

On a mission to innovate

Frank Horwitz, by his own acclaim, "plays a mean guitar". And with his laid-back manner, trademark dark shirt – and a passing resemblance to Anglo-Irish singer Chris de Burgh – it is not hard to imagine him fronting the comeback tour of a 1970s rock group. His regeneration this year is arguably more mundane, however. In April, Prof Horwitz, 55, became dean at Cranfield, one of the UK's most established business schools, after 23 years at the University of Cape Town, latterly as dean.

The decision to become dean at a second business school was not automatic, he says. With his term of office at Cape Town coming to an end, he was considering whether to return to teaching and research or try something different. Then came the call from Cranfield. "I was pleasantly surprised to be approached by Cranfield," he says.

Although he left Cape Town before the end of his dean's tenure, he believes that was positive. "I left on a high. It's important to leave an organisation when people want you to stay."

A South African, Prof Horwitz has worked on four continents, either as an academic – he has worked in one capacity or another at the Rotterdam School of Management in the Netherlands, Nanyang Business School in Singapore, the University of Calgary in Canada and Griffith University in Australia – or in management. He has also worked for 10 years in the corporate world in the UK.

This global experience, he believes, is one reason he was offered the job at Cranfield. Another was that he had been instrumental at Cape Town in building a relationship between the business school and the university, links that had been historically fractious. By the time he left there was, at least, a "rapprochement", he says wryly.

Developing the links between the school at Cranfield and other parts of the university was clearly on the mind of the appointments committee.

"Certain business schools are highly autonomous, such as Insead or IMD whereas Cranfield is part of a large university institution," says Prof Horwitz.

Given the profile of the school, there are obvious synergies between the different departments. As a

purely postgraduate university and one where all the departments have a strong link with industry – engineering, aerospace, defence management, design and manufacturing – Prof Horwitz believes that Cranfield belongs to a handful of similar universities worldwide, such as MIT in the US or Nanyang. And it is a university where all the departments need to work together. "There is an overlap of clients which creates opportunities."

Prof Horwitz has spent time in each of the schools at the university and says there is already considerable collaboration – the doctoral students in the engineering school have to take courses in the MBA programme, for example.

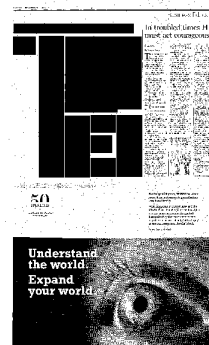
He believes the links with industry need to be strengthened. "Now in times of recession it's even more important we are close to our clients or our partners. We believe our special contribution is to improve and innovate the practice of management."

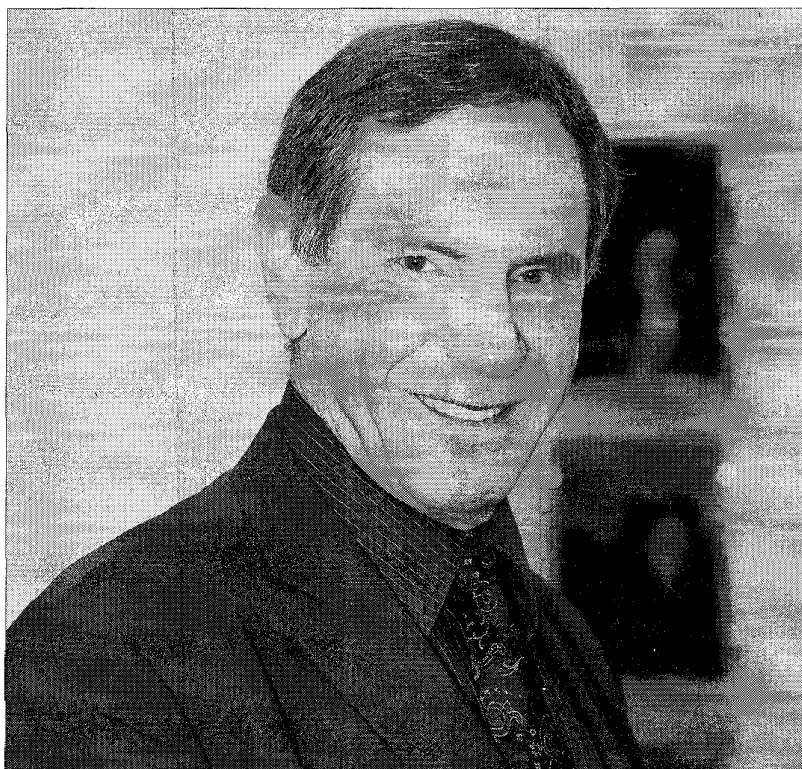
The proximity to industry is also something which attracts faculty, he argues. "When you ask recently appointed academics why they came to Cranfield, this is the answer you get."

Although Prof Horwitz believes the development of the school should be "organic" rather than imposed by the dean, he is developing an advisory board for the school.

"I have felt it important that the school as a whole has a board," says Prof Horwitz. "One of the key questions I have been asking is what should Cranfield be famous for... An advisory board would be expected to have an input to that. I do think it's important that we develop a clear idea of our distinctiveness."

The new dean of Cranfield brings a wealth of global experience to his role, writes **Della Bradshaw** 'One of the key questions I have been asking is what should Cranfield be famous for?'





Frank Horwitz: Cranfield's proximity to industry attracts faculty