring, fulfilling and rewarding of lifestyles – that of managing and achieving in the real-world premier league business environment. However, the nature and scale of the transitional task facing top management is quite different to anything previously encountered. They have to find much more self-sufficient methods and means in terms of new regimes of management

capabilities at all levels, based on a radical and innovative perspective of management's emergent dynamic role and their constantly changing relationships with all their stakeholders.

Most importantly they have to achieve – and be seen to have achieved by investors and customers alike, a sustainable base of intellectual authority, leadership and imaginative superiority in all their corporate business sectors.

Integrated interventions

Achieving this higher-level status of being and knowing is not a one-off exercise or change management programme. It requires an initial powerful integrated intervention that achieves a much deeper and more profound engagement with people's mind-sets and subsequently instills a lasting commitment to reform and renewal by all those people who want to do things, are capable of doing things or who are in a position to do things for the firm's financial health and organisational well-being.

Achieving these changes touches on every aspect of a business's dynamics, moving on from ideas dominated by style and structure and into the realm of key process management. This is the new dawning for many organisations and invokes a sharp wake-up call for top management and their style of leadership. They have to re-envision their own role to achieve this order of magnitude change. They need to create very special intervention platforms and the design and implementation of those platforms in turn requires a new style of intervention manager whose leadership capabilities are exceptional and unique to the challenges of the task.

The BLU way – a reference framework

The DTI's small business service has developed its own very special approach to managing this transition based on the new generation corporate university or corporate academy intervention. This process of developmental management has been branded the Business Link University (BLU) way and this is the reference case in this article, illustrating the sustainable measures

that are being taken to achieve a new reality of efficiency and effectiveness. We define this as the BLU way in this article.

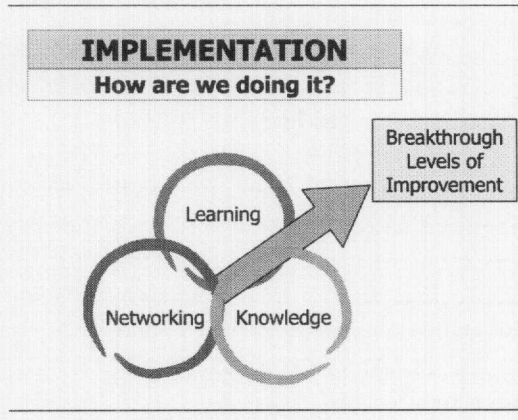
The concept of the BLU way has its origins in similar approaches developed in many private sector organisations, e.g. Unipart way, Hewlett Packard way, BMW Oxford way and Toyota Production System. As much as anything it describes a way of doing things that bridges differences in culture, learning processes, attitudes, training, continuous improvement methodology and skilled resource development to produce superior performance and improved customer satisfaction. Benefits for employees are that it provides a package of support that helps them to do their jobs more effectively, thereby enhancing job satisfaction and personal fulfillment. It also provides these packages through a single access point usually accessible via an intranet, or in the case of BLU, through the extranet.

The BLU way is unique in the public sector in that it is the first attempt to create an "our way of doing things model" and implement it across a policy into action value chain. The BLU way is founded on three core strands of learning, networking and knowledge management (see Figure 1). Its core principle is the intention to bring people into positive working relationships and provide a safe place to collaborate.

A pivotal role in transition

The corporate university concept of business and organisational transformation has the potential to play a leading role in the achievement of such outcomes and provides the apolitical high ground from which top management can engender credible business

Figure 1 The BLU way



solution perspectives – visionary perspectives that will sustain co-creative value management development on a continuum. However, the quality of professional management talent available to lead and strategically facilitate these innovative evolutions and revolutions is currently a very scarce resource.

Experience shows that the management of this vital role is all too often based on a very limited vision of the concept's potential. Management is enthusiastically retrospective in its vision, bogged down in training and development thinking, or it has been hi-jacked by people who are looking for an escape mechanism from the cut and thrust of the core business activities, the latter being characterised particularly by what we call the façade and edifice syndrome. We have observed all these very weak management characteristics in firms attempting to introduce these new process dynamics.

Very significantly, we have observed that some top managers are poorly advised and do not receive good advice on the scale, nature and timing of the corporate university intervention and its potential for achieving sustainable re-generative actionable learning in the modern business context.

It is essential that there is an understanding that the corporate university is totally business centric. The performance of the business and that of the corporate university are inextricably linked.

Outline of the purpose and objectives

Typically, the BLU way is a generic term covering a "cocktail" of BLU branded and quality assured products, services and skilled resources that people in the key value chains can access on demand and use to assist them to work together collectively to drive performance improvement and build capacity and capability (Figure 2).

All the sections of the toolbox combine to provide a systematic way to access support for experiential based learning, to access knowledge management systems, to locate best practice, to capture and codify newly acquired knowledge and to provide the environment and opportunities for networking and to get into relationships with people who can influence results.

The BLU way has a number of key objectives:

- To provide a continuous improvement strategy and methodology that underpins a particular way of working.
- To provide a consistent high quality set of tools, processes, models, training provision, and delivery channels.
- To provide access to high quality skilled resources at all levels.
- To promote collaboration, sharing of knowledge and know-how and the development of strong, effective working relationships.
- To help create an easily accessible body of small business knowledge that can be retrieved by anyone in the value chain, at the time they want it, in the way they want it, in a relevant format.
- To make these products and services available through physical and virtual delivery channels.
- To contribute to creating more customer centric, can do, responsive attitudes and behaviors.
- To enable and support the crusade for waste-down and value-up across the SBS value chain.

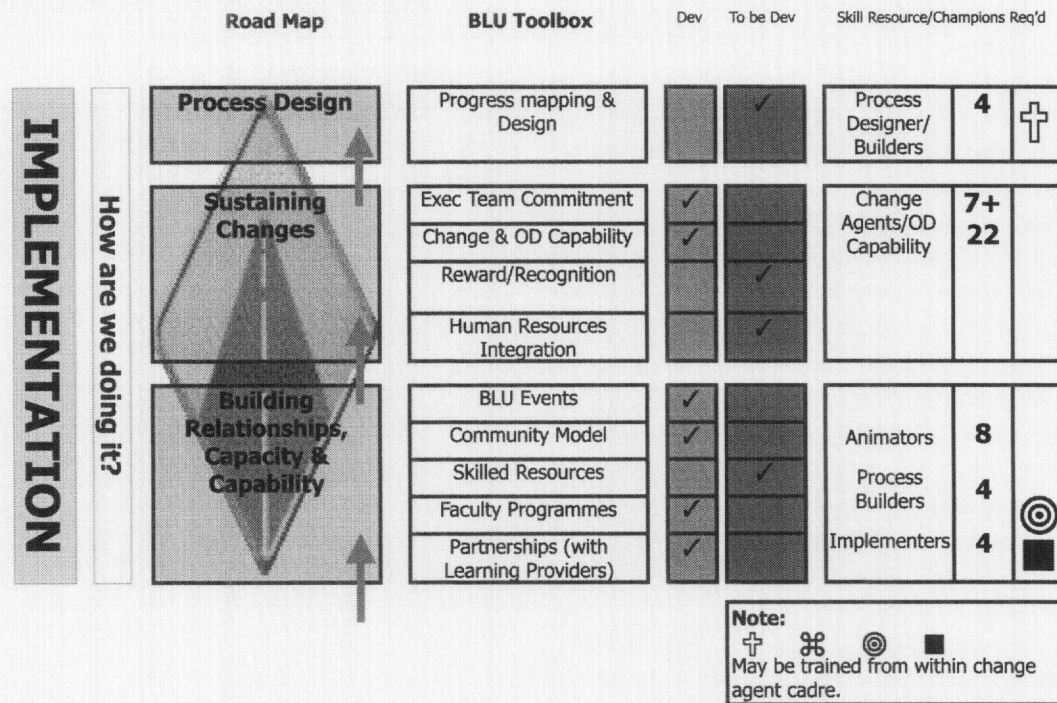
It is important to have this clear perspective as we have encountered many applications that have not achieved this focus.

Moving forward – an end to "me too-ism" and "retro ego trips"

Since the introduction of the corporate university or academy concept half a century ago there have been many derivatives in business, government departments, military services and across a wide range of sporting activities. The common bond between them all is the desire to learn about and know how to manage the competitive spur and sustain high standards of excellence in particular areas of individual and collective human endeavor.

The outcomes of these interventions have ranged from substantial success to short term mediocre performances and some well-known and notable failures. The variability of these outcomes has given rise to our undertaking several lines of enquiry which have indicated that the profiles of the under-performers are due mainly to the shortcomings inherent in three corporate university management styles. All of these inevitably lead to an

Figure 2 The BLU toolbox – middle section



under-achieving of a satisfactory return on the corporate university enterprise investment.

The most common management style contributing to failure or under-performance has been the corporate university copycat or me too-ism syndrome. This style of corporate university intervention is based on replicating how other firms or organisations are doing it, "so we will do the same". In these cases we have found there is little or no innovative interpretation of the concept locally and *de facto* that the copy-template firms or organisations are dated in their design and in completely different business sectors has resulted in the whole intervention becoming quite out of character.

The second problem management style that we have identified is that the corporate university is seen as a mimic of the academic university or business school educational paradigm. In this context the integrative business case is not well founded. It should also be clear that there is little point in reinventing a wheel that is there to serve a quite different purpose.

The third main distorted perspective of the corporate university is that it is a glossed-up and re-badged human resources based training and development function, i.e. the main evolutionary thrust towards systemic interventions and holistically developing the multiple intelligences of individuals and

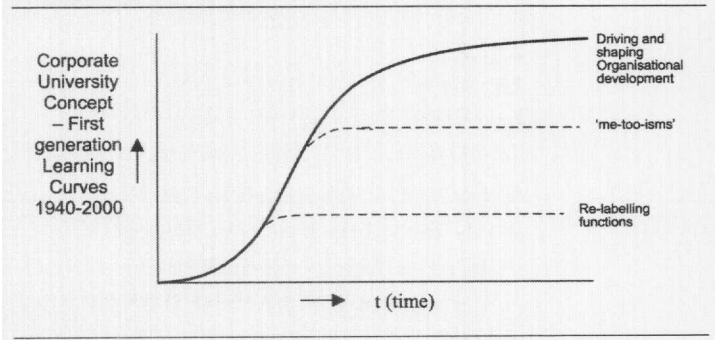
strategically guiding intellectual strategic thinking and actionable learning is very largely not included in this function.

In many cases there has also been little evidence of an in-depth understanding of the corporate university business model or of even the most basic rudimentary feasibility studies having been carried out.

Management styles along the learning curve

Figure 3 illustrates the step-change categories of these management styles along the corporate university performance "S" curve with which we have become only too familiar. Clearly, management cannot do everything at once but this does not excuse having a poor

Figure 3 Step functions along the corporate university management learning curve



perspective vision on the overarching strategic intellectual requirements that are essential in establishing a successful, sustainable enterprise-based solution.

Where such management styles persist today they reflect adversely on the capabilities of a company's corporate university management to understand the new dynamics of business and management ecosystems and to positively innovate and move forward with the times. It reflects on their ability to envision the modern organically driven context of business development and identify with the need to release higher levels of people potential, make more space for them to think freely and to take timely action, i.e. to become world class talented performers in the dynamic circumstances of global knowledge based economies.

The importance of the firm's stakeholders' perception of the corporate university event cannot be understated. Its public brand image has far reaching consequences and, as one senior investment analyst put it:

If you want to know whether or not a company is a good investment for the future, look at how well it manages *inter alia* the corporate university concept – the strategic development of its intellectual equity!

In contrast, the BLU way emphasises the essential need to articulate integrated strategic thinking via systematic communications about purpose, which are clearly branded and manifest specific brand values. The brand represents consistent experience of assured quality and excellence in internal and external learning provision and is, therefore, only applied to offerings that have been hallmarked against specific QA criteria. The BLU way manifests the brand values around:

- Helping people get into positive relationships – meeting as people.
- Providing stimulus and support for new and applied learning.
- Capturing and exploiting knowledge.
- Relevance to business needs and priorities.
- Easily accessed and understood.
- Flexible, just in time not just in case.
- High quality processes and outcomes.

Clear and simple messages are the glue that binds these brand facets together. This requires a clear communications strategy and structure that provides frequent and relevant two-way communications aligned

to what people need to know. This reinforcement of business vision, strategy and objectives employs stimulating visual management systems and a variety of complementary media that clearly meets the expectations of the total learning community.

Strategically configure for a real-time new learning context

In our experience the underlying factors contributing to an engagement in the corporate university business development intervention are many and varied, for example, the current *de facto* performance situation of the firm, its available resources, its culture, its state of readiness for change, the nature of its intellectual and physical challenges and the way in which top management envisions the future.

In the case of BLU, the imperatives for improvement are:

- Rapid deployment of government development policy.
- A need to get better value service delivery for money invested.
- Need to reduce waste.
- Government pressures to achieve much more for less.

This requires relentless, hard nosed and systematic application of process management and improvement techniques. There is a need to put business process design and implementation and business process improvement processes in place quickly and involve the process owners and users to continuously improve them to remove non-value added activities.

Targets need to be set for process activity improvement aligned to organisation objectives and performance measurement tools put firmly in place.

For really successful outcomes we have found that management must introduce very strong people in-flow lifestyle objectives that relate, in particular, to changing for the good the way in which people think about themselves and how they manage their learning-to-learn behaviors in relation to the business purpose (Dealtry, 2002).

For the majority of firms this means a paradigm shift in top management's thinking

about the metabolism of their organisation. And this involves them seeing it as a living organism with an ability to grow through the co-creation of new, well managed regenerative learning processes that feed off the business environment as the primary source of all energy and growth.

Innovating new generative learning perspectives

So how do we see the genre of the new generation of well managed corporate universities? What will be the nature of the business model for the managers who want their enterprise to become a reference point for profitability and growth in the knowledge economy? And what will be the shape of the corporate university intervention process platform if it is to constantly flex and adapt in synch with the raw dynamics of the management ecosystem?

The other segments of the BLU toolbox include the products, services, skilled resources and processes to provide an environment for driving performance improvement and building capacity and capability. These comprise:

- Continuous improvement strategy and methodology (e.g. EFQM).
- Business process design and implementation.
- Business process improvement tools.
- Community of practice model.
- Knowledge management systems and tools.
- Specific training provisions.
- Physical and virtual learning spaces and delivery channels.
- Branding – the BLU experience and communications channels.
- Cadre of skilled facilitators, process builders and implementers.
- Reward and recognition programmes.

Some of these areas of objective development are described below.

Business process improvement tools

These are a core set of tools that teams can use to improve business process:

- process mapping/definition;
- value stream mapping;
- quality circles; and
- problem solving.

People resources

A small cadre of skilled coaches and facilitators are available to support CI activity and to train and help people acquire confidence and competence in using the tools to get good results.

Physical and virtual learning spaces

To enable people to work together collaboratively and learn and apply the learning to improve process it is important to provide working spaces, which are equipped with facilities, and resources that enable this type of networking and collaborative working.

To provide a flexible and cost effective way of doing this BLU offers “BLU in a box”. This is a set of materials and resources that are BLU branded and designed to embody BLU principles and the philosophy that can be used to customise any room quickly and cheaply to provide a suitable environment. This avoids the cost of permanent physical learning spaces. BLU is not a concrete U!

The virtual learning space provides a range of electronic support for learning, networking and knowledge management. This includes knowledge repositories, collaboration spaces and e-learning.

Knowledge management

Knowledge needs to be captured, codified and deployed in a way that is available to those who need to know in the pursuit of organisational goals.

In practice people do not often behave as desired and willingly share knowledge. There may be several reasons for this and each one may require a different intervention to overcome it.

The BLU is particularly concerned with capturing, codifying and sharing knowledge derived from improvement activity. Getting people to work together in cross-functional project teams or task forces focused on improvement activity is a way of overcoming the obstacles as it helps to build trust and social networks.

The key principle is to avoid reinvention of the wheel by sharing practical fixes so that other teams can adopt the fix and improve it by applying their own creativity and ingenuity. A well-tried approach is rapid action groups or quality circles using a consistent set of problem solving tools.

In this way what is learned at 11.00a.m. can be applied at noon to achieve improvements in process.

This only works if people can access the resources they need from a single reliable source. It also requires an environment that supports experimentation and learning and provides the technical infrastructure to enable people to gain access to the resources and support they need via the extranet, together with a concern for developing and supporting key behaviors that drive collaboration.

Knowledge creation – the community model

The community model is the engine for creating new ways of designing and implementing improvements to process, products and services to help SMEs grow. The model has three phases:

- (1) The interest or enquiry phase, during which current practice and knowledge are gathered and examined, leading to questions and a broadening of understanding.
- (2) The prototype or process building stage, which creates a prototype that can be fast tracked and tested to provide data to inform implementation.
- (3) The implementation stage, which applies the learning to create a breakthrough new process or product, which can be implemented, broad-scale.

BLU provides process, tools and skilled resources to support the model. The knowledge generated by people working through these phases is captured in a central, scalable database.

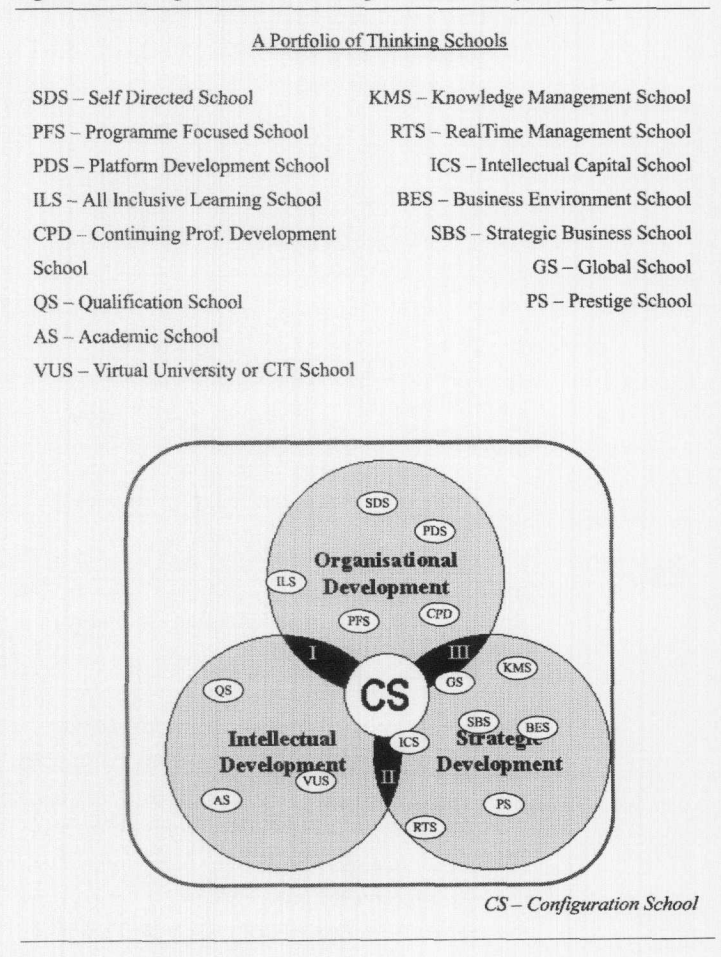
The corporate university blueprint (www.corporateuniversity.org.uk) provides the hard-core process model for initiating and capturing this detailed decision making, planning and management of the business case. However, in terms of providing a wider cerebral environment for the specific blueprint decision making activities, we know from experience that it is advisable to generate an overarching strategic view whose purpose is to identify the most relevant portfolio of intellectual properties for a particular business or organisational situation. This is a highly valued input that adds substance to the anatomy of the BLU blueprint framework business model.

Our first standpoint in this process is to recognise that every firm or organisation is searching for a unique intellectual, cultural and behaviors paradigm for success and we find the clues to how to achieve this by revisiting our earlier thinking schools depiction for configuring appropriate corporate university properties (Figure 4) (Dealtry, 2001).

In this process we envisaged how different schools and domains of corporate university thinking can and do influence the scope of choice in developmental provision and processes. The main benefits of the model are that the properties configuration perspective provides us with a seriously reflective opportunity to re-visit the vast array of developmental resources that we have available to choose from and to examine their individual developmental role potentials.

From this thinking schools forum, we can gain insights into and consider the effects over time of different configurations of intellectual properties and the related learning portfolio compositions that will engender the most effective management style of corporate university intervention and development.

Figure 4 Thinking schools domain segmentation and positioning



Using this process model, professional managers of corporate university design functions can think differentially about the nature of its role and future management style in the singular context of each firm or business sector. They can determine quite precisely the sequence of its strategic evolution and examine just how critically important the objective selection of an appropriate portfolio of intellectual, organisational and strategic process development activities is in engendering a relevant, authoritative and inspirational active learning environment – one that is commensurate with the fundamental people in-flow objectives and with the firm's intellectual equity development needs. This delivers a powerful composition of properties that will underpin and sustain high standards of management and business excellence throughout the enterprise.

However, each of these domain-based configurations of properties is dynamic in themselves and are moving forward all the time, both individually and interactively. Consequently, the potential coercive developmental value effect we place on each of the different thinking schools and their related processes contributions are time linked to a barometric developmental scale.

So, for intellectual properties configuration success in the future we have had to re-think constantly how better to manage the firm's portfolio of thinking schools, and our primary reference point from which to do this is the domain of strategic thinking as this set of dynamics is the formative leading edge in shaping the choice of intellectual and developmental provision. It is this strategic domain that links and interprets what is feasible within the given resources in relation to the business environment threats and opportunities. However, in recent times initiating this process has not been as simple as it would seem as the movements and rapid pace in a business's dynamics has overtaken the capability of classic strategic management model theory or practice to cope in many situations and there is now no reliable formative model which can deal adequately with the fast changing real-time dynamics of management in the operational environment.

And as a consequence, we have had to look for a new, more directly people owned and focused strategic management process model that we can use to make visible the invisible

and through which we can configure the developmental properties that will, in turn define and redefine both internal and external provision requirements via the blueprint experience model.

Strategy moves from mechanistic to organic states – organic strategies do not grow on trees!

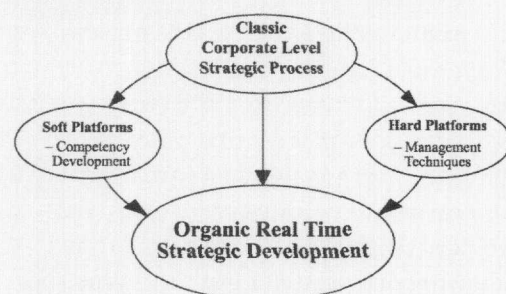
Our guideline for this new, regenerative evolution has been the very significant changes taking place in the domain of strategic management thinking (Farjourn, 2002). This indicates significant changes in the corporate-strategic to operational-tactical relationship. It emphasises competition as the spur to progressive innovation in every aspect of the firm, and strategy is all about the related issues being treated decisively as learning opportunities as they occur.

Figure 5 shows how the centre of gravity for strategic management responsibility has devolved and dispersed significantly outwards into the operational areas of front line management, where tactical strategic learning sub-processes and real-time management skill-sets play an increasingly important role in the success of the businesses. This strategic process has now become *per se* more multi-dimensional: it is organic, it is opportunistic and it is existential in character, emphasising the role of the individual manager as a free and responsible agent.

Success in organic strategic management is dependent on each individual's ability to read and respond to changes but, much more so, to initiate change in real-time.

In terms of re-configuring the intellectual properties of the business and the pivotal role of the corporate university in resourcing and delivering them, these changes in strategic

Figure 5 Trends from corporate to organic multi-business strategies



process perspective have had a major impact in determining the character of its role. It has had to be built from the ground upwards as the outcomes are very dependent on the resolution of leadership style issues, the "completeness of managements vision" and the "devolved ability to execute" in all business areas.

Our views on the value of the specific resources which are embedded in the three principal thinking domains have changed dramatically as we are dealing with situations where nothing is intellectually fixed. We are dealing with situations where it is not sufficient to know what you need to know but also what you need to know to apply it effectively.

The configuration of intellectual properties has, therefore, taken on a new modality of analogue to digital proportions and in strategic management terms from classic theory to organic process dimensions, i.e. the nature of the strategic learning management process for survival becomes much more prescient in character rather than following the tracks of a classic linear process. The implications for the specific thinking schools are that they have to become more metamorphic in their application, thereby responding to specific needs to meet the management challenges around the timeframes of day-to-day, week-to-week and month-to-month issues and circumstances.

All these changes have important consequences for the way in which we manage the resources and administer the new generation corporate university, both in terms of policy deployment, faculty profiles, structure and intervention strategies.

From this digitized and organic perspective we start by envisioning the configuration process as being one of an eclectic and also interactively dynamic process that:

- has the capability to take a fix on, and diagnose and make sense of, what are the organisation's current intellectual properties;
- sets out to configure the range of people properties that will most effectively engender organisational activities that will sustain its main value streams; and
- design and deliver the new learning provision that will close any gaps and sustain intellectual capabilities.

From the corporate university new strategic learning management standpoint, where learning (L) for success has to be equal to or greater than the velocity of (\Rightarrow) change (C), the new learning imperatives and the implications of these changes are enormous in planning and developing the intellectual capabilities of management. However, we now have a reality perspective from where we can visualise the implications for the configuration process and find performance based allocation solutions which will bring the many different management development situations to life in a very evocative way.

Re-defining properties based on an organic strategic perspective

To identify the scale of the specific differences that are taking place in the strategic thinking domain, we have found it of value to observe the differences in the main stages of the evolving procession to the present time.

The first generation of corporate universities were founded on a strategic process context where strategic development was about formal processes, based on planned goals and actions, thereby achieving co-alignment and dynamic balance and moved onto an integrative process model, i.e. it becomes the product of interactions between organisation, environment and performance, where it is recognised that some degree of imperfect adaptation is inevitable.

In the present state of business dynamics it is a dynamic organic process model which is based on recurrent processes and multi-business based generative learning across the organisation. It is one of the main purposes of the corporate university to make these processes mentally visible, administer them in a creative mode, emphasising entrepreneurship styles of management and implant strong sub-process strategic management skills that involve tactical time, sensitive decision making on the ground to define and re-define emergent strategies and related action taking.

The present organic strategic thinking involves the concurrent use of more widely dispersed dialectic skills with direct learning cycle links between formulation and solution action management. Such ways of working frequently demand new and transient organisational linkages for successful

outcomes. They emphasise all the intelligences of the individual being enlivened in proactive behavioral paradigms, in decision making, learning support and action learning facilitation. As Schumpeter (1989) described it, "this is a process of creative destruction", i.e. new ideas and new learning taking over from objective current best practice to leverage competitive efficiencies and utilise market forces to advantage.

To achieve and sustain this latter state of effective organic development, management have to be constantly rethinking both the nature and value of specific intellectual properties in different task environments of the enterprise. To satisfy these conditions, new generation corporate university management must be intensely involved in developing new, real-time processes and professional standards in the systemic management of interpersonal skills and interactive relationships. Figure 6 illustrates the BLU way in terms of the key strategic stages.

Continuous improvement strategy and methodology

This change in the strategic context implies that, for success to be underpinned, there is a need for a systematic approach to continuous improvement that includes the principles of TQM.

Many organisations have toyed with TQM but never really grasped the nettle. However, the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) model provides a very good and comprehensive framework to support a comprehensive delivery. It also provides a measurement framework which can inform on the basis of the balanced scorecard. EFQM is also the model adopted by the BLU SBS network:

Elements of the EFQM strategy are:

- Executive team commitment and support for the principles approach and activities that underpin the strategy.
- A clear focus on business lead priorities, i.e. SBS strategy and business plans.
- A balance of time spent on business as usual and capability improvement activities (creating space to undertake improvement activities).
- A budget of cost and time to support improvement activity. Improvements will

normally fund the costs of improvement several times over.

- Consistent use of a set of improvement tools and techniques.
- A focus on process and management using factual objective measures.
- Localised facilitators and champions.
- A senior steering group to drive the process.
- A CI plan that weighs the challenges, priorities, potential features, costs and which designs the ideal future state.
- Full BLU support to enable the strategy.
- Full integration of branding.
- Systematic communication and visual management.
- Reward and recognition systems that embed customer focused behavior and attitudes.

The BLU way provides a single point of access to continuous improvement courses, materials and resources that support the SBS strategic objectives and the identified key learning and development needs.

These provisions are subjected to quality assessment and approval and are indexed at four levels:

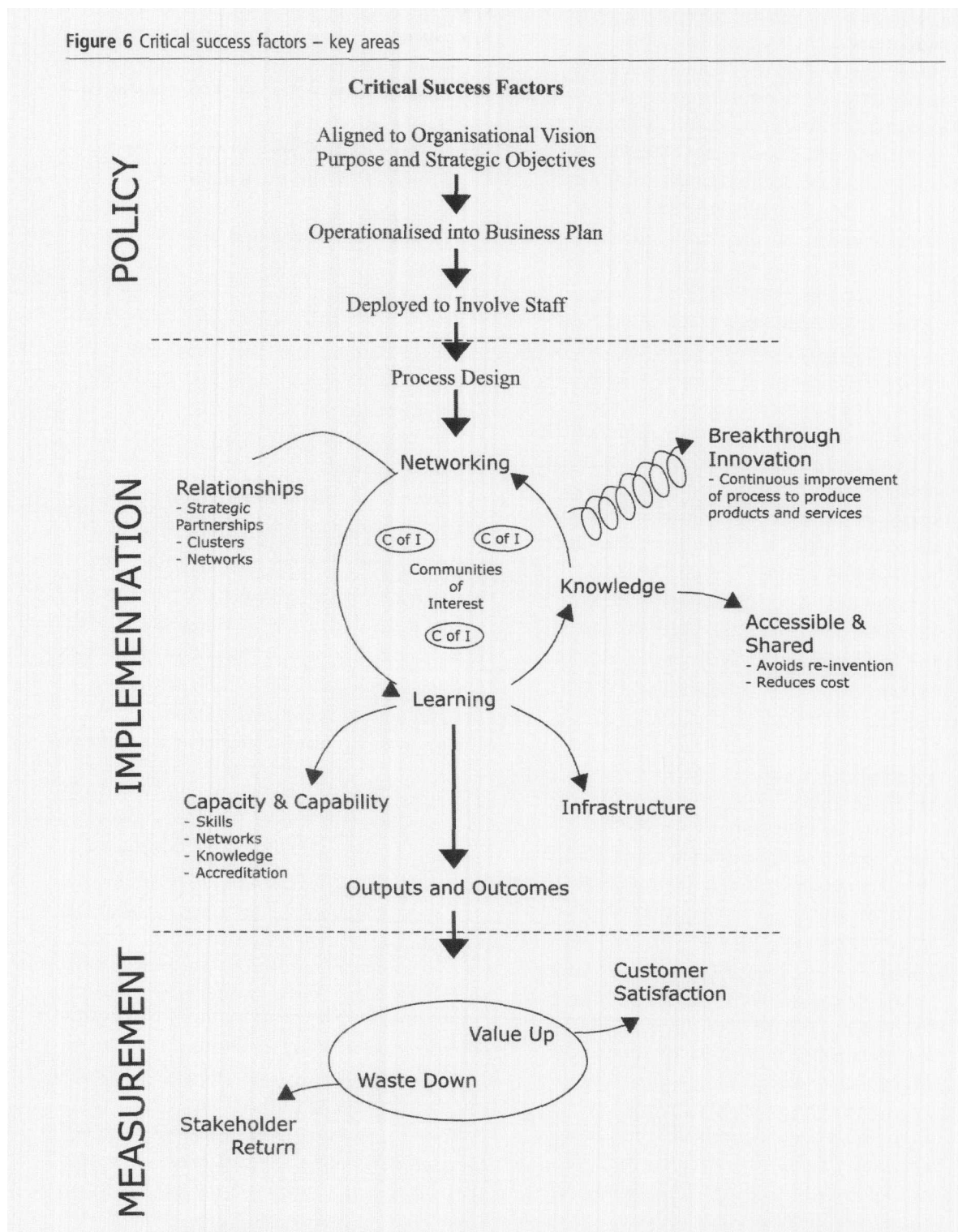
- (1) Sign posted.
- (2) Approved.
- (3) Accredited.
- (4) Commissioned by the appropriate BLU faculty.

These provisions may be in the form of traditional courses, e-learning, coaching or self directed learning materials.

Outcome objectives are defined in terms of increased capacity to trust, undertake knowledge sharing, level of participation in supportive learning-to-learn events and skill sets relating to a more independent universal style of leadership capability that is defined by entrepreneurial and taming the irrational behaviours (Dealtry, 2003). The characteristics of crucible learning – learning and unlearning.

These people and process development strands are the strand dynamics of organisation development that are incorporated in the new generation corporate university management style. Figure 7 illustrates this further evolution of the new generation corporate university learning curve.

Figure 6 Critical success factors – key areas



Managing organic configurations

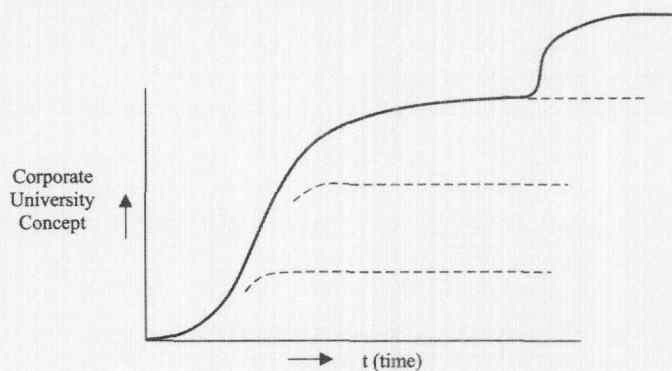
So what is the intellectual and philosophical case for the new generation corporate university and how does it move with the times?

The way in which we manage this question is to make visible the people, organisational and business forces that will shape the configuration portfolio activity. Figure 8 illustrates these different role relationships

that exist between the individual and the organisation.

An effective, intellectual properties configuration implies that a developmental synergy will be achieved in a continuum between these different dynamic capabilities. This implies that, given the appropriate opportunity, a comprehensive vision of the enterprise can be re-interpreted by top management in terms of the four relational strategic areas of people and organisational

Figure 7 New generation curve



development shown in Figure 8, and that an appropriate prioritisation and investment allocation can be determined for each of them. The potential contribution of the individual thinking schools in this strategic context can then be appraised in relation to the four strategic development areas to define the optimum configuration of development activities in the form of both internal and external provision.

This process can be monitored over time to ensure that the changing dynamics of the business are well matched by the different forms of provision.

In this process corporate university managers have to undertake a major business intelligence based role. Not only do they have to define the relational properties, they also

have to work in a highly alert mode – understanding and interpreting all the current internal and external factors affecting both the organisation’s performance and the competitive environment of the business.

Reward and recognition

For these intervention processes to become established it is important that they are given prominence and that positive outcomes from individual and group proactive behavior are well and publicly rewarded. Such recognition needs to be sustained at all levels.

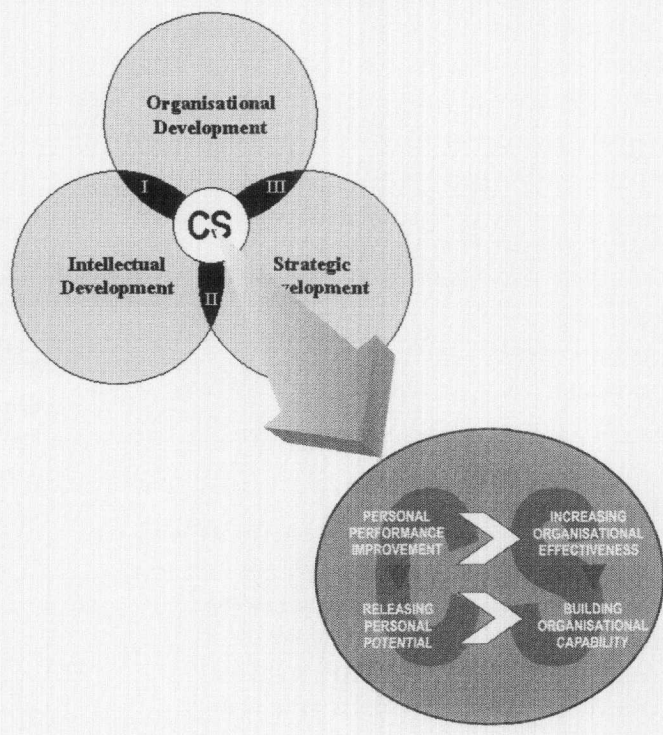
When people do the right things in the right way their behavior needs to be celebrated and reinforced by senior management, sometimes in the form of excellence awards or social gatherings attended by top management. These occasions need to be designed around non-financial rewards that empathise with the new learning culture and motivate and inspire people.

Their purpose is to signal support and recognition for the regenerative new learning activities and self-sufficient leadership behaviors the organisation wishes to actively encourage.

The key factors in achieving this public organizational relations status is the active and consistent involvement of the top management group, the repetition of key corporate university brand themes and communication of highly visible messages that exemplify the learning-into-action of the champions being applauded at the events.

Last, but by no means the least important, is the very visible management of well directed new learning as an essential part of each individual’s career development. Building personal knowledge about the organisation’s career process should emanate from formal tutorial sessions about career appreciation and planning, so that each individual has a clear understanding of career pathways and a proper understanding of their own personal learning needs in relation to their ambitions. The heartlands of good corporate university management are the achievement of balanced management perspectives on the sharing of the qualitative and quantitative rewards for new and applied learning between the individual, the organisation and the provider.

Figure 8 Organic configuration developments



Managing the strategic paradox

The role of the new generation of corporate universities is to be the co-creative agency through which both public and private sector organizations can introduce and sustain systemic developmental processes that will grow: advanced management capabilities and people skill sets.

How that is achieved is dependent on its managers having a clear understanding of the:

- vision of top management;
- dynamic properties and processes that are vital for the collective achievement of that vision; and
- its vital formative role in shaping visionary relationships with all stakeholders.

The operational concept of the corporate university BLU way provides the medium for the development of imaginative intervention strategies that will turn these understandings into a new and more meaningful work-life reality.

It is implicit for the success of such undertakings that a new style of creative strategic leadership is taken up by corporate university managers – a leadership style that is complementary to the visionary values and objectives of top management. In practice it has the courage to identify and articulate the intelligence gaps by questioning everything – rules, regulations, opinions and obligations – and undertakes rigorous analysis in decision making and in the application of new learning, to move forward and break out of the cliché syndrome of self-serving and self-promoting fine words into a new belief system which will eventually become the inspiration for a singular management system. It is a management system that produces a continuous pipeline flow of smart practical ideas

We use the term multiple intelligences to define the broad range of capabilities that are necessary to manage effectively in conditions of organic growth and development. These capabilities are not simply concerned with the development of a highly educated élite, but are based on founding a broadly based, ubiquitous resource of potential releasing lenses that can be widely applied across the organizational spectrum.

The more extensive use of these often ignored or subordinated capabilities sit in the pole energizing position that augments and

binds the core dynamics of networking, knowledge management and new learning together (see Figure 1). It is one of the primary objectives of the BLU way to know what they are and should be and to ensure that these capabilities are given the opportunities to flourish throughout the organization. Collaborative e-technologies are the instruments that are making this real-time competencies paradigm a practical working reality by providing the closed loops for the integrated networking of business intelligence, new learning and decision making in all three areas.

We have developed the philosophical view that the corporate university should be a strategic paradox. On the one hand it should be a primary source for generating and evaluating keen-edged, world-class business and organizational development solutions, while on the other hand it should provide the places where ceaseless, unfettered innovation and experimentation can take place, the latter being a relaxed environment where people can study the consequences of what they failed to do properly, where they can explore and probe the consequences of their learning process proclivities, and to dare to have opinions, and quite often, to be right, and sometimes wrong.

The outcomes we aim for in the administration of the new generation of corporate university are both contradictory and altruistic in character. Can it be possible to achieve a thoroughly united endeavor for collective survival and at the same time pursue the release of individual potentials that support higher levels of self-belief, responsible highly individualistic behavior and greater independence in taking action?

Finding the effective and sustainable mainstream solution of organic development in the context of national and global environments is the challenge for the present generation of corporate universities. From the narrative in this article it can be seen that we are developing processes that combine and unite the different characteristics that we have identified as being important for success in the professional management of personal and group insights into the limitations of situational dynamics. For example, we identify the following as key strands in achieving a successful outcome:

- developing awareness for the existence of the individual as a free and responsible person;
- the selection and evaluation of ideas or beliefs from many different sources;
- the art of investigating the truth of opinions, testing of truth by discussion, and dealing with contradictions; and
- the metamorphic use of management tools and techniques in different ways in real-time.

These powerful dynamic strands of development allied to an awareness for knowing individual strengths and weaknesses across the portfolio multiple intelligences and insights into the value of personal attributes in the form of a sharp mind, ruse, stability, and finesse all combine to create high level capabilities to not only solve problems in real-time, but also to leverage thought leadership and imaginative action ahead of the competition.

All these changes imply a new and significant cultural imperative and that is that the organization's institutional frameworks become a coach and mentor to the individual and are certainly not seen as a source of total deference. Clearly, there is a need to move beyond development paradigms that are polarised on information gathering, analysing and synthesising techniques and reach out much further into the ontology of management's role. Our current new generation management style brings about that extended curriculum with the realisation and development of all the intelligences – emotional, spiritual and quantum.

We now see a new base line position where business and organisational management has grown up to be a seriously defining experience

and one of the most exciting career adventures that anyone can embark on. It has emerged as the place to be for those people who enjoy working in and learning from challenging environments. Intellectually, it has now become an area with no boundaries and no end.

The role of the new generation of corporate universities is to co-create the circumstances where people can take pride in participating in a collective endeavour. It achieves this by providing personally stretching experiential and applied new learning opportunities that will reward, energise and sustain people's motivations for self improvement and advancement, and add greater meaning to their work over their lifetime.

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