HARNESS THE POWER OF
DISRUPTIVE INNOVATION

The business school that thinks and lives in the future
This four day executive course focuses on the latest developments, insights, models and frameworks in corporate communication and business administration and forms a solid foundation to further deepen your knowledge and skills in the field of corporate communication.

During this course you will explore:
- Trends in reputation management, branding and positioning
- Organisational identity, stakeholder analysis and strategic management
- Research based solutions for managing corporate communication
- How to apply competitive analysis, academic models and co-coordination mechanisms

The Foundations of Corporate Communication will take place from 26 till 29 January at four-star Golden Tulip Jagershorst hotel in Leende, the Netherlands.

**DAY 1**
On the first day the focus will be on the overall concept of corporate communication and placing this in the organisational context.

**DAY 2**
During the second day we will go into detail about conceptualisation and paradigms of organisational identity.

**DAY 3**
On the third day, we will discuss the new trends in external communication and the strategic choices to build external trust.

**DAY 4**
On the final day we will discuss how to manage the corporate communication process by using a corporate communication dashboard.

**Corporate Communication Centre**
The Foundations Course of Corporate Communication is part of the Executive International MSc in Corporate Communication programme, offered by RSM’s Corporate Communication Centre and is open to managers in the wider business community. The Corporate Communication Centre is a joint initiative of RSM and the business community, and aims to develop and expand knowledge in the field of corporate communication.

**MORE INFORMATION? PLEASE CONTACT:**
Corporate Communication Centre
Phone: +31 (0) 10 408 2851
Email: ccc@rsm.nl

**WWW.CORPORATECOMMUNICATION.NL**

**WWW.RSM.NL/MCC**

**GET INSPIRED**

**AND JOIN THE FOUNDATIONS OF CORPORATE COMMUNICATION**
Contents

Page 28
Professors Jan van den Ende and Henk Volberda outline their views on the challenges and pitfalls of disruptive innovation.

Page 32
Prof. Justin Jansen believes that new business models can be integral to innovation success.

Page 34
Ellen Kuppens, vice president of HR at DSM Netherlands discusses why new ways of working will keep the company innovative.

MAIN FEATURE
DISRUPTIVE INNOVATION

Page 28
Managing disruptive innovation
With disruptive innovation being the “Holy Grail” of modern business, the challenge is to ensure you ensure that you’re the disruptor and not the disruptee – Canon and not Kodak? Two of RSM’s senior faculty members, Prof. Jan van den Ende and Prof. Henk Volberda, provide their expert views on the subject.

Page 32
How to be a disruptive innovator
Market newcomers are some of the biggest sources of disruptive innovation. Here RSM’s Prof. Justin Jansen, named among the top 100 most influential thinkers worldwide this year by TIME magazine, shares his thoughts on how start-ups can set the stage for breakthrough innovation.

Page 34
Innovation through transformation
Ellen Kuppens, vice president of human resource at multinational life sciences and materials company DSM Netherlands, talks about the importance of innovation, the crucial human factors, and how new ways of working will enhance the company’s innovation capabilities.
Heb je ervaring, maar wil je meer uit je carrière halen? Studeer dan bedrijfskunde naast je baan. Start in september met de avondopleiding Parttime Master Bedrijfskunde aan de beste business school van Nederland.

- Tweejarige deeltijd masteropleiding in het Nederlands
- Universitaire kennis waarmee je direct aan de slag kunt
- Internationaal project in de Verenigde Staten, Zuid-Afrika of China
- Keuze uit negen profielvakken
- Mogelijkheid tot RSM MSc Alumni Lifelong Learning Scholarship

Kom naar een voorlichtingsavond of open dag.

INVESTEER IN JEZELF

Meer informatie op: WWW.RSM.NL/PARTTIME-BEDRIJFSKUNDE

24 | The passionate entrepreneur
Meet alumnus Richard Robinson. He likes to travel, has a passion for stand-up comedy, and is a serial entrepreneur and start-up advisor who works for just 90 minutes at a time.

40 | Academic interview
Dianne Bevelander, newly-appointed professor of management education, and executive director of the just-launched Erasmus Centre for Women and Organisations is on a mission to empower women in business and academia.
Heb je ervaring, maar wil je meer uit je carrière halen? Studeer dan bedrijfskunde naast je baan. Start in september met de avondopleiding Parttime Master Bedrijfskunde aan de beste business school van Nederland.

• Tweejarige deeltijd masteropleiding in het Nederlands
• Universitaire kennis waarmee je direct aan de slag kunt
• Internationaal project in de Verenigde Staten, Zuid-Afrika of China
• Keuze uit negen profielvakken
• Mogelijkheid tot RSM MSc Alumni Lifelong Learning Scholarship

Kom naar een voorlichtingsavond of open dag.

Meer informatie op:
WWW.RSM.NL/PARTTIME-BEDRIJFSKUNDE
Welcome to the Winter 2014 edition of RSM Outlook. RSM’s focus is, as always, on advancing the reputation of the school, and for this we have prepared our “RSM 3.0 strategy” to last until 2018.

RSM 3.0 includes optimising our education portfolio to take account of innovations and current trends in business, attracting a rising calibre of students, and offering them a unique value proposition. And it works, as evidenced by the growing intake of our programmes. The Parttime Master Bedrijfskunde is up almost 50% to 84 students, the Global Executive OneMBA is up almost 30% to 31 students, our master programmes are up 18% to 1,465 students – and more than half of them come with bachelor degrees from other universities.

Already very international, RSM is also now preparing for a new phase of internationalisation with the appointment of Ying Zhang as associate dean for China business and relations, responsible for maintaining and developing relationships with Chinese businesses and academic institutions. The Global OneMBA programme has a new partner in Xiamen University Business School in south-east China, and we are actively pursuing other forms of collaboration with top Chinese universities.

RSM 3.0 also includes a continued focus on making our research more impactful by increasing our engagement with businesses. Our executive education portfolio is a great example of this. We explore executive education success stories on page 44, and the calendar of new programmes for 2015 can be found in the back pages of this issue. On page 40, you can read an interview with Dianne Bevelander, our new professor of management education with a focus on women in management. She heads the new Erasmus Centre for Women and Organisations, which launched in November.

The past few months have seen an impressive harvest of awards and grants for international research in diverse subjects. I am very proud of our position in two recently published research rankings. The renowned Shanghai University Ranking and the QS University Ranking put us at number four and number seven in Europe, respectively.

Another facet of our strategy for 2018 is to foster a “one school” culture to bring undergraduate and graduate programmes as well as research closer together, and we have made new appointments with this in mind; the keystone to this is the appointment of Professor Eric Waarts as our new dean of degree programmes; he heads a new team that will look to develop our post-graduate programmes.

Our strategy for 2018 includes strengthening our growing alumni network. Read about our inspiring alumni (page 24) and alumni in action (page 38) and take pride in our network, which has topped 30,000 for the first time after this autumn’s graduation ceremonies.

Powerfully demonstrating impact and relevance for industry, our recent RSM Leadership Summit had an audience of more than 600 people. Business leaders and RSM faculty members explored the theme of “Big data: what’s in it for me?” in an event that embodies everything RSM stands for, not least the thought leadership of our academic staff. You can read a review on page 18. We also interview our speakers from Sanoma – Ulla Kruhse-Lehtonen, vice president of customer insight and analytics and Riikka Turunen, director of data protection and privacy – on page 20.

It also made me hugely proud to introduce the amazing nominees for the RSM
The past few months have seen an impressive harvest of awards and grants for international research in diverse subjects.

Distinguished Alumni Awards (page 16) during the event. These awards exemplify our future talent and the event embodies our social cohesion, social fabric and social capital.

Innovation is integral to business success, and in this issue our faculty members give their view of the power of disruptive innovation in particular (page 28). In addition, Ellen Kuppens, vice president of HR at DSM Netherlands, shares her perspectives on the importance of human factors in innovation (page 34), while an entrepreneurial view is presented on page 32.

So we will continue to push on, in the knowledge that our efforts are already being noticed; RSM alumni returning to campus for the five-year MBA reunion in October told me they were awed by the new campus, by the Leadership Summit and by the way we are extending the activities of the whole RSM community. I am awed too.

I wish you all a peaceful festive season, and a busy and prosperous New Year.

Prof. Steef van de Velde
Dean
Rotterdam School of Management
Erasmus University
NEWS FROM RSM

GENDER-BALANCED LEADERSHIP SEMINAR
Senior professionals from multinationals and sole entrepreneurs alike were among the 100-strong audience – 70 women and 30 men – at the seminar about gender-balanced leadership in Amsterdam. Led by RSM professor Dianne Bevelander, the third edition of the RSM Erasmus Business Series explored professional perceptions of women and how businesses can implement strategies to better utilise this untapped pool of talent. [www.rsm.nl/ebs](http://www.rsm.nl/ebs)

NEW DOUBLE DEGREE FROM CHINA
A new double master degree is in development after a trip to China by RSM’s dean Steef van de Velde and Ying Zhang, associate dean for China Business and Relations. Their autumn visit resulted in an agreement between RSM and the College of Business at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics. Pictured are Prof. Van de Velde and Prof. Yuding Luo, acting dean of COB SUFE as they sign the agreement.

DEAN OF DEGREE PROGRAMMES
Part of the strategy to bring undergraduate and graduate programmes and research closer together has been achieved with the appointment of Professor Eric Waarts as new dean of Degree Programmes. Daan Stam has been appointed academic director for Full-time MBA and Executive MBA programmes, and Milton Sousa is now programme director for the Full-time MBA and Executive MBA programmes.

RSM HOCKEY WORLD CHAMPION
As a member of the Dutch national women’s team, RSM student Marloes Keetels (BScBA) won the Rabobank World Cup Hockey 2014 tournament at the final in The Hague, which took place in June. The team is also the reigning Olympic champion. Marloes’s next focus is to train for the Summer Olympics 2016 in Brazil – in addition to her studies, of course. (Photo: © KNHB-Koen Suyk)

NEW AFFINITY GROUP FOR SCM AND LOGISTICS
If you’re involved in the logistics and supply chain industries then you’ll be interested to find out more about RSM’s new Supply Chain Management Affinity Group, which launched in the summer with a lively seminar exploring integrated business planning. Members will have access to the latest SCM research as well as debate and networking opportunities. [www.rsm.nl/affinitygroups](http://www.rsm.nl/affinitygroups)

DINI LEENTVAAR RETIRES
Dini Leentvaar, familiar to thousands of RSM alumni as their warm but frank student advisor, has retired from her job after 40 years. Dini started in 1972, first in Kralingen, then at the IIB in Delft before RSM’s move to the EUR campus. She became a student advisor in 1984 and worked for the Bedrijfskunde bachelor programme and RSM’s early master programmes.
WITH DEEP REGRET

RSM and its alumni network have expressed their deep regret at the deaths of two alumni who lost their lives in the Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 crash in July. Lucie van Mens received her PhD at RSM in 1992 and was an academic staff member until 1997. She was working for the Female Health Company and was on her way to the International AIDS Conference in Melbourne, Australia. Antoine van Veldhuizen graduated from RSM in 1995 in corporate finance and strategic management. He was general manager of Expatica, an online portal for expats in the Netherlands, and was on holiday with his wife and family.

AN AFFINITY FOR FINANCE

There’s a new common-interest group for RSM alumni, faculty and students working in finance or with an interest in finance. The Finance Alumni Affinity Group’s first session in July explored a case-study involving the 100-year-old ABN AMRO bank, the events leading up to its takeover by Royal Bank of Scotland, Fortis and Santander, and its ultimate nationalisation. Find out more at www.rsm.nl/affinitygroups

ENERGY FORUM DEFINES THE FUTURE

Describing June’s two-day Erasmus Energy Forum as an excellent opportunity to discuss advances within the sector, Günther Oettinger, EU Commissioner for Energy (pictured), outlined how international and global energy challenges will affect everyone. Attendant experts from politics, business and academia concurred that the energy industry needs a common European framework, and that a successful transition to sustainable sources of energy will rely on smartgrids. For a full report of the event, go to www.rsm.nl/energy

RESEARCH CHAIR FOR LARS NORDEN

RSM’s new chair of banking and finance is Professor Lars Norden. Endowed by the Erasmus Trust Fund, the chair was created to promote top-quality research into fundamental questions such as why banks exist, what they do, how they do it, and the role of banks in ensuring financial and economic stability.

IMPROVING CHINA BUSINESS RELATIONS

Ying Zhang has been appointed associate dean for China Business and Relations at RSM. She is responsible for maintaining and developing RSM’s relationships with Chinese businesses and academic institutions. Zhang says RSM’s highly-ranked education and academic research will be an important contributor to China and China-relevant business.

STEFANO PUNTONI APPOINTED PROFESSOR

Stefano Puntoni has been appointed professor of marketing. He will focus on finding out how globalisation influences brand management, communication, marketing strategy and consumer behaviour. Puntoni teaches in RSM’s EMBA, MSc in Marketing Management, and executive education programmes. He is also a visiting professor at Lancaster University, and has taught at London Business School, Bocconi University and the American University in Cairo.
How can businesses get hold of – and understand – the impact of research that will be useful to them? Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University (RSM) has launched a new online research platform, RSM Discovery, which gives easy access to the outstanding research of RSM faculty. With profile videos, videos on research findings and related articles, RSM Discovery takes RSM’s cutting-edge research closer to business and provides organisations with a new, interactive way to find out about useful business research helping to sustain their future.

RSM Discovery. We bring our research into your boardroom.

Watch our researchers in action and join the discussion at www.rsm.nl/discovery.

ROYAL HONOUR FOR PROF. CEES VAN RIET

Cees van Riel, RSM professor of corporate communication, has been awarded the Officier in de Orde van Oranje-Nassau (Civil Order of Orange-Nassau). Mayor of Rotterdam, Ahmed Aboutaleb, presented the award on behalf of HM King Willem-Alexander in September. Prof. Van Riel was recognised for his great contribution to society through his work as a business reputation specialist.

Mayor Aboutaleb said that: ‘Van Riel is a keen advocate of the importance of reputation management and its use in companies and organisations on a strategic level. His research and publications have given the Corporate Communication Centre at RSM a prominent position in this field, and his vision has contributed to a better reputation of Dutch brands and thus to a more positive image of the Netherlands worldwide.’

As well as being founder of the Corporate Communication Centre at RSM, Prof. Van Riel also established the Reputation Forum Netherlands.

www.rsm.nl/ccc

I WILL HAVE THE COURAGE TO MAKE DIFFICULT DECISIONS

Daan van der Schroeff, Dutch Student, EMBA 2014

NEWS / IN BRIEF
ENERGY AWARD FOR FOREST SMART GRID

A smart grid designed to supply carbon-neutral power to a nature-rich UNESCO World Heritage Site in the Philippines won this year’s Erasmus Energy Business Award. Atem S. Ramsundersingh, CEO/member board of directors of Singapore-based WEnergy Global, received the award for the best and most innovative sustainable business idea from Volker Beckers, chairman of the Advisory Board of the Erasmus Centre for Future Energy Business at RSM’s Erasmus Energy Forum in June. [WEB www.rsm.nl/energy]

MANAGEMENT INNOVATION AWARD

A paper authored by RSM faculty members Henk Volberda, Frans van den Bosch and Kevin Heij has received the European Management Review Best Paper Award 2014 during the European Academy of Management in Valencia. Entitled Management Innovation: Management as Fertile Ground for Innovation, the paper argues that successful innovation is not just the result of technological innovation, but is also heavily dependent on “management innovation” – the introduction of management practices, processes and structures that are designed to further organisational goals.

AWARD FOR SYMPOSIUM

The Management Education and Development division of the Academy of Management judged a symposium co-ordinated by Michaëla Schippers, RSM associate professor of leadership and management, as the best of event for its significant contribution to management education and development. Schippers and colleagues presented the symposium in August at the 74th annual meeting of the Academy of Management in Philadelphia.

AWARD FOR VIRAL MARKETING RESEARCH

RSM’s Professor Gerrit van Bruggen won the MOA Scientific Award 2014 for best article in the Annual Review of Marketing Research 2014, which is published by the Dutch Market Research Association (MOA). The paper, co-authored with former RSM associate professor Ralf van der Lans, provides practical insights into the predictability of viral marketing campaigns.

FIRST PRIZE FOR IBA STUDENTS

A team of IBA students from RSM won the first Chulalongkorn International Business Case Competition in Thailand. Students Nathalie Lidman, Sebastiaan Scholtes, Jan Wallner and Carsten Passlick won with their case about further developing sustainable solutions for the Mae Fah Luang Foundation, which supports socially and ecologically sustainable activities in Southeast Asia’s “Golden Triangle”.

AWARD FOR MASTER THESIS

A thesis written by Sophie Gaarenstroom, a recent MScIM/CEMS graduate, explaining how socially responsible purchasing can be beneficial for companies has won this year’s KPMG RSM Sustainable Master Thesis Award. Sophie’s research explores the effect of sustainably responsible purchasing on operational and relational efficiency and the mediating role of buyer-supplier collaboration.

WIN FOR STUDENT ENTREPRENEUR

RSM’s Fabian Dudek (MSc Strategic Management) won the Best Student Entrepreneur 2014 award from recruitment agency ImpressiveGreenApple. The 22-year-old founded Nestpick, a fast-growing online intermediary between landlords, international students and expats. Fabian won a trip to explore entrepreneurship in a developing country of his choice, plus financial advice and media training. [WEB www.nestpick.com]
BUSINESS SCHOOLS AFLOAT

Teams from 10 business schools joined the RSM Regatta 2014 in Lelystad in August. The crew from Libera Università Mediterranea, Italy won the A-division. The B-division was won by a mixed crew from Warwick Business School, RSM and INSEAD. The event, organised by RSM, the MBA Sailing League and the RSM Sailing Club, attracted many alumni and corporate partners who, in addition to enjoying the thrills of the races, also appreciated the opportunities for networking and socialising.

Watch highlights of the event on YouTube at [link](http://tinyurl.com/kaptein-integrity)

INTEGRITY’S POWER IN GOVERNMENTS

A free e-book written by Muel Kaptein, professor of business ethics and integrity management at RSM, explores how integrity can make or break the careers of servants of the people (SPs). Entitled The Servant of the People: On the power of integrity in politics and government, each of the 95 chapters discusses one of the many facets of integrity, with plenty of positive and negative examples involving different kinds of SPs from different countries. The central message of the book is that integrity has great power over SPs and that it can make or break their careers.

To download your free copy, visit: [link](http://tinyurl.com/kaptein-integrity)

NEW REPUTATION RESEARCH CENTRE

Exactly 25 years after it was founded, RSM’s Corporate Communication Centre is to launch a specialist Reputation Research Centre (RRC). The announcement was made at a 25th anniversary reputation management conference in Rotterdam in September, when it was revealed that the new RRC would benefit from a US$400,000 donation from the world’s leading reputation management consultancy, Reputation Institute. RRC’s mission is to elaborate on insights in reputation management, with post-doc and research scholarships.

NEW ONE MBA PARTNER IN CHINA

A new, important and innovative strategic partner has been added to the international OneMBA consortium with the addition of the School of Management at Xiamen University. Xiamen provides China with a commercial, cultural and academic link to Taiwan. The 21-month OneMBA programme is delivered by five world-class business schools – including RSM – across four continents and is designed for business professionals who live and work around the globe.

RSM’S INFLUENTIAL RESEARCHERS

Justin Jansen, professor of corporate entrepreneurship and Henk Volberda, professor of strategic management and business policy, are regarded as being among the best and brightest scientific minds of our time, according to Thomson Reuters in the latest survey of the most influential scientists in the world. Thomson Reuters, publishers of the survey and “the world’s leading source of intelligent information for businesses and professionals” say peers in the field of economics and business most frequently cite research produced by Jansen and Volberda.

RSM DISCOVERY

Unique management insights from RSM’s world-class researchers are available to executives free of charge courtesy of the RSM Discovery platform. Accessible through videos and articles, RSM Discovery is designed to keep busy executives abreast of the latest developments in management science that are of real practical value to forward-looking and ambitious companies. Visit the RSM management science knowledge bank at [link](http://www.rsm.nl/discovery)
GRAND MSC GRADUATION
The biggest graduation ceremony yet for RSM was witnessed by almost 2,000 friends and family members who celebrated with 523 new MSc graduates in De Doelen concert hall and convention centre in Rotterdam on 4 October. Keynote speaker was Tex Gunning, CEO of TNT Express. The graduates were welcomed to RSM’s alumni network with a festive cocktail reception in the grand foyer. In total, 1,698 students have graduated from RSM’s 12 MSc programmes this year.

INTERNATIONAL ADVENTURES
As part of their curriculum, professionals from three classes in the Dutch-taught executive Parttime Master Bedrijfskunde programme travelled to Shanghai, Cape Town, or New York City in 2014. They explored local business practices and attended lectures at RSM’s partner universities.

THE RSM STORE, NOW ONLINE!
Always wanted an RSM hoodie, mug, tie or bag? You can order a wide range of RSM branded items online!

Visit RSM’s online store and have your purchases delivered straight to your door.

WWW.STORE.RSM.NL

GRAND MSC GRADUATION

INTERNATIONAL ADVENTURES

THE RSM STORE, NOW ONLINE!

Always wanted an RSM hoodie, mug, tie or bag? You can order a wide range of RSM branded items online!

Visit RSM’s online store and have your purchases delivered straight to your door.

WWW.STORE.RSM.NL

GRAND MSC GRADUATION

INTERNATIONAL ADVENTURES

THE RSM STORE, NOW ONLINE!

Always wanted an RSM hoodie, mug, tie or bag? You can order a wide range of RSM branded items online!

Visit RSM’s online store and have your purchases delivered straight to your door.

WWW.STORE.RSM.NL
LOOKING FOR TALENT?
PROFILE YOUR ORGANISATION AT RSM!

At RSM you will find a vast resource of world-class talent for your organisation and opportunities to engage the Netherlands top management institution.

Participants in the Bachelor, Masters and MBA programmes range from motivated young business professionals to experienced senior executives. Representing over 40 nationalities, they have a wealth of global business and intercultural expertise.

Engagement opportunities for organisations include;

- On-site company visits
- On campus company presentations
- Consulting projects
- Internships
- Online CV platform and job boards

As well as customised services to promote your organisation at Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University.

Contact: +31 (0)10 408 2010 | careerservices@rsm.nl | www.rsm.nl/careerservices
MOVERS AND SHAKERS

Keep up to date with the professional advancements of fellow alumni as they develop their careers and move not only to new positions and companies, but also to different countries.
Making a career move? If so, contact us at mail alumni@rsm.nl

Elsa Alexandra Razborsek
Full-time MBA Class of 2013
Moves from being financial accounting analyst at Royal Dutch Shell to founder & CEO at Xana Living Consulting (The Hague, The Netherlands).
Effective: August 2014

Danffer Navarro
Full-time MBA Class of 2008
Previously director, customer intelligence & business performance at DHL Supply Chain; is now senior manager, business market intelligence & strategy tools at Electrolux (Stockholm, Sweden).
Effective: July 2014

Markus Lodensträter
Full-time MBA Class of 2013
Has moved from the role of sourcing advisor at QS Advisory to become technology strategy consultant at Gartner Consulting (Zurich, Switzerland).
Effective: July 2014

Silvia Yu
Full-time MBA/MBI Class of 1998
Moves from the position of senior global marketing director at Asus Technology to become CEO at Red Peak Asia Group (Taipei, Taiwan).
Effective: May 2014

Selim Caydamli
Executive MBA Class of 2010
The former energy desk unit manager at Credit Europe Bank NV is now director, trade and commodity finance energy desk at Rabobank International (London, UK).
Effective: June 2014

Philippe Mettey
Full-time MBA Class of 1999
Has moved from the position of SVP marketing at Pullman Hotels and Resorts – Accor to become commercial director at NH Collection, NH Hotel Group (Madrid, Spain).
Effective: May 2014

Jeroen Reyes Stolker
Full-time MBA Class of 2000
Formerly CEO at SEB Life Insurance and now head of corporate banking, vice president, member of the board at SEB Bank (Riga, Latvia).
Effective: August 2014

Ints Krasts
Full-time MBA Class of 2005
Formerly CEO at SEB Life Insurance and now head of corporate banking, vice president, member of the board at SEB Bank (Riga, Latvia).
Effective: August 2014
The efforts of two outstanding alumni to reduce malnutrition for millions of people around the world is saluted in this year’s RSM Distinguished Alumni Awards.

*Story by* Dorine Schreiner and Justine Whittern

**ALUMNI AWARDS HONOUR SUSTAINABILITY ACHIEVEMENTS**

Each year, RSM recognises young and senior leaders from its 29,000 alumni for their excellence in business and contribution to society in relation to RSM’s four core themes of sustainability, innovation, critical thinking and spirit. The winners of this year’s RSM Distinguished Alumni Awards strive for the same cause: the alleviation of global malnutrition. Both received their awards in October at the RSM Leadership Summit.

**Distinguished senior leader**

As senior manager (Netherlands) at Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition, Herbert Smorenburg (Executive MBA 2002) takes a sustainable approach to address global malnutrition issues through business development. His work across sectors and countries requires strong relationships, inter-cultural management and other people skills to successfully develop business models that bring nutrition to the base of the pyramid. ‘Good nutrition is fundamental for society’s success. Under-nutrition and over-nutrition affects billions. I want to contribute to solve this,’ says Herbert, who was nominated by RSM career coach Dory Grandia.

Malnutrition is a complex problem that cannot be solved by any business, NGO, knowledge institute or government in isolation, according to Herbert. That is why he works with partners to explore innovative and sustainable solutions to malnutrition in developing countries.

Previously employed by Unilever, Herbert says RSM inspired him to start up the Unilever Health Institute for Sub-Saharan Africa. He then began to grasp the complexity of conducting multinational business with company strategy and end-users in mind. At RSM, Herbert regularly provides coaching, joins panel discussions, and has spoken at the RSM Sustainability Forum. ‘It’s interesting to discuss the role of business when addressing societal issues with future leaders,’ he says. ‘I’m impressed by this younger generation’s creativity and innovation when approaching sustainable business development.’

Herbert plans to continue making a significant impact to reduce malnutrition in developing countries. The results fulfill him professionally and personally. ‘Knowing that our work makes a difference to so many gets me up every morning,’ he says.

**Distinguished young leader**

Alba Tiley (MSc in Strategic Management 2010) shows the benefits businesses provide when acting ethically and providing products and services that solve real needs. ‘Having a solid external orientation and staying on top of global sustainability trends are beneficial to strategy, marketing and business development,’ says the UN partnerships and sustainability manager at Royal DSM.
‘Given the issues we face today – ranging from climate change to social inequality – it’s difficult to not feel a desire to act,’ says Alba, who was nominated for the award by Joey Johannsen, RSM’s sustainability co-ordinator. ‘We can’t sit back and expect other people or sectors to fix things for us.’

At RSM, the Canadian researched the strategic value of cross-sector partnerships. Alba says: ‘There’s a major need for collaboration between governments, communities and companies to find solutions to large-scale issues, such as those related to the food industry given its direct impact on the environment, people’s health, economic growth and the link to sustainable consumption patterns.’

Alba works on a nutrition project in partnership with the UN World Food Programme to solve complex matters across sector boundaries in the fast-changing world of sustainability. By co-ordinating the programme, which co-develops nutritional products for children, pregnant women and people living with HIV/AIDS, Alba has helped improve the nutrition of 21 million people in 2013, and aims to reach 30 million people annually by 2015.

‘One billion people still go to bed hungry every night,’ says Alba, who aims to continue her career in developing partnerships to fight global problems. ‘We have all the ingredients to turn a sustainable and equitable society into a reality. I make my small contribution to this journey and am grateful to RSM for the great start.’

—

The nominees

Distinguished Young Leaders
Robin Slakhorst and Korstiaan Zandvliet (MSc Entrepreneurship & New Business Venturing 2010), founders, Symbid Corporation.
Kiki Vreeling (MSc in Global Business & Stakeholder Management 2005), founder and owner, Kii2.
Bo Wiesman and Michael van Schie (MSc Entrepreneurship & New Business Venturing 2005) founders, NewCompliance.

Marten Dresen (MSc in Strategic Management 2007), Founder of Good Hospitality, and general board member at Niños de Guatemala.
Namita Krul (Parttime Master Bedrijfskunde 2010), Founder of WORK+SHELTER, co-founder of New Yardsticks, and credit manager at BNG Bank.

Distinguished Senior Leaders
Patrick Kalverboer (Doctoraal Bedrijfswetenschappen 1997), Managing partner at H2 Equity Partners in the UK, and various non-executive board positions.
Natalie Righton (MSc Strategic Management 2000), Journalist and editor, de Volkskrant.
Reinier Willems (International Full-time MBA 2000), Marketing director, LeasePlan International.

Marcello Palazzi (International Full-time MBA 1993), Founder and president, Progressio Foundation.
Karen Chang (International Full-time MBA 1997), Owner, Acro Novelty Design and Manufacturing, Taiwan.
Diederik Rus (MSc Marketing Management 2004) and Victor Hendriks (MSc Innovation Management 2005), Owners, Otravo B.V. (Vliegtickets.nl, Vliegtarieven.nl).
October’s RSM Leadership Summit at the iconic UNESCO-listed Van Nelle Ontwerpfabriek in Rotterdam featured presentations from leaders of businesses that have already implemented it into their corporate strategies and are using it to gain competitive advantage, plus RSM faculty members who are experts on the subject. They all shared their experiences with a 600-strong audience from the business community. The resultant debate was far-reaching and eclectic. And as always, there were superb networking opportunities.

A quick poll of the audience at the start of the summit showed many did not think big data would bring a competitive advantage. The three speakers from the world of business and the two RSM academics subsequently demonstrated that it could.

The speakers came from media and learning company Sanoma, technology company Fujitsu, and international airline Lufthansa. Each demonstrated that if businesses want to find and hold on to their competitive advantage, then they need to understand the potential benefits and risks of big data and master the technology for collecting and analysing it.

Finnish media company Sanoma is using big data to help product development and innovation, said Ulla Kruhse-Lehtonen, vice-president of customer insight and analytics (3). Sanoma uses con-

From smartphones to fridges and cars, all kinds of electronic devices are interconnected. They create the “internet of things”, which produces countless billions of bytes of data in huge datasets known as “big data” that, when studied, can be used to competitive advantage by businesses.

Story by Justine Whittern
sumer data such as subscriptions, digital transactions, digital click streams, external data and consumer research to generate personalised content for consumers. Preparation is all-important to understand the task ahead and to organise a structure to support it, said Kruhse-Lehtonen.

Privacy is a priority
Her colleague Riikka Turunen, director of data protection and privacy at Sanoma (1), is helping to build security and privacy into the company’s data management processes. Riikka took the audience through what she called the “fundamental human rights” of data protection and privacy, based on those developed in 1980 by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. The size of the task of building privacy into data management shouldn’t be underestimated, and introducing and launching big data projects are huge change management operations, said Turunen.

Decisions based on big data
RSM’s Professor Peter Vervest (5) is a specialist in information management and networks. He emphasised taking care with automated decision-making. Datasets produced by the “internet of things” are evolving, and follow as yet unknown principles. ‘We will feed these systems with data even though we might not be sure if it’s accurate or not. And they’ll start making decisions on our behalf. We may already be inside The Matrix,’ he said, referring to the 1990 sci-fi film.

The internet of things
Big data can add value if the right data is collected and the right questions are asked, said Jens-Peter Seick, vice president of product management and development at Fujitsu in Europe (4). Fujitsu products make it possible for businesses to collect, analyse and use big data without having a team of data scientists on board. New technologies are developing fast, and the infrastructure for handling big data is easy to understand and quite mature. Technology is not a hurdle any more, and the advantage comes from using big data in the smartest way possible, he said.

Unexploited data
The economic pressure to exploit big data, especially within the aviation industry, was explained by Roland Schütz, CIO at Lufthansa (2). He said the airline has an unparalleled source of data that hasn’t yet been exploited and predicted that the biggest IT spending in aviation will be on customer service and personalisation. The value chain is also about hotels and airport services. ‘Airline websites look like online travel agencies. It’s convenient and complete,’ he said.

Create new business
RSM Professor Eric van Heck (6) studies information management and markets specialising in big data and is one of the academics behind the recently launched Erasmus Centre for Data Science and Business Analytics. Big data has three levels of value for business: existing business becomes more efficient; business becomes more effective by targeting and segmenting customers; and new business is created.

But the lack of a common platform for sharing data in most companies is an obstacle and users, clients and sometimes CEOs will not – or cannot – engage in this new journey. Prof. Van Heck recommended going back to the drawing board to look at the enterprise architecture from a business and a technical point of view.

In conclusion, each of the expert speakers demonstrated to an enthusiastic and responsive audience the huge business opportunities in big data. They also pointed out where managers should be cautious in exploiting its potential. Once again, the Leadership Summit brought plenty of new ideas to the RSM community and offered a rare opportunity for the audience to get frank answers from senior business leaders and respected academics.

The next RSM Leadership Summit takes place on Friday, 2 October 2015.
With key markets in Finland, the Netherlands, Belgium and Central and Eastern Europe, media and learning giant Sanoma employs some 10,000 people and in 2013 achieved net sales of over €2.2bn. It is one of Europe’s largest media companies. Sanoma actively seeks to develop new and innovative ways of offering its many millions of customers and users tailor-made experiences through the provision of rich and, more importantly, relevant content across its digital platforms.

It is through meaningful relationships with customers and a deep appreciation of their needs – developed through the collection and analysis of data about customers’ interaction behaviours and preferences – that the company creates value propositions for countless advertisers both large and small. For Sanoma, big data is an innovation wellspring.

Going back to basics, Ulla Kruhse-Lehtonen thinks that the big data concept – the collection of what can be petabytes of data – is very hyped at present and points out that it has its origins in the 4V model (volume, velocity, veracity and variability), itself an adaptation of the 3V model developed by Gartner analyst Doug Laney in 2001, but with the later addition of “veracity”.

That said, Ulla makes clear that: ‘It doesn’t matter what label is attached to it because for us at Sanoma it’s consumer data. Millions of people come to our websites and other digital platforms and that generates a considerable volume of data. This is in addition to what is traditionally known as “small data”, which comes from our subscription databases and transactional data.’

**Personalising offerings**

Analysing the big data that it gathers brings considerable advantages to Sanoma, she says: ‘Combining our customer information with financial data really helps us to build a 360-degree view of how they behave in our networks. Using the data for customer relationship management (CRM) purposes allows us to personalise offerings – magazine subscriptions, for example – and make them more relevant to the customer. In fact, the data is useful through the entire consumer funnel. It helps us understand how we can acquire and engage with customers, encourage them to purchase our offerings, and how to retain them.’

As well as the many CRM benefits, Sanoma applies the behavioural and other insights it gains from big data analysis to get maximum value from its B2B relationships with advertisers: ‘Sanoma obtains its revenues in a roughly equal split from two sources: consumers and advertisers. Of course, advertisers want to maximise their spend with us by reaching the parts of the audience that’s of greatest value to them. Through customer analytics we can help them reach specific target groups by profiling customers, providing attribution modelling and, by understanding the optimum frequency of advertisements on...
channels, we improve conversion rates of media campaigns,’ she says.

According to Ulla, larger advertisers in particular can be very advanced in their use of this type of data and have data analysis functions in-house. ‘They know what to demand and what questions to ask about the data Sanoma gathers. Small and medium-sized companies generally don’t have that level of sophistication, so we help them get the best out of the information we provide.’

New initiatives
The company is currently piloting an initiative across a number of online channels that allows it to offer customers more personalised content and recommendations based on their own reading behaviour and the behaviour of readers who are like them. ‘The whole idea is that the customer will benefit through better-targeted content – including advertising. Look at Amazon – 35 per cent of their sales come from recommendations. That makes it clear that recommendations can offer great value for the business,’ she explains.

And it doesn’t stop there. ‘Another initiative in Finland, the Sanoma Account – a common user login – will help us identify users across different online properties. At the same time, users will receive special loyalty offers, get access to unique and personalised content, and have the ability to personalise home pages. Again, it’s very much about two-way benefits.’

Print media
The benefits of customer insights also extend to the company’s printed products. ‘With traditional print media, reader preferences and the impact of on-page advertising has always been very difficult to gauge and is typically measured through consumer research,’ Ulla points out.

“The whole idea is that the customer will benefit through better-targeted content – including advertising.”
Ulla Kruhse-Lehtonen, vice president of customer insight and analytics, Sanoma
‘In Finland, we’re now measuring impact through the digital replicas of our publications that customers read and browse on their tablets and other devices. Our hypothesis is that there is a close correlation in behaviour between readers of digital versions and traditional paper products. Some statistical weighting has to be made for variances between the population using tablets and those who prefer the printed versions. Unsurprisingly, it’s something that advertisers are very interested to learn more about.’

Ensuring that the benefits of big data are of strategic value is a key issue, says Ulla. ‘Sanoma’s approach to data-related projects is to ensure that there are always people involved from business, IT, data and privacy functions. This highlights that everything we do is interdependent. For example, without useful data our media sales teams find their job much more of a challenge. Without business value, data is meaningless. Common incentives help ensure that everyone, no matter which department they’re in, focuses on the same goals.’

A matter of privacy

Unsurprisingly, with so much personal information being gathered and analysed, there are many privacy concerns. Indeed, in the USA earlier this year, the White House Big Data and Privacy Working Group stated that key concerns surrounding the use of big data included: 1) that it can reveal intimate personal details, and 2) that it could lead to discriminatory outcomes.

Acknowledging these and other concerns, Riikka Turunen, Sanoma’s director of data protection and privacy, believes that data collection is an opportunity for both parties, as long as some basic privacy principles are respected: ‘There have to be

“The plain fact is that there is great value in data for business and for society.”

Riikka Turunen, director of data protection and privacy, Sanoma
data collection limitations and purpose use limitations,' she explains. 'First, organisations must always be clear about for what specific purpose they're collecting data. Second, they must be transparent about the data processing and provide users with fair choices about how the data is used.'

For Riikka, it's important to consider how privacy is evaluated and to build solutions around the architecture and related data management processes. 'It's always possible to find a solution through which you can respect the basic principles of privacy. It does mean you have to invest more time in privacy; it has to become a part of analytics and part of the data management process.'

**Threats and solutions**

Riikka is firm in her belief that privacy professionals must work together with data scientists to evaluate the different profiling mechanisms or algorithms that are to be used. 'We have to identify threats and define solutions that give consumers transparency about how they are profiled. Indeed, some people – and it's a fundamental human right to be left alone – don't want to be profiled at all.'

Additionally, she believes that one of the biggest risk concerns relates to the complexity of the technology. 'Most consumers don't understand big data,' she says. 'About a year ago, we did a customer survey in Finland about big data. Of the 1,000 or so respondents, 60 per cent didn’t understand what big data means or what it's about. They may have heard the term and realise the benefits, but they don’t really understand.'

Privacy is an issue that has to be tackled not only at a business and a national level, but also at an EU and international level. 'For any sort of accord to be reached there will have to be common rules,' she says. 'The plain fact is that there is great value in data for business and for society.'

At the same time, throughout history some people have wanted to remain anonymous. It's a constant. 'What's changed is that the mechanisms for being anonymous today are different,' Riikka observes. 'I believe that at some point in the future people will start to see their personal data as something that they own. It will become an element of our individual digital identities and be protected by rights.'

**Building trust**

If that is to happen, for Riikka the question is: 'How do we make all of this understandable, eliminate the complexity and give people choices to ensure they are not discriminated against and have the ability to influence how they’re treated?'

'At the heart of the matter is trust. Research shows that trust is always an important element when people make purchases online. If a company offers sufficient choices as to how customers are treated in respect to privacy, trust can be increased. There’s also a value exchange: people want to know what they get in return for the information they provide.'

Privacy is very much about the service design in the digital environment, she believes: 'The use of a recommendation engine that’s based on the purchases you’ve made or viewed is, for example, a key value proposition offered by Netflix. Consumers are happy to provide their data in return for the good recommendations Netflix provides.'

As Ulla concludes: 'Big data is about the consumer and about companies being consumer centric. The consumer-centric company understands its customers and that understanding comes from data.'

**WEB** www.sanoma.com
THE PASSIONATE ENTREPRENEUR
Richard Robinson has made it his life’s work to seek out spectacular failure and run toward it as fast as possible. Often he misses his target. When this happens he stands up, puts his latest success in his back pocket with a shrug, and cheerfully looks around for his next shot at catastrophe. Here he speaks with us about what makes a global citizen and entrepreneur tick. Story by Imogen Moore

“... I met an Australian who had been travelling for four years. Four years! I couldn’t process it.”

It’s clear that Richard is not only driven, but is also very passionate about what he does. In fact, he has four great passions: travel, family, stand-up comedy and, as we’ve just learned, entrepreneurship. At first glance this seems like an eclectic collection, each element completely unrelated to the others. Not so. They are all fun, all fraught with risk, and none of them can succeed without absolute authenticity.

... I met an Australian who had been travelling for four years. Four years! I couldn’t process it.

And it is through these desires that we also learn about what could be described as Robinson’s fifth passion – failure. A more accurate analysis might posit that he exploits and uses failure as a tool. Failure provides the lessons that help him understand what needs to be done differently next time.

As a young man, Robinson knew that his destiny lay with China, so I ask how the dream became a reality. ‘People careen off in different directions after mundane events,’ he explains. ‘My mundane event was on a subway. I went to school in South Boston. Have you ever seen the movie Good Will Hunting? It was like that. One freezing miserable day the cuff of my trousers cracked like a bell, it was so covered in sleet. We were on the subway and a guy said, “Screw this, I’m going to school in Florida.” Another guy said, “Screw this, I’m going to school in Hawaii.” And I thought I’d split the difference, “Screw this, I’m going to school in California.” And it came to me, the epiphany that I actually could. I could go anywhere I want.’

The night before he left Boston for the University of Southern California was the last time Richard remembers being afraid of adventure.

‘When I was at USC I met an Australian who had been travelling for four years. Four years! I couldn’t process it. I had the cognitive equivalent of a record stuck on a scratch. Do people really do that? Is that even legal? It sparked something for me.’

So when an opportunity came along to study at Cambridge University, the self-described “plastic Paddy” packed his bags and boarded a plane for Europe. For Richard, a born global citizen, RSM was a natural choice for his MBA.

‘I was looking for the most international programme I could get. And RSM was the most international business school: it’s more international than IMD in Switzerland, more international than London Business School. I feel like I chose well. There were a hundred students and maybe 30 or 40 nationalities in my class. No more than 10 per cent of the students were from any one country. I think in that environment you learn almost as much, if not more, from the student body as you learn from the teachers.’

There was one student in particular who inadvertently set Robinson’s feet on a path he still walks. ‘I got a job in a library with a fellow student whose surname happened to be Erasmus. He brings in a little diskette – a 1.4mb diskette – with a skull and crossbones on it and it’s labelled “Do Not Install”. So of course we installed it. It was the first browser ever on the school’s system (Mosaic, the predecessor to Netscape) and I fell in love with the internet.’

The timing couldn’t have been better. Up until this point, Richard had been...
the captain of a ship without a rudder. ‘I came to RSM knowing that I wanted to be in China but not knowing what I wanted to do there. A lot of students were much more experienced. Some people had more than 10 years of solid work experience and other master degrees. They came into the programme with a very clear vision of what they wanted, whereas I was looking for clarity through the programme. And then I got it the very first week… the internet!’

The fact that there was no Internet to speak of in China (the first commercial service was launched in 1995 with just 800 subscribers) didn’t faze Richard in the slightest. With that unerring knack for identifying the potential for complete and total failure, he happily acknowledged that his goal was a straight path to disaster and then set about making it happen anyway. For this, he partly credits the RSM alumni network. ‘One of my partners, Karl Knoflach, who I’ve created three businesses with, was a student with me at RSM and moved to Beijing. The network has been really valuable to me.’

A small detour
‘Right after RSM I did this bike trip through Africa. I wanted to do something that was overland. And solo. And extreme. Everybody was saying: “Well, what kind of support are you going to have? Will you get sponsorship?” But I didn’t want that kind of safety net. I didn’t want to cheat. I wanted to push myself to my limits. In a way I was prepping myself for entrepreneurship. Because of the failure.’

Intuitively embracing the lessons that come out of failure may be Robinson’s biggest key to success. While other business people might have been devastated by the dotcom crash, Richard’s gregarious optimism gives him a rubber coating, an enormous capacity for bounce-back that keeps investors believing in him.

‘I was involved in mobile games for a while, but I turned 47 this month! I’m not that guy any more and I realised I spend a lot more time on LinkedIn than I ever spent gaming. ‘So, I co-founded a company with the co-founder of the “Facebook of China” and we have partnered with the “Twitter of China” to create a “LinkedIn of China”. And so far, it’s proven to show some traction.’

The second-biggest key to Richard’s success may very well be how oblivious he is to the extraordinary life he leads. When we speak, he is sitting under an enormous pressurised dome covering his son’s entire school. ‘The air in here is as clean and pure as in the Swiss Alps.’ He thinks nothing of excusing himself for a moment to speak fluent Mandarin, and barely blinks when off-handedly mentioning that (just like that Australian) he once grabbed a backpack and crossed oceans and continents for almost four years straight.

He does clearly identify one or two unusual but highly effective habits that help him succeed. He avoids all email and phone calls until he has finished one of his three or four daily 90-minute bursts of productivity. ‘Email is someone else’s To-Do List,’ he says.

Working just 90 minutes at a time? ‘It might sound counter-intuitive but it’s the most productive I’ve been in years.’ He is also an avid avoider of tedium. ‘I’ve always tried to fire myself for doing things that I’m not good at, for things that are repetitive. Delegate it or fire myself.’

Given how successful an entrepreneur he is, Richard Robinson may be the last person left in the world who would fire Richard Robinson! ■

WEB  http://about.me/richardrobinson

“Email is someone else’s To-Do List.”
Remember your Graduation Day?

SHARE THE FEELING!

We always hear from prospective MBA students that they would like to connect with alumni to get a sense of our school and our MBA programmes. They want to know the “look and feel” of who we are, and our alumni are the best ambassadors to show them!

PLEASE JOIN US IN SHARING THE RSM SPIRIT BY:

• Joining one of our recruitment events
  Check the full list of events here
  www.rsm.nl/mbaevents

• Being a contact for questions and/or conducting interviews for us
  Sign up: www.rsm.nl/alumniambassador
  E-mail: dchasney@rsm.nl

• Follow MBA Marketing & Admissions

Rotterdam School of Management
Erasmus University
The challenge has haunted boardrooms now for nearly two decades since the idea was first formulated by Clayton Christensen, a professor at Harvard Business School in a *Harvard Business Review* article titled *The Innovator’s Dilemma* in 1995 and then published as a book in 1997.

Christensen’s idea was itself a kind of disruptive innovation. More than any other recent business thinker, Clayton Christensen’s theory gave digital entrepreneurs and anxious corporate executives a way to understand the tremendous changes that were roiling many industries, and explained why an upstart like eBay or Craig’s List or Amazon could eventually displace not just leading firms but entire sectors.

And the idea has not been displaced in the past 19 years. Despite a few critics who have charged him with cherry-picking cases to fit his theory, most theorists of entrepreneurship and innovation management still see disruptive innovation as a powerful economic force.

**Redefining markets**

Jan van den Ende, professor of management of technology and innovation at Rotterdam School of Management, is a strong proponent. One thing he likes about it, he says, is that it explains why otherwise capable companies are often so unable to defend themselves against a disruptor: disruptive innovations conflict with existing development trajectories of products and services, and the company follows traditional metrics so closely, that it doesn’t realise there is a problem until the newcomer is well entrenched and the market redefined.

‘One of my favourite examples is budget airlines,’ Prof. van den Ende says. ‘We all dislike flying with them, because you feel like you deserve better treatment and comfort – you have to conform to their procedures and their websites are sometimes rather customer-unfriendly, so in terms of service the quality is lower.’

Prof. van den Ende says that accustomed to competing on service, the established carriers saw only an airline with lousy service, not realizing that even more than this, customers would value getting from point A to point B for less money and often more quickly, because the new airlines used smaller regional airports that...
were easier to get in and out of and sometimes closer to their final destination.

Even after they realised what was happening, they still couldn’t change. ‘Everything you do, you have to do in a different way with this new airline. You need to create different relationships with airports, because the financial relationship with these local airports is completely different compared to the relationships they had before. Plus, you need different relationships with your pilots, you need different relationships with your customers, you need to change everything,’ he explains.

Underperformance paradox

Why do incumbents tend to ignore the disruptive innovations before it is too late? ‘The most important reason is that disruptive innovations often underperform in the traditional performance attributes,’ Prof. van den Ende says. ‘It sounds paradoxical that underperformance is so important in the definition of disruptive innovation, since it suggests that we would like underperforming products and services. But that’s not true: the point is that for a large number of customers of the existing products, the underperforming product is good enough.

Customers do not always want the best product; they want a product that serves their needs adequately. Christensen claims that incumbent firms often “overshoot” the market. Focused on their most demanding users, they forget that the average user may not have such advanced demands. And, in addition, disruptive innovations may have new features on top of existing ones that may be attractive for certain users.’

Also, since disruptive innovations focus on niche or emerging market segments, incumbents may not consider the disruptors as their competitors. The incumbents may think that the disruptors cannot compete with them because they may begin life as small start-ups. Later, as the competition grows more serious, disruptive innovations conflict with existing products/services, values and processes, which creates resistance to their adoption. The incumbents therefore do not want to cannibalise their successful products/services, or may think that their offerings worked before and will work again. These incumbents could not be more wrong, as history is full examples of toppled companies, services and products.

Warning signs

The symptoms that a company might become a victim of disruption are often not obvious, according to Henk W. Volberda, professor of strategic management & business policy at RSM. Often, business is actually good: companies are often doing quite well at first when faced with disruption. Telecomms company KPN, for example, actually found that its market share increased at first after the introduction of the iPhone. Companies sometimes miss the curve at this point by focusing too heavily on financial measurements.

Look more closely, however, and you may notice that things are not all that they seem, according to Prof. Volberda. Top talent and high-potential employees are leaving. Your turnover is almost entirely from long-established prod-

“Customers do not always want the best product; they want a product that serves their needs adequately.”

Jan van den Ende, professor of management of technology and innovation.
You have to continuously reinvent your business model, otherwise you're gone.” Henk Volberda, professor of strategic management & business policy.

Risk of disruption grows
Unlike many other business gurus of what was then called the New Economy, Christensen’s books remain a touchstone for business today. One reason is that more and more companies today face the threat of disruption, according to Prof. Volberda. ‘You have to continuously re-invent your business model, otherwise you’re gone,’ he says.

New technologies such as the “internet of things”, 3D printing, and big data are spurring reinventions. New business models too, such as Uber, the online ride-sharing service, and Airbnb, the online rental agency, are upending traditional business models in ways that neither traditional taxi services nor hotels nor regulators could contemplate.

Companies often have a hard time defending themselves against such challengers. ‘It breaks with your routines. Everything you do, you have to do in a different way,’ Prof. van den Ende says.

Responses to disruption
On the basis of a recent survey of 590 Dutch firms in his book *Re-inventing business: how firms innovate their business model*, Prof. Volberda found that those companies typically followed one of three strategies if they need to reinvent their business model. ‘The first is just to deny it,’ he says. ‘We call this business model fixation.’ Prof. Volberda points to the case of Kodak as one example of a company that was unable to escape from its film-based business model. Although Kodak invented some digital photography processes, it was unable to capitalise on its insights and move with the times.

Prof. Volberda wonders if Royal Dutch Shell, which continues to focus on oil and gas despite having made some successful solar and wind innovations, is destined to follow in Kodak’s footsteps. ‘Maybe Shell is the next Kodak,’ he speculates. But on the other hand, he observes that Shell has deep pockets and might buy successful companies in renewable energy when fossil energy is really ending.

Other firms, such as McDonald’s and IKEA, have shown themselves adept at translating the same business model in a new context. ‘They replicate their business model every time and every place,’ he says.

Reinvention rules
A third and much smaller group has learned how to continuously reinvent its business model, he says. DSM, for example, a Dutch multinational, has already reinvented itself several times. In the beginning, it chose to specialise in bulk chemicals, then converted to petrochemicals and fine chemicals, and now focuses on life and material sciences and sustainable technologies. This hasn’t just been a matter of serendipity. Instead, Prof. Volberda notes, DSM innovates almost like clockwork, following a rule that 20 per cent of turnover in any given year needs to come from a new business.

The CEO’s length of tenure also seems to have an impact on how well the company is able to adapt to change. CEOs who have been with a company for less than three years or more...
than 13 years, Prof. Volberda found, tend not to pursue business model innovation nearly as often as CEOs who have been there for three to 12 years.

Making such shifts is not easy, as it typically involves allocating resources away from an apparently successful business toward an unproven new venture – and often, one that will even cannibalise a certain amount of the parent company’s business.

Christensen often advises pursuing two business models at the same time, but on a rigidly separate basis, the way Air France and KLM are doing with their joint venture, Transavia. While successful more often than other models, Prof. Volberda notes, a dual focus also has a high potential for failure. ‘Mastering two different business models is quite difficult,’ he says.

Typically, this approach only works for a very large company, Prof. van den Ende observes. More daringly, a firm may bet its future on an entirely new business, as Nintendo did with Wii, its motion-sensing game console.

Another strategy, popular with major pharmaceuticals, is to buy research after it reaches a fairly advanced stage of development. While apparently a lower-risk path, Prof. Volberda worries that companies that follow this model risk becoming unknowledgeable about pharmaceutical trends -- and in the end, irrelevant to the smaller, research-driven firm.

**Culture matters**

Culture also plays an important role in making for smooth transitions between business models. Building a company that defines itself not by a particular product but by its ability to innovate can make for more graceful transitions, according to Prof. van den Ende.

Management must play a key role in making it clear that innovation is a priority, Prof. van den Ende believes. ‘One of the most important factors is management that expresses a clear vision that the company wants to go for innovation. If that’s not clearly communicated, it becomes hard for people to come up with ideas; they may become afraid.’

However, firms must be careful about how the incentives are set up. As Prof. van den Ende explains in a recent paper he’s published, the least successful corporate innovators often don’t get discouraged, despite many failures, but don’t seem to be able to learn how to come up with better ideas either, while the most successful ones often stop after they succeed. So, he says, companies have to stimulate the successful innovators to repeatedly develop new ones, while the less successful should be educated about how to do better.

**Practical insights**

External discussions can also be helpful – whether that means crowdsourcing, customer collaboration, or the kind of external brainstorming workshop that RSM offers in its executive education programmes and in which Prof. van den Ende is actively involved. ‘When people participate in these kind of events, they can come up and develop innovations that they might not have thought about before,’ he points out.

Prof. Volberda is also active in bringing his perspectives to business leaders and recently challenged executives during his seminar Re-inventing Business Models, which was part of the RSM Business Series. Although disruption comes mostly from without, more tools and better theories can help well-established firms to become more sensitive and open to new business models.

---

**Jan van den Ende is professor of management of technology and innovation at RSM, and holds the International Chair of Management, LUISS Universita Guido Carli, Italy. His field of expertise is the development process of new products and services in firms. His current research interests include firm-internal and -external idea management, control of NPD projects, design management and sustainable innovation.**

EMAIL jende@rsm.nl

**Henk Volberda is professor of strategic management and business policy at RSM and scientific director of INSCOPE: Research for Innovation, a research consortium involving Erasmus University, Maastricht University, University of Twente and TNO. His recent book Re-inventing business: how firms innovate their business model is published by Van Gorcum: ISBN 9789023251460.**

EMAIL hvolberda@rsm.nl
Before Marleen Vogelaar co-founded 3D printing company Shapeways in 2007, she was told the prospect was impossible: the technology was simply not available. Seven years later, the company is the leading 3D printing marketplace worldwide and considered one of the most disruptive innovators to come out of the Netherlands.

‘Why did I believe in the potential of 3D printing as a business prospect?’ says Vogelaar, a keynote speaker at a recent conference hosted on disruptive innovation by the Erasmus Centre for Entrepreneurship (ECE). ‘Because I really, firmly believed that there was emotional value for people in being part of the design process. This emotional power of the product was why we moved so fast.’

The concept of “disruptive innovation”, one of the most pervasive buzzwords of 2014, should be especially interesting for entrepreneurs. Many major innovations are emanating from the newcomers in the market, says Professor Justin Jansen, scientific director – along with Professor Roy Thurik – of the ECE. But nurturing them into existence is still a precarious process.

Professor Jansen was ranked among the top 100 most influential thinkers worldwide by TIME magazine this year, and a keynote speaker at the conference hosted in autumn by the ECE – currently leading in Europe for its research into entrepreneurship.

‘Companies that produce these sorts of innovations usually share certain key characteristics,’ he says – among them: early engagement with customers, getting people on board with experience and networks, making the right hiring decisions, and the drive to push past the naysayers.

Listen to your customers
One of the most important things you can do as a small company is involve your potential customers early on in the process, says Prof. Jansen. While it is impossible to accurately predict whether a product will disrupt the market, feedback from potential customers will increase your odds. He says: ‘The key is to apply this feedback to improve your product again and again.’

Vogelaar, co-founder of Shapeways, agrees: ‘Your customers really want to be heard. That input will make you innovate so much faster.’

Connect with investors
Big companies can make it very difficult for newcomers to break into an industry. ‘They operate in ecosystems with their suppliers and customers,’ says Jansen. ‘Their reputation gives them a legitimacy with new products that newcomers just don’t have.’

Start-ups can create legitimacy by getting experienced outsiders involved, such as venture capitalists and angel investors who have the experience and networks to make the product a success. ‘They have played the game before and it’s this kind of energy and funding you need.’
Hire the right people
The key message here is to create diversity within your company. A balance between different areas of expertise and fundamental motivations yields several benefits, including control of your finances. ‘You grow so fast – you need investors or managers with long-term ambition who can keep control of costs,’ says Prof. Jansen. At the same time, you need entrepreneurs who can drive innovation and entrepreneurial behaviour. Diversity of gender helps, too. Simone Brummelhuis, founder of IENS, the Next Women, and keynote speaker at the conference, says: ‘Research shows that more innovation occurs when women are involved.’

Think business models
Business models themselves can also be the breakthrough innovation. ‘If you can build a new business model that will create value for your customers in a novel way, the chance of you having a big impact will be higher,’ he says. ‘Business models are much more difficult for competitors to copy – and one of the big advantages for a start-up.’

Well-known examples include those in the airline business. Established incumbents are still struggling to provide the right response to the low-cost service business models of Ryanair and easyJet.

Don’t listen to naysayers
With breakthrough innovations, you need to really believe in your idea, says Prof. Jansen. World-renowned virologist and influenza expert from Erasmus MC, Ab Osterhaus, told entrepreneurs at the conference how, when he set up his company 30 years ago, ‘everyone told me that infectious diseases were finished with, there was no more money to be made. Then along came the AIDS pandemic.’ Since then his laboratory has risen to the head of its field, one of the 12 laboratories worldwide that combined forces to stop SARS in 2012 – the first pandemic to be stopped in human history.

Keep innovating
And once you’re up and running, don’t stop innovating. ‘The impact of entrepreneurship within companies has doubled in recent years,’ Prof. Jansen says, quoting findings from his recent research. ‘Entrepreneurial behaviour within companies has become the big differentiator between the winners and the losers.’

This is, in part, because it leads to higher productivity. ‘Most companies think of it as costly,’ he says. ‘But investing in innovation helps to improve productivity throughout the organisation, even in the short term.’

Justin Jansen is professor of corporate entrepreneurship and joint scientific director of the Erasmus Centre for Entrepreneurship Research (ECE). EMAIL jjansen@rsm.nl

More information about the Erasmus Centre for Entrepreneurship Research can be found at WEB www.erim.eur.nl/entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurial behaviour within companies has become the big differentiator between the winners and the losers.”
Justin Jansen, professor of corporate entrepreneurship.
INNOVATION THROUGH TRANSFORMATION

Ellen Kuppens, vice president of human resource at multinational life sciences and materials company DSM Netherlands, talks to Russell Gilbert, managing editor of RSM Outlook, about the importance of innovation, the crucial human factors, and how new ways of working will enhance the company’s innovation capabilities.

Story by Russell Gilbert

As a global organisation with 24,500 employees and annual sales of €10 billion, DSM is acutely aware that sustainable business success in highly competitive markets requires great speed, agility and flexibility in innovation. To facilitate this, the company is currently engaged in a major transformation process.

For Ellen Kuppens, central to this transformation are new ways of working and a rethinking of traditional models of employment which, ultimately, will create a more innovation-driven business culture.

Russell Gilbert (RG): Thanks for taking the time to share your thoughts with readers of RSM Outlook magazine. As a first question, how important is innovation to DSM?

Ellen Kuppens (EK): Innovation is the lifeblood of our company. It is through innovation that we stay ahead in extremely competitive markets. At the same time, we want our innovations to have a beneficial impact on society, not just through the products that we make, but also in the way that we make them; for example, by reducing energy consumption and waste by-products. Our approach to business is very much to add value across the three dimensions of people, planet and profit.

RG: Sustainability as a business philosophy is very much a driving force within DSM?

EK: Yes, very much so. Sustainability is at the core of our strategy; it’s in our DNA. Involving stakeholders, including customers and NGOs, is crucial as they bring an outside-in perspective to the innovation process. Partnerships are very productive and bring great value to both parties. Working together means we not only have access to the knowledge within DSM, but we also benefit from the expertise brought in by partner organisations when identifying what developments or improvements are needed. And the cross-fertilisation of ideas in tandem with knowledge exploitation helps us to inject innovations into other areas of our business.

We want everyone – inside and outside of the organisation – to develop an innovative mindset. This is why we’re transforming the DSM culture through a cultural change agenda that will encourage the conditions in which that mindset can flourish.

RG: What conditions are needed to create this culture of innovation?

EK: Diversity is absolutely essential. However, to make the most of the diversity within the organisation there has to be inclusiveness. DSM
has always made products of which it was proud and that add value for our customers and society. This level of innovation requires increased speed and agility today. It’s a challenge that I know a lot of large companies are facing right now.

RG: How are you convincing people to buy in to the transformation?

EK: First you have to be completely clear about the changes you want to make and why they’re needed. You also have to create a common language within the organisation so that everyone clearly understands what is meant when we’re talking about issues like the outside-in perspective or collaboration for speed.

I think we’re very fortunate in that everyone who works for DSM has a clear understanding of our ambition to positively impact future generations through what we do. Our people understand that, like many other companies, DSM faces heavy competition, especially from countries such as China. They understand we need to change the ways in which we work so that we can focus on developing the innovation breakthroughs that will keep us ahead of competitors.

Changing the culture within an organisation is very challenging and requires a step-by-step approach. We measure our progress by various means, including an engagement survey that enables us to see the ground we’re making and what areas need more effort. The purpose is to make the heart of the agenda very real for individuals at a personal level.

RG: People can be notoriously resistant to change. While DSM has a very positive story to tell, has there been resistance to the transformation agenda and if so, how are you overcoming it?

EK: It is true; there is always some resistance to change, so it’s important to keep focusing on the positive aspects. As a good example, at the end…

“…knowledge needs to be accessible immediately, even when it’s not available in-house.”
of every year we have what we call our “glass half full week”, during which we pay extra attention to people’s concerns, address them, and come up with solutions to turn negative feelings into positive ones. It’s an effective way to create positive energy around the change agenda. It’s important that people feel that what we’re proposing benefits both the individual and the company as a whole.

Diversity is an important building block for change. If the members of a diverse team really listen to one another, have clear goals, build on each other’s strengths and make the most of the different perspectives the group has, then you have a great environment for creating ideas and developing innovative solutions.

RG: So the goal is to create a culture within DSM in which idea generation and innovative thinking is the norm?

EK: Absolutely. We have a well-organised framework in place to help us get the best out of people’s ideas. Front-end loading – undertaking feasibility analyses for the conceptual development of projects – really helps. We approach ideas with the questions “what are we starting?” and “what problem will we solve?” To find the answers, we seek as many different perspectives as possible from inside and outside DSM. This really adds value, particularly in understanding, avoiding or finding solutions for the risks a project might encounter.

It’s really important to listen to different opinions, which brings us straight back to diversity and inclusion. Having diversity without a culture of inclusiveness is self-defeating. We have facilitation techniques in place that make sure everyone’s ideas and opinions are heard. And an innovation monitor enables us to track and assess what progress we’re making. Ultimately, we want innovation to be in the genes of all our people, and the only way to do that is to listen, encourage and support.

RG: In some areas, DSM currently has 20 per cent of its people on flexible employment contracts. In a recent newspaper article you stated that this might rise to 40 per cent. Why is that?

EK: A streamlined and more flexible workforce is essential for DSM to maintain its front runner position as a world-class innovator. Historically, innovation teams had the time to develop the knowledge they needed to bring projects to life. Technology has changed the world and speed has become critical. This means that knowledge needs to be accessible immediately, even when it’s not available in-house.

Hiring consultancy firms is one route, but that’s an expensive option. There is an incredible amount of individual knowledge and experience in the minds of our people. We want to tap into this huge resource at the right time. In R&D and innovation functions in particular, it makes good sense to find more flexible ways of working, through temporary contracts or collaborations, for example, so that we have the knowledge we need when we need it. At the same time, our innovation centre partners with universities, entrepreneurial start-ups and NGOs because it’s often much more practical to use and build on the expertise of others than it is to try to develop it yourself.

RG: This approach will become pervasive?

EK: Yes, although it will take time. DSM, and we’re not alone in this, has an ageing workforce. Inherent with it is the traditional “job for life” mindset. This is a challenge because we need to work with that perspective while at the same time adapting the organisation to the new mindset.

The only way we can be a high-performing company is if everyone is a high performer. There are differences between a high-performing 30-year-old and a high-performing 50-year-old. Bridging these differences and getting the best out of both can also be a challenge.
RG: Today’s generation is completely immersed in technology while preceding generations are not. Is this a factor?

EK: Pre-digital generations have adapted to technology as it’s become ubiquitous. Today’s generation looks at and interacts with the world completely differently and quite naturally this requires new ways of working and new ways of innovating.

In our technology-driven world, knowledge is much easier to acquire, but at the same time is much harder to keep. Look at our Dyneema product range, which we market as “the world’s strongest fibre”. In the past we could keep the secret of what makes it so special under wraps for a long period of time. Now though, that knowledge is all too quickly out in the open. That’s why speed and agility in innovation is so important.

RG: To the ageing workforce these changes must seem very dramatic.

EK: To some it might. However, you also see that most fully embrace the digital world. Faced with a shift in traditional employer-employee relationships, we must have an open dialogue with employment unions and stakeholders about the nature of flexible working and how best to make provisions for people in areas such as sickness coverage and pension rights.

Regardless of the changing nature of working relationships, it’s very important to me that DSM is an inspiring place for people to work. In the future, not everyone who works for us will have a DSM name badge and an employee number, but that doesn’t matter. I want people to be involved because they believe in our mission. It’s through belief that people become engaged in what they’re doing. It’s profoundly important to remember that people create innovations; technology by itself doesn’t.

The only security employers can give to people is to invest in them; make sure they have the skills that improve their employability, not just for working at DSM, but with any company. People are not disposable commodities.

To bring this full circle, to inspire people to give their best we must focus on their strengths. In turn this leads to the innovation breakthroughs that add value for our customers and benefits society at large. At the same time, being innovation-driven enables us to deliver value to investors, which is also our responsibility. It’s through this triple bottom-line value cycle of people, planet and profit that sustainability drives the business.

RG: Ellen Kuppens – thank you very much.
Airlines pilots have long been trained on simulators. And now, thanks to abcdeSIM, doctors and nurses can receive similar benefits. Based on the international “abcde” standard used to diagnose and treat critically ill patients in emergency rooms abcdeSIM is a serious game. In a virtual emergency room, a doctor and nurse are presented with a critically ill patient. The mathematical model of the human physiology integrated in the game platform enables abcdeSIM to create different games and levels for different types of patients and learning objectives.

'The idea came from my colleague Dr. Stephanie Klein Nagelvoort-Schuit, head of emergency medicine at Erasmus MC,' abcdeSIM co-founder and RSM alumnus Ronald Nanninga (MSc Business Administration 1992) explains. 'She said, “If pilots use simulators, why can’t doctors?”'

They set up the company together, and over 2,000 medical professionals in more than 20 hospitals – including Erasmus MC – in three countries, now use their serious game.

Ronald says studying at RSM gave him invaluable assistance. ‘Working in small teams was a great learning experience from a group dynamics perspective. Gaining knowledge in different functions helps me as an entrepreneur, and in forming an overview of new markets and business areas.’

And RSM still supports his work. 'Being a coach in the Bachelor programme and the Master in Entrepreneurship, I meet lots of students developing smart business ideas,' he says. 'This is also a learning experience for me, as it’s easier to see flaws in someone else’s plan than your own.'

One challenge was that the customers – hospitals, academic centres and GPs – wouldn’t usually factor “gaming” into their budgets. Thus abcdeSIM had to become the first accredited serious game in the Netherlands. ‘Doctors receive Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits when they successfully finish accredited programmes,’ Ronald says. ‘By getting accreditation we opened new markets.’

And abcdeSIM is going international. ‘We’ve sold licences in Oman and the UK, and have leads in five other countries,’ he says. ‘The Royal College of Physicians in the UK will use abcdeSIM at 60 locations to support classroom training. We also plan to enter the German market in 2015.’

The company is now working on VirtualMedSchool: a range of medical games with wider applications, some based on abcdeSIM and developed in co-creation with other medical centres. ‘One example is a game for treating severe burns, co-created with the Maasstad Ziekenhuis,’ Ronald says. A paediatrics game is also planned, and they are exploring potential applications for an international trauma game. ‘To grow VirtualMedSchool we’re in the process of acquiring our first round of VC funding. Our recent nomination as finalist at the Accenture Innovation Awards will help build our exposure.’

As VirtualMedSchool’s strapline says, it’s the “next level of medical education”.

WEB www.abcdeSIM.nl

Stepping in the right direction
VICO is a leather footwear brand founded in 2012 by RSM alumni Kevin van Wijk (MSc Entrepreneurship, 2008) and Dave Hendriks (MSc Marketing Management, 2010). The two young entrepreneurs take inspiration from their travels around the world – the company name derives from
vicus, the Latin word meaning “in the street” or “in the neighbourhood”. The concept is that every neighbourhood has its own story. ‘When travelling we meet people with different insights and views,’ they say.

Studying at RSM also helped. ‘We were stimulated to work hard and do what we love. Not only in classes, but also in all the other activities, which were very professional, with people coming together from all over the world and creating nice things. And we were inspired by the entrepreneurs who came to share their experiences with us.’

So why shoes? ‘At the time we started VICO, we saw a lot of retro fashions in the market. A lot of brands were just re-releasing old styles. We wanted to create something from scratch, with an anti-retro approach and our own identity.’

That doesn’t mean everything was plain sailing. ‘If it was easy more people would have tried it. You need people around you who you can trust, who have the same vision, and are willing to build something together.’

One challenge was finding the right production partner. They first travelled to Asia and were about to work with a company there, but then decided it didn’t match their philosophy. ‘We solved the problem by heading to Portugal. After a long week and visiting many potential partners, we finally found the right one. This is the factory we still work with, and one of the reasons VICO is stable and successful.’

VICO also likes to use young talent in its marketing campaigns. ‘We recently worked with a very talented musician from London, and next we are working with a surfboard maker from Biarritz,’ says Dave.

‘Our mission is not only to create new things, but also to innovate and inspire people to move forward. Every day we work hard and push ourselves. We want VICO to become a globally known brand, but we are taking our time to build it in the right way, keeping the long-term vision in mind.’

And what advice would they give someone thinking of following the same path? ‘Do your research properly, imagine all the problems you could face, and multiply these by 100. If it’s still worth it, go for it!’

WEB http://vico-movement.com
EMPOWERING WOMEN IN BUSINESS AND ACADEMIA
The picture in academia is just as depressing: only 13 per cent of full professors in the Netherlands are women, putting a country renowned for its progressive attitudes ahead of only three other EU member states – Belgium, Cyprus and Luxemburg – according to She Figures 2012, an ongoing European Commission report. RSM BV does a bit better with a 20 per cent female faculty, according to the FT European Business School Rankings 2013, although it lags behind the top-ranked HEC Paris, IESE and LBS which show a 27, 33 and 23 per cent female faculty, respectively.

Gender imbalances
The introduction of the Erasmus Centre for Women and Organisations (ECWO), under executive director Dianne Bevelander, who was recently appointed professor of management education, is seen as a way for RSM and EUR to begin to address, and redress, both areas of female under-representation. The overall goals and mission of the ECWO, which launched in September 2014, are to:

* Enrich the university and business school experience for all students
* Educate all students on gender diversity/gender bias
* Support women in developing and appreciating their potential as leaders; in particular, to support EUR and RSM alumnae in their advance towards leadership and board positions
* Investigate and support organisations’ efforts to understand the institutional and societal barriers to the progression of women
* Provide a platform where scholars and organisational leaders come together to develop and share experiences within the arena of building gender-balanced and societally beneficial best practice

With support from the RSM Advisory Board and Dean Steef van de Velde, Prof. Bevelander has high ambitions for the centre.

‘What I would like is for this centre to have impact, to actually change people’s lives,’ she says. ‘I want to undertake and support research into sources of gender bias and the approaches for overcoming them. I want to help women achieve their career goals and navigate obstacles, and provide our alumnae with ongoing education and the opportunity to share their experiences,’ she says. ‘At RSM, I would like management and faculty to understand the biases they hold. People are so unaware of gender biases. The ECWO will be raising awareness for all our stakeholders.’

Subliminal messages
The ECWO is a culmination of the work Dianne Bevelander has been doing for years: highlighting the different, often unrecognised, leadership styles of women, and the concomitant “outsider” status that can dent their self-confidence as well as their career potential.

As executive director and associate dean of MBA Programmes for RSM B.V. for more than six years, Prof. Bevelander built the brand of the school’s flagship European programmes. She was instrumental in initiating such programme innovations as Personal Leadership Development

The most significant point remains that women are barely visible amongst top business leaders – more than 96 out of 100 company presidents are men – and there is no sign of progress.”

From the European Commission Progress Report Women in economic decision-making in the EU (2012).
(PLD), an embedded leadership course focused on such “important and under-recognised complex skills” as self-reflection and communication (traditionally ‘feminine’ skills).

Compared to other EU programmes, the percentage of female participants at RSM was relatively high. Yet she noticed the women who took part in MBA programmes, despite their clear intelligence and great GMAT scores and prior successes, seemed somehow less confident than the male MBA candidates. Why?

In part it may be the issue of institutional culture identified by McKinsey & Company’s most recent (2013) Women Matter report, subtitled “Gender diversity in top management: moving corporate culture, moving boundaries”. Women tend to display less confidence (than men) about their chances to succeed here – confidence is defined as a perception of one’s chances of success in the current environment, rather than confidence in one’s own qualifications. Our study shows that corporate culture matters twice as much as individual mindsets with regard to women’s confidence about their potential to succeed,’ says the report.

‘There’s a lot of subliminal messaging going on,’ says Prof. Bevelander. ‘In corporate culture there is a language of gender bias that we are unaware of: it’s called “benevolent sexism”’. An example of this is when a male colleague or supervisor refers to a highly trained, qualified female engineer as “honey” or “meisje”. ‘Everyone acts as if it’s okay,’ she says. ‘It’s not. Deconstruct it. It’s not being friendly. It’s a power thing.’

Making waves

During her own PhD period at Luleå University in Sweden she began to look at social and business networks, and this is reflected in her research publication Ms Trust: Gender, networks and trust: Implications for management and education. She had realised something striking: women network differently to men. ‘I saw how that difference could negatively impact women’s careers,’ she says.

This focus on the way women connect, communicate, collaborate and lead resulted in Prof. Bevelander designing the first women-only elective at a business school: the MBA Kilimanjaro Leadership Project, launched in 2012 and now a hallmark of the MBA/EMBA programmes at RSM. The elective garnered plenty of positive attention, notably getting the RSM MBA into the New York Times in May 2012. ‘The Kilimanjaro project has really had an impact,’ she says, noting that even the push-back from male students around the woman-only elective is positive. ‘The difficult part about gender bias is that people don’t notice it; this project is making waves, drawing attention to the problems, and raising questions.’

Some of those questions can be asked of RSM. For example, the website of ERIM, from which most RSM faculty is drawn, shows only four female full professors. ‘And there isn’t much diversity in the leadership of the school; it’s run by men,’ she says. ‘I’m pushing the dean, Steef van de Velde, to think more about diversity at the top level of RSM.’

The future is feminine

Still, the establishment of the ECWO is encouraging. ‘It shows that RSM is taking
I want to help women achieve their career goals and navigate obstacles, and provide our alumnae with ongoing education and the opportunity to share their experiences.” Dianne Bevelander, professor of management education.
RSM Executive Education currently operates under the marketing tagline of “Business was Usual”, painting a very accurate picture of the ever-evolving business landscape. By the same token, business schools need to equip managers and executives with the skills and knowledge to deal with this shifting business environment. When Theo Backx, former managing director of Sony Europa, was entrusted with management of RSM Executive Education he considered it was high time the department followed suit and evolved, firstly in response to changes in the business world and then in anticipation of change.

The first steps taken were in-house, as he explains: ‘I had been in the corporate world for 34 years and at RSM since 2006. What I inherited was a department that had achieved so much but, by shaking up internal processes, could have an even greater external impact and therefore be of even greater relevance to its clients.’

The challenge for any such centre is to bridge the gap between corporate demand and faculty input. Theo decided to underpin this by the formation of two collaborative but highly different councils – the Advisory Council (a soundboard comprising solely of high-ranking representatives from the business world) and an Academic Council (representing members of all faculty departments). In addition, a complete review of the marketing of programmes was performed, social media activity analysed in greater detail, and closer follow-up of potential clients carried out. In short, the goals were – and still are – to generate more revenue and bring in new clients.

**Strategy for growth**
Both prior to and since the establishment of this shake-up, RSM Executive Education has had plenty of success stories to share: this year marks the 10th anniversary of its partnership with the global automotive supplier Denso; in October 2012 the new Amsterdam office was opened, doubling in size within its first six months of operation at limited additional cost; and over the past 12 months the combined efforts of the Rotterdam and Amsterdam offices have seen a 15 per cent growth in the executive education client base.

These recent achievements, along with the necessary internal changes, are signs of a longer-term vision that will serve to strengthen the RSM brand name alongside its “cousin” Erasmus University, harness core activities in the areas of finance, accountancy, marketing, strategy and leadership, and create stronger relations between faculty and the various Executive Education departments.

Theo wants to see this translate into three main tangible results: ‘From a strictly revenue perspective we want to see RSM Executive Education double its market share in the next three to four years. From the marketing angle, we want to tell a compelling story that will gen-

**“ …within our organisation we must think, act and operate like a business – every single day.”**
Theo Backx, executive director, RSM Executive Education
erate more business and consequently improve our client conversion rate. And within our organisation we must think, act and operate like a business – every single day.’

A new business mind-set
Operations from Amsterdam can be held up as a concrete example of the way in which RSM Executive Education is moving forward, strategically and operationally speaking. The choice of location was a “no-brainer” for a city regarded as the hub of Dutch business to the same extent as London is regarded in the case of the UK. The demands of executives working in the city affects the way the office works – they are looking for shorter, more intensive programmes and Theo reckons this more “Amsterdam” way of doing business will filter over to Rotterdam and eventually be incorporated into the overall way of doing business within RSM Executive Education:

‘What we have developed in Amsterdam is not a training centre but a business office, from where lectures are delivered, from where we respond to specific demands and also go out and seek new clients in a pro-active way. We now enjoy greater control over our business proposals and can look forward to developing an even more business-oriented culture across our two main Dutch bases,’ he says.

The future is bright
Such has been the success of the Amsterdam project that RSM Executive Education is looking to replicate it in Germany, with Dusseldorf clearly in its sights for the location of the next Executive Education office. The arguments for the choice of city are overwhelming, from a geographic and industry perspective. Above all, it is symptomatic of the new way of operating at RSM Executive Education – business is being sought, rather than assuming it will land on the centre’s doorstep. Add to this the continued development of technology-enhanced learning, a reciprocal corporate-academic training scheme and discussions that Theo Backx and his team are currently having with the national and international industries in view of a new, high-level executive programme launch in 2015 – and the future for RSM Executive Education looks very bright indeed.

More information about RSM Executive Education and its programmes can be found at WEB www.rsm.nl/executive-education/
A Christmas dinner in Greece, a spring reunion in South Korea, a leadership weekend in Germany, or networking drinks in the USA? Around the world, alumni organise all kinds of events to get together to build their networks, stay connected, and keep learning while having fun. Check the RSM Alumni Local Chapter calendar for activities near you at [WEB: www.rsm.nl/alumni] or contact Meta Mikec at [MAIL: mmikec@rsm.nl] to organise an event where you are.
21 January
ALUMNI NEW YEAR CELEBRATION
Join RSM and your fellow RSM alumni to celebrate the New Year in Amsterdam on Wednesday, 21 January 2015 from 17:00. For more details, contact Irene Kroon in the Alumni Office.
MAIL ikroon@rsm.nl

February
NEW GENERATION CONSULTING
If you’re already in management consulting as a senior manager or partner, or an independent consultant, then RSM has a new programme to help you to successfully manage the unique challenges of your profession. New Generation Management Consulting is designed to develop the new capabilities, knowledge and attitude you’ll need. Learn how to create value for your clients through innovative thinking during nine evening workshops that run from February until June, plus participate in a personal development project.
WEB www.rsm.nl/ngmc

5 February and 10 September
CAREER BOOSTERS
Meet RSM faculty and staff, and learn how RSM’s Open Programmes can boost careers for you, your colleagues or your team during our two 2015 general information sessions on Thursday, 5 February and Thursday, 10 September, both at 16:30 – 18:00 in Rotterdam. Register now at WEB www.rsm.nl/infosession or explore the RSM Open Programmes at WEB www.rsm.nl/open

Spring
DUTCH MASTER IN BUSINESS
Tell your Dutch-speaking colleagues about RSM’s Dutch-taught executive Parttime Master Bedrijfskunde. Monthly information sessions and regular open days about this 24-month programme will take place this spring. The programme takes just two evenings per week and fits around work and home schedules. For more information and dates, visit WEB www.rsm.nl/parttime-bedrijfskunde

14 March
MBA OPEN DAY
Do you know a colleague or friend who’s thinking about an MBA? Our next MBA Open Day on Saturday, 14 March in Rotterdam is for learning more about RSM and our MBA programmes, meeting RSM staff and discussing the global business landscape as well as talking to other alumni about their personal journeys during and after their MBA. If you had a great MBA experience, don’t keep it to yourself. You can play a part too and share your story!
WEB www.rsm.nl/mbaopenday

Spring/summer
THE POWER OF STORIES
How can you use a story to grab attention, create trust, and guide others’ actions? Find out at the fifth Erasmus Business Series event, a storytelling seminar by Nicolas Constantinesco, an RSM MBA lecturer and specialist in problem solving, who has worked at McKinsey and KPMG. Dates and location are being confirmed as RSM Outlook goes to press, so keep an eye on the Erasmus Business Series website for more details.
WEB www.rsm.nl/ebs

10 April
RSM SUSTAINABILITY FORUM
An exploration of innovating for sustainable business – including disruptive new products, services and processes – is assured at the third annual RSM Sustainability Forum to be held in the Forumzaal of
FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Erasmus University Rotterdam on Friday, 10 April. It’ll include the presentation of the KPMG-RSM Sustainable Master Thesis Award. For more details of speakers and for registration information follow @sustainablersm on Twitter.

12 April
REGISTER FOR THE ROTTERDAM MARATHON
EUR has reserved start numbers for RSM runners in the Rotterdam Marathon, which takes place on Sunday, 12 April, and alumni can register now. Being part of the EUR & RSM team includes information sessions, training sessions and an EUR running shirt for all members. The team will run for the Erasmus Education Fund, which provides scholarships for underprivileged students. For more information, mail marathon@eur.nl

18 and 19 June
FUTURE ENERGY BUSINESS 2015
After three successful annual events, the next Erasmus Energy Forum is already in planning for Thursday, 18 and Friday, 19 June, says the Erasmus Centre for Future Energy Business. The event includes a business day in Rotterdam and a science and academic day on campus. Both days bring together business, industry and academia to explore the future of energy business. Read a report of the 2014 event at www.rsm.nl/ef

2 October
HOT LEADERSHIP TOPICS
After this year’s fascinating exploration of big data at the RSM Leadership Summit, we’re already planning the next opportunity for alumni to interact with more experts over a hot leadership topic. We’ll be bringing you top executives, world-class faculty, the RSM community and business practitioners for another day of high-level networking, a lively conference and the sharing of knowledge at the next RSM Leadership Summit on Friday, 2 October 2015. WEB www.rsm.nl/summit

2 October
RSM’S 45TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
Alumni and the whole RSM community are invited to help RSM celebrate its 45th anniversary on the evening of Friday, 2 October at a Grand Lustrum Reunion. This extra special event will take place straight after the RSM Leadership Summit, and will showcase what’s new at RSM in terms of research, developments and strategy. Keep your eye on WEB www.rsm.nl/alumni for more details, or mail alumni@rsm.nl

17 April
RSM NETWORK GROWS GLOBALLY
RSM’s international alumni network will grow with the graduation of around 60 highly talented MSc International Management/CEMS students on 17 April at the Erasmus Paviljoen on campus. They’ll also automatically start to receive RSM Outlook magazine twice a year. If you know of alumni who aren’t getting their copy, please ask them to update their contact details by visiting WEB www.rsm.nl/alumni and following the link for staying connected.
3 October

**MBA ALUMNI REUNION**

Did you graduate in a year ending in “0” or “5”? If you did, then it’s time for a reunion! Alumni who graduated in 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005 or 2010 from our full-time, part-time, executive MBA (or MBA/MBI), OneMBA, MFM10 or MHR2005 are invited to join the class reunion on Saturday, 3 October and to re-explore Rotterdam as well as reunite with old classmates. Make a weekend of it – it’s the day after the RSM Leadership Summit and Grand Lustrum Reunion.

WEB www.rsm.nl/mbareunion or MAIL alumni@rsm.nl

---

**WHAT IS YOUR I WILL?**

I WILL START SOMETHING THAT MATTERS

I WILL STRIVE FOR DIVERSITY AND CHANGE THE STATUS QUO

I WILL SHARE KNOWLEDGE WITH OTHER PEOPLE

I WILL TRAIN THE MANAGERS OF TOMORROW

I WILL BREAK THE GLASS CEILING

I WILL DRIVE THE WORLD AND PEOPLE FORWARD BY USING MULTIPLE COMPETENCIES

I WILL CHALLENGE THE STATUS QUO TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

I WILL ADD VALUE THROUGH INNOVATIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

I WILL INFLUENCE PEOPLE THROUGH AUTHENTICITY
At any stage of your career, RSM Executive Education can help you understand and master the business challenges you face. Our open programmes provide you with fresh insights and knowledge that can immediately be put into practice. We invite you to take a look at our programmes offered in the first half of 2015. RSM and Erasmus University alumni are offered a 10 per cent discount.

### JANUARY
- **12 Jan**
  - Finance for Senior Managers
- **22 Jan**
  - Finance for Non-Financial Managers

### FEBRUARY
- **03 Feb**
  - Advanced Management and Leadership Programme
- **03 Feb**
  - Performance through Inclusive Leadership
- **10 Feb**
  - Effective Negotiating Skills
- **11 Feb**
  - The Art of Project Management
- **12 Feb**
  - New Generation Management Consulting

### MARCH
- **05 Mar**
  - New Business Development
- **11 Mar**
  - Make Strategy Work
- **16 Mar**
  - Diploma Programme in Sales Leadership
- **17 Mar**
  - Diploma Programme in Business Management and Leadership
- **23 Mar**
  - Women in Business

### APRIL
- **13 Apr**
  - Business Model Innovation
- **13 Apr**
  - The Strategy Consultants’ Approach to Problem Solving
- **16 Apr**
  - Business Valuation
- **28 Apr**
  - Strategic Account Management

### MAY
- **11 May**
  - Future Energy Business
- **11 May**
  - The Art of Project Management
- **28 May**
  - Coaching for Improved Work Performance

### JUNE
- **02 Jun**
  - Effective Negotiating Skills
- **16 Jun**
  - Diploma Programme in Business Management and Leadership

Dates can be subject to change. Please check [www.rsm.nl/open](http://www.rsm.nl/open) for more information.

**Early Bird discount**
Register now for one of our open programmes in 2015 and receive an extra 10 per cent discount. Please mention EARLY BIRD in the comments fields of the online registration form. This promotion is valid until 15 December 2014. For the terms and conditions of this promotion please visit [www.rsm.nl/earlybird](http://www.rsm.nl/earlybird).
KOOPHUIS? HUURHUIS? JOUWHUIS!

ONTDEK ONS AANBOD:

NIEUWBOUW WONINGEN
vanaf € 167.500 v.o.n.

BESTAANDE WONINGEN
vanaf € 50.000 tot € 350.000*

KLUSWONINGEN
vanaf € 104.000 v.o.n.

VRIJ SECTOR HUURWONINGEN
vanaf € 699,50*

WIL JE WETEN WAT HET BESTE BIJ JOU PAST? DOE DAN DE KOPEN OF HUREN TEST OP JOUWHUIS.NU

YOUR HOME

At Woonstad Rotterdam we have the apartment or house tailor made to suit your needs. Included in our portfolio is a large and varied selection of Real Estate and private accommodation to let in the vibrant and modern World port of Rotterdam. Not only do we can offer houses to buy from €50,000 and upwards we can also provide the option of roomy and spacious houses/appartments to rent from 699,50 a month. These are immediately available without the need of a deposit and free of real estate agents charges or fees and no fixed term leasing agreement. Check out our latest offers at jouwhuis.nu

JE VINDT ONS COMPLETE AANBOD OP JOUWHUIS.NU

010-4408800
You can make a difference in today’s new world of business. At any stage of your career, RSM Executive Education can help you understand and master the business challenges you face.

Taught by world-class academics, our broad portfolio of short open programmes provide you with new skills and knowledge that you can put into practice immediately. RSM and Erasmus University alumni are offered a 10% discount.

Choose your open programme.

Early Bird discount
Register now for an open programme in 2015 and receive an extra 10% discount. More information: www.rsm.nl/earlybird.

RSM.NL/OPEN

ROTTERDAM SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT
ERASMUS UNIVERSITY