



## Lambert Review of Business-University Collaboration

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### ♦ **Contribution Area**

Our contribution to the Lambert Review is concerned with the relationship between UK Private and Public Business Sectors and Universities and Business Schools in the area of management education. The scope of the comments refers to the quality of UK qualification based management education that is available for managers at all levels and functions in organisations and in all sizes of companies.

The UK in spite of high levels of university and business school provision does not produce sufficient high calibre managers in the international setting. This situation is reflected in international league tables and survey work.

### ♦ **IPC Situation Perspective**

Intellectual Partnerships Consulting was established as an independent source of advice and information on best practice in the design and management of the new generation of corporate university business development intervention platforms. Our development took place in parallel with similar developments in the USA where there are now some 3000-plus corporate universities and academies in public and private sector organisations.

We now provide the Corporate University Blueprint model to a range of major companies world-wide and have recently launched the Enterprise Academy model for SMEs and strategic business units (SBUs) based in larger organisations. Our specialist areas are management, intellectual strategy and organisational development, but the corporate university engages with the effective management of corporate learning across all areas of provision.

Generally speaking the reception of our products and services has been very good from overseas countries but the UK is a much less mature market and there are issues of:-  
i) cultural dissonance, ii) curriculum relevance, iii) relationship management and iv) structure, between universities and business that limit progress in the adoption of these and other important lifelong learning management platforms. We comment on the state of these relationship strands below.

### ♦ **What is going on? - Major issues – the base line position**

The following observations on current strength and weaknesses are based on two decades experience providing *bridging* management services between industry, business and universities. For a more comprehensive picture of this relationship landscape please refer to the documents listed in the Appendix 1. which are readily available to the Lambert Review Executives.

### ***Cultural Dissonance***

The term Corporate University is well established in the USA due to the more closely integrated relationships and business being seen as a major source of funding streams.

In the UK business managers are sceptical about using the term University due to its academic overtones and the title Corporate tends to imply centrally dominated. Corporate Academy is, however, the favoured naming in Europe.

An additional problem is that the UK academic community at large does not have an informed view of what a corporate university is and tends to think it business trying to 'steal their clothes'. The latest generation of corporate universities is in fact nothing like a traditional university or business school and is a world of opportunity not threat.

The formal accreditation of business and industry learning presents considerable difficulties for many universities. The QA criteria for assessing learning achieved in organisations - for it to have any strategic value - are quite different to the criteria being applied in formal academic programmes.

With regard to the ownership of learning outcomes there is conflict with regard to the academic penchant for publishing as a career enhancing strand and the need on the part of the corporate organisation to preserve confidentiality on new strategic learning that sustains competitive advantage.

### ***Curriculum Relevance***

There is great weakness in universities to accept innovations in learning paradigms unless they fit conveniently around existing curriculum and committee frameworks. We quote the example of the action research and action learning process developed by Reg Revans more than sixty years ago which is a powerful all-inclusive business-based learning process now used in many countries throughout the world but, traditionally resisted by the academic community in the UK.

The teaching/learning processes being applied in management education in the UK, generally speaking, have not changed in the last 30-40 years. They are almost entirely campus-centred and are disconnected from the development of real-time learning behaviours and dialectic skills that are keys to success in the real world of managers. One encouraging development is that some of the better newer universities, either due to financial pressures or having seen the real potential that a 40 year lifelong curriculum has to offer, are now engaging with these business and organisational learning needs.

The rate of change in the business environment introduces a rapid rate of decline in the shelf-life of current knowledge. This dynamic, combined with higher levels of know-how that is essential to be competitive in the market place, emphasises the fact that the business environment is now dialectically-speaking more challenging than university environments. A concept of 'learning on demand' is an essential development necessary to facilitate new learning at all levels in organisations.

E-technologies have produced more accessible and efficient learning infrastructures and a 'free market in knowledge' which emphasises the need to move on from a knowledge-silo mentality into the more sophisticated mind-set that focuses on the design and management of learning processes.

### ***Relationship Management***

The privy council route to achieving royal charter and university status is a framework based entirely upon maintaining the status quo.

The programme validation services previously administered by the now defunct CNNA seem to be almost entirely focused on supporting the Open University.

In a number of cases universities have appointed industry liaison officers, generally at a low level, whose primary role appears to be finding clients for existing programmes rather than identifying new requirements.

In terms of logistics, the working arrangements of academic communities are not particularly compatible with those of business and industry.

### ***Structure***

The structure of universities is such that good people live in subject area or functional silos that are dominated by highly bureaucratic administrators. Their working arrangements are out of synch with business and their career and reward systems do not motivate academics to become involved in business enterprise developments.

Many business organisations do not realise that they are not structured and do not have the necessary competencies to develop effective strategic alliances and strategically manage external learning provision on a short or long term basis.

There does not appear to be a rigorous funding model to test the value of higher education investments; assessment is based on quality of academic outcomes rather than overall business, social and economic benefit.

All these points are realised in a situation where the standards of performance in UK management have fallen further behind competing nations.

## **Recommendations for improvement**

We recommend that consideration is given to a completely new approach rather than tinkering with present arrangements.

Clearly there is a new educational model emerging which will take up some of the good educational, training and development practices of universities and organisations. However, it will need to innovate new co-creative processes that will sustain relevant quality corporate and organisational learning in a continuously changing business environment. This will involve setting up a new body that is commissioned to award charter status for corporate university and corporate academies who wish to confer their own degrees and foundation degrees as part of their career management activities. We have set-up with a wide range of support the Association of Corporate Universities and Academies (ACUA) as a professional body that could lead this initiative.

In this new proposed context organisations would set up a rigorous validation and assessment processes for programme based learning and real time learning experience accreditation. Each curriculum could be formulated and assessed by business managers and academics jointly. There are a number of QA methodologies that can be applied for this purpose.

Unless such an innovation is envisioned for a co-creative processes in management education and development, UK managers will be seen as second rate and progressive businesses will move to alternative international sources of provision that more effectively and holistically release managerial potential and create a balance of benefits between the sponsoring organisation and the individual.

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TRD/ak 16<sup>th</sup> April 2003

**ARTICLES**

**APPRAISING THE CHARACTER OF THE CORPORATE UNIVERSITY LEARNING CURVE**

1. Frequently asked questions with reference to the corporate university
2. Managing the corporate university learning curve

**EXPLORING INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE CONCEPT OF THE CORPORATE UNIVERSITY**

3. Strategic directions in the management of the corporate university paradigm
4. Establishing a methodology for appraising the strategic potential of the corporate university

**EVALUATIVE RESEARCH INTO CORPORATE UNIVERSITY DEVELOPMENTS**

5. Case research into corporate university developments
6. Case research into the evolution of a corporate university development process

**DETERMINING PROPERTIES, POLICIES AND PURPOSE FOR OPTIMISING THE CORPORATE UNIVERSITY**

7. Configuring the corporate university - managing a portfolio of thinking schools
8. How to configure the corporate university for success
9. Managing intellectual leadership in corporate value

**CORPORATE UNIVERSITY PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

10. Managing the transition to the corporate university - a synthesis of client research
11. Managing the issue of learning relevance in the formulation of corporate learning strategies
12. Managing the corporate university watershed
13. The realtime corporate university becomes a reality
14. Issues relating to learning accreditation in corporate university management