Addressing Key Business Challenges of the 21st Century

According to CEO Magazine’s “Agenda 2005,” business leaders in the 21st century are facing daunting and unrelenting challenges as never before. Among the top challenges facing CEO’s in the 21st century are such intractable problems as: improving Third World Health; rethinking IT outsourcing; Fixing America’s Educational System; Improving the Quality of Life; Reforming Governance, and Making Diversity a Profitable Reality.

A global CEO study sponsored by IBM Business Consulting Services indicates that “growth is back on the corporate agenda.” Two-thirds of the CEO’s expect growth to come from new products that they will develop over the next five years, with more than half expecting to enter new markets in search of growth opportunities. Furthermore, many of these new potential market opportunities may require an entirely new perspective for business leaders.

In his seminal book, “The Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid,” C.K. Prahalad makes a strong case for the enormous opportunities that can be found by multinational corporations changing their view and seeing through a new lens called “inclusive capitalism” to bring prosperity to the poorest people of the world. “For companies with the resources and persistence to compete at the bottom of the world economic pyramid, the prospective rewards include growth, profits, and in-calcuable contributions to humankind.”

Yet many CEO’s feel their organizations are not responsive or agile enough for...

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Former CHRMS G.A. Heads Goddard School

After receiving her MBA in Human Resource Management at FDU in 1996, former CHRMS graduate assistant Kym Ramsey began her career as both HR Manager at the Ingersoll Dresser Company and as adjunct professor at FDU’s Silberman College of Business. The mother of three girls, Kym and her husband later moved to Pennsylvania where she became an instructor at Temple University and the University of Pennsylvania’s...

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After 14 years as Director of CHRMS, it is with confidence that I turn over its responsibilities to others. Now is the time of change and new beginnings that hold promise for this community. The three interrelated transitions about which I will write are at different levels. One is national-global, a second is organizational and the third is personal. Each is a beginning that rests on the values and principles that have been nurtured by CHRMS in various ways for the past decade.

First, in the national-global transition, there is an emerging understanding and commitment to a new form of management. The win-lose exploitative theories and practices are being unmasked and discredited and there is a growing commitment to find more effective corporate roles and governance. CHRMS has long been an advocate for more positive human resource philosophy, e.g., introducing the “life-giving workplace” theme, and publishing and causing the Eastern Academy of Management to have it as the theme of its annual conference. The hidden “operating code” of current management theory and its negative impact on practice is revealed by Sumantra Ghoshal in an article titled “Bad Management Practices are Destroying Good Management Practices.” Read it and you will understand why and how this transition is occurring.

The second transition is with CHRMS itself which is now creating an umbrella Institute to enable the CHRMS faculty-practitioner community to be more wide-ranging and powerful in research, teaching, and service. As CHRMS has evolved, our research, curriculum responsibilities, and service have extended into all areas of management, e.g., the NSF-VA research on stress and aggression and the transformation of the Executive MBA. The formation of the Institute for Sustainable Enterprise appropriately encompasses the broader domain of our intent and actions. At the same time, it forwards the principles and strategic objectives of CHRMS. For example, the five strategic objectives of CHRMS call for 1) innovatively partnering with business, 2) integrating scholarship and practice; 3) fostering a learning community, 4) having a global perspective, and 5) serving societal and economic needs. Existing CHRMS programs, such as the Breakfast Seminar series, Executive Scholars, etc. as well as the HRM Major in the MBA will be continued.

The third transition is new leadership to guide ISE and CHRMS into the future. I will step down from being Director of CHRMS and Gerard Farias, PhD. in Organization Studies, will become the Executive Director of ISE. I believe he will be an effective leader. Also, it is time for me to take on new and less time-demanding roles. I am, nevertheless, committed to be a part of these transitions. The principles and values of these transitions have been my passion and purpose and I know also that they have been so for many of you. Now is the time when many things are starting to tip. Together we need to use the increasing leverage to create a better world.
Our March CHRMS Breakfast Seminar addressed “what’s new” about Diversity and Inclusion. Peter Bye, founder and President of MDB Group, Inc., presented a seminar entitled, “Achieving Business Results through Diversity and Inclusion.” Pete highlighted our need to think about diversity and inclusion in the CEO’s language and terms.

Most companies do some combination of growing or increasing something (e.g. sales, market share, or productivity), improving something (e.g. customer or investor satisfaction), or reducing expenses (e.g. turnover or the cost of producing goods and services).

Pete illustrated that many diversity initiatives are planned from other perspectives that, while perfectly valid, do not directly align with and support a company’s key business objectives. Aligning our thinking, words, and planning in this way is central to engaging the CEO and senior leadership team and ensuring a sustained focus even under difficult business conditions.

In his talk, Pete presented a planning model and practical approach to developing and implementing this type of “business-aligned” diversity and inclusion strategy. The reference points are a company’s key business objectives, typically with a three-year horizon, and the changes in the workforce and work environment that will help ensure success. Diversity and inclusion initiatives and metrics are then designed to help effect these changes. This directly aligns the diversity work with business outcomes.

Key success factors include taking a systemic approach (e.g. integrating into key people management processes) and selecting metrics that help achieve meaningful business outcomes. Reporting progress in ways that leverage executives’ pride, competitive nature, sense of politics, and wallet create accountability for results. More widely, communications must be thought of as a strategic process that is integral to the diversity

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Wharton School of Business. Realizing the importance of quality preschool education, Kym enrolled her girls in the Goddard School®, one of a network of 165 schools nationwide. So impressed by her children’s experience in what she described as a “nurturing, safe, and educationally-focused pre-school”, Kym assumed ownership of a new Goddard School which opened in September, 2004 in Skippack, Pennsylvania. Using her background in business and education, she supervises the operation of the school, concentrating on marketing, public relations and parent interface.

At the Goddard School, children from 6 weeks to 6 years are separated by age and monitored by teachers on their achievement of age-specific developmental goals. Using student-driven vs. teacher-driven learning, Kym explains Goddard’s curriculum as allowing the children “to explore the world created by teachers. It creates a community of learners.”

With 14 teachers and a student population of 148 in just its first year, the Skippack Goddard School’s success is proof of Kym Ramsey’s passionate commitment to the education and care of the very young child.

Supplementing her work at the Goddard School is Kym’s volunteerism as a Parent Educator for the Parenting Resource and Education Network (PREN) which promotes healthy parenting seminars and workshops. She is also the Vice Chair of the Parents Association at her children’s elementary school.

It has been only ten years since Kym began her graduate assistantship at CHRMS. Her accomplishments are numerous. We are very proud of her!
Key Business Challenges (Continued from page 1)

pursuing new opportunities! “It’s not the strongest or most intelligent who survive, but those most adaptive to change,” says Ken Chenault, CEO, American Express.4

Thus, not only are the challenges to being successful continuing to grow exponentially, but the very definition of what we mean by success is being transformed. While Wall Street continues to set the traditional performance standard for modern corporations with its unrelenting emphasis on quarterly results, progressive business leaders across a wide swath of industries are beginning to speak out about the need for diligence, excellence, and investment in areas heretofore considered either “out-of-bounds” for business or too “soft” to permit the necessary return-on-investment business analysis.

Key to success in this brave new world is the ability to think differently, and to develop strategies that acknowledge and address a broader range of issues than ever before. Simply being good at what you do, taking care of your customer, and keeping an eye on the competition is no longer enough. Moreover, concerns about the sustainability of our way of life and our natural resources are leading to demands for greater accountability for natural resources, including water, the environment, bio-engineered products, and so forth. Amidst these formidable challenges, leaders are being asked to exhibit new levels of courage, decision-making abilities, and problem-solving capabilities.

This agenda sounds the call to confront the new realities before being overwhelmed by them. To further our understanding of leaders’ priorities for the 21st century, and where they are most in need of support, FDU’s Institute for Sustainable Enterprise (ISE) is spearheading a global research project called Leading in the 21st Century. Focusing on leaders in both the private and non-profit sectors, the study gets to the heart of those key issues that can differentiate organizations who will be successful from all the rest. For example, these include such critical organizational capabilities as: effectively applying organizational change principles to business and product life cycles; enhancing sustainability of enterprises through responsible use of natural resources; facilitating adoption and use of new information technologies; and positioning industry consolidation, M&A, and strategic alignment for success from a cultural perspective.

Results from the survey will fuel other initiatives at FDU’s newly formed ISE, and will:

• Build on the research already completed, by providing further insights into those business challenges that HR, OD, and T&D professionals can help to address.
• Help HR, OD, and T&D professionals become more of a strategic partner within their organizations.
• Disseminate findings that will help OD, HR, and T&D practitioners make more effective contributions to their organizations.

Besides The Institute for Sustainable Enterprise at FDU and The Global Committee on the Future of OD, co-sponsorship for the survey has already been secured from The O.D. Institute, OD Network, NTL Institute, and the International Organization Development Association.

In Phase II, the results of the research will be collaboratively addressed using action learning/action research methods with Communities of Practice of OD practitioners in various industries and around the world.

This groundbreaking research officially launches from May 15th through July 15th, 2005. For more information, contact Jeana Wirtenberg at jwirtenberg@optonline.net.

Jeana Wirtenberg, Ph.D
President, Jeana Wirtenberg & Associates, LLC


Diversity and Inclusion (Continued from page 3)

People interested in exploring this further will find resources at http://MDBGroup.com and are welcomed to contact Pete at pbye@MDBGroup.com.

Peter Bye is the founder and President of MDB Group, Inc., a consulting firm that improves its clients’ business results and reputation through diversity and inclusion. Previously the Corporate Diversity Director at AT&T, Pete develops business-aligned diversity and inclusion strategies, implementation plans, and websites. He is an accomplished executive coach and a subject matter expert in planning and managing employee network groups. Pete frequently speaks at the Conference Board and other conferences and his articles have appeared in many journals, including Profiles in Diversity Journal, Workforce Diversity Reader, and Diversity Factor.
Thereze Ovid, graduate assistant at CHRMS for the past year and a half, will be graduating this May. Managing the Executive Scholars program has allowed Thereze to increase her assertiveness and confidence at public speaking. She found fulfillment as manager of the Book Discussion Group because she is an avid reader and fond of books on various subjects.

Over the course of time, Thereze developed skills not only in project management but in event planning - skills that she was initially unaware of. She developed her networking abilities by interacting with HR corporate executives who assisted her in career development.

“My experience here at CHRMS has been tremendous and worthwhile”, she remarked. “My capabilities were enhanced by the feedback and critiques which aided my professional development. I remember a conversation with my predecessor as she handed over the Executive Scholars program to my care and leadership. I knew then that this was an opportunity to leave my mark not only on that program but on CHRMS as well. I confidently leave and am very proud of setting the record for the highest enrollment of mentors and students in the program’s 15-year history. In addition, the meeting format, changed during my tenure from lecture style to one-to-one conversations, will be continued for years to come.”

“As I leave CHRMS and transition from graduate assistant to HR professional with my MBA in Human Resource Management, the sky’s the limit for me.”

In September, 2004, Maria Garippa, graduate assistant at the Center for Human Resource Management Studies (CHRMS) during the ’04 spring and summer semesters, was promoted as Administrative Assistant to Peter Calligari, Director of the Executive MBA Program.

During her time as a CHRMS G.A., Maria worked as project manager of the Business Ethics/HR Law Roundtable which was presented in conjunction with the Employers Association of New Jersey (EANJ). She assisted CHRMS Director Dan Twomey in the development of the “Achieving Breakthrough Results” Program which has since been incorporated into the Executive MBA curriculum. Maria was also responsible for the content and maintenance of the CHRMS web site. Additionally, she helped to develop and execute a 2-week undergraduate trip to Costa Rica. There, she assisted Dan and Rose Twomey and 15 undergraduate students and is proud to report that the trip was a great success.

Maria is currently finishing up her MBA studies in International Business and will graduate in September of 2005. Her last class will be a trip to China with the Executive MBA students scheduled for August, 2005. Maria is enjoying her continuous involvement with Fairleigh Dickinson in as many ways as possible. She recently became staff advisor of a fraternity on campus, Sigma Chi, and is excited to begin working with them.

Looking back over the past year, Maria is proud to say that her GA position helped her to grow both personally and professionally while giving her the opportunity to expand her abilities in many areas.
Costa Rica Course — January, 2005

Dan and Rose Twomey launched the first Silberman College of Business undergraduate business course with a study abroad component. Each of the sixteen students wrote two papers—one analyzing the banana industry and the other focusing on sustainable tourism. Judging by the comments made by these students, the trip was a “life-changing experience”.

Banana workers at EARTH University Banana Plantation

“Home Sweet Home” Cabin in Manzanillo, Costa Rica

Presentation at the Dole Banana Plantation

Student Synthia Aceitano and Iguana

Students in Costa Rica course... Jay, Rob, Maria, Renee, John, Chris & Andrew

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