Abstract

Purpose. This paper argues that global management should be considered by practitioners, educators, regulators and society at large as a true professional discipline. While in its current form, it may not meet all the defining criteria of a profession, true professionalism is the best guiding principle as we move forward.

Approach. The paper reviews recent critiques of management education, synthesizes the generally agreed upon criteria of a profession, and applies that framework to the case of management.

Practical Implications. Global management needs to further develop a body of knowledge that is both theoretically grounded and instrumental for practice; it needs to raise the bar in terms of professional qualification through existing accrediting bodies; and it needs to articulate and formally adopt a set of core values and principles of conduct determining how it serves the broader interest of society.

Keywords. Management, global management, professionalism, professional conduct, accreditation, certification

Type of paper. Conceptual paper.
Although not all business is global, a significant and growing share of it is. How can global managers be developed to meet the complexities of global business? The Masters of Business Administration (MBA), offered by hundreds of accredited business schools worldwide, has become a de facto requirement for managerial positions in many corporations and professional service firms. Yet, the long practiced approaches of Business Schools and MBA programs, and the competencies and effectiveness of their graduates, have been sharply criticized in recent years (Mintzber, 2004; Pfeffer and Fong, 2002). Additionally, accounts of executive wrongdoing have frequently faulted MBA training as contributing to these sad incidents. If these institutions and programs have been allegedly inadequate in helping to create effective managers to this point in time, what promise do they offer for preparing managers for the heightened challenges of global business?

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The challenges posed about the value of an MBA, and the competency and character of some who hold the degree, has produced waves of rebuttals (e.g. Connolly, 2003) debates about curriculum reform and admission requirements—and the provocative suggestion that if management were based on a professional model, such as law or medicine, the practice of management and the quality of business education would be much improved (Khurana, Nohria, & Penrice, 2005; Bennis & O'Toole, 2005). In this paper, we first consider whether or not management can rightfully be considered as a “profession”. We believe that management earns mixed reviews, at best, when assessed against accepted professional criteria, but we do strongly support the enhanced professionalization of management as a desirable vision for the teaching and practice of management in the future. We then consider the implications for professionalizing global management as a sub discipline, one of increasing relevance in the 21st century. We draw upon experiences at Thunderbird, the Garvin School of International Management as one example of how global management education can be accomplished, not as a model that is presented as the “one best way” for all to follow. In closing, we describe some of the desired attributes of global management as a profession.

**Management as a Profession**

Management as a profession is quite young compared to traditional professions such as medicine and law. Peter Drucker, in his book “Concept of the Corporation” (1946), is typically credited with introducing management as an explicit role within the company, and even labeling it a “profession”. His central point was not so much that managers are professionals, in the exact same manner as lawyers or physicians, but that management was a role or occupation—or profession—in itself, different from the function-based roles and occupations found in accounting, operations, sales and so on. Management is a social role, not just a technical role. Drucker does add that managers are members of the leadership group, and that establishes them as
professionals, given the added status and responsibilities—one of which is to honor the demands of professional ethics.

Recently, Khurana et. al. (2005) proposed that management could enhance its public legitimacy and trust, so essential for the optimal functioning of economic institutions, if it merited the label of “profession”. To do so, it would have to qualify on four professional criteria: a common body of knowledge resting on a well developed, widely accepted theoretical base; a system for certifying that individuals possess such knowledge before being licensed or otherwise allowed to practice; a commitment to use specialized knowledge for the public good, a renunciation of the goal of personal profit maximization in return for professional autonomy and monopoly power; and a code of ethics, with provisions for monitoring compliance with the code and a system of sanctions for enforcing it. Additionally, Bennis and O'Toole (2005), in their indictment of an alleged dysfunctional overemphasis on scientific research in business schools argue that business schools should emulate professional schools in medicine, dentistry, and law. Khurana et al. find management not fully qualifying as a profession, but conclude:

“Our speculations about a genuine professionalization of management as a remedy for the crisis of legitimacy facing American business may strike some as radical […] we believe that our idea of making management into a bona fide profession has the virtue of asking a group that has seriously abused the public’s trust to make a serious commitment to restoring it.”

However, the prospects for professionalizing management appear bleak when one considers business schools as the key supplier, based on what Trank and Rynes (2003) claim is the ongoing de-professionalizing of business education. According to them, management fails the test when compared against some key criteria for what constitutes a profession: explicit membership rules to exclude the unqualified; a strong ideological and ethical component to guide professional work; and the
abstractness and generalized nature of professional knowledge that can allow professionals to adapt to a range of situations. They argue that business schools have become “enablers of deprofessionalization or, in some cases, “institutional entrepreneurs” who willingly engage in the oversimplification of business knowledge for profit.”

Is the situation as bad as portrayed by these authors? In what follows, we summarize the arguments for whether or not management qualifies as a profession, based on a synthesis of the various criteria listed by Khurana et. al (2005) and Trank and Rynes (2003):

1. A common body of knowledge that is at the same time theoretically grounded and instrumental for practice.

2. A set of rules for entry to the profession in order to be able to practice

3. A shared ideology as to how the profession ought to serve a greater social good (e.g. core values; a code of conduct).

A common body of knowledge that is at the same time theoretically grounded and instrumental for practice

The nature and purpose of knowledge in the context of management as a profession and the business school as its professional training ground is much in-debate (e.g. Bennis & O'Toole, 2005; Mintzberg, 2004; Peffer & Fong, 2002; Trank and Rynes, 2003). Should the professional knowledge base be abstract and general, allowing managers to adapt that knowledge across time, situations, and changes in the underlying research base? Or should it be comprised of applied skills and techniques, responsive to specific business challenges or contexts? Should it be built and
validated through scientific inquiry or through the accumulation and sharing of practitioners’ experiences and heuristics? What qualifications should be possessed by those who train aspiring future members of the profession?

These questions are entangled in the swinging pendulum of whether business schools should be treated as vocational trade schools or academic, scientific-based schools. The seminal report by Gordon and Howell in the late 50s criticized American business schools as overly-vocational and sub par vis a vis the academic rigor and legitimacy of other professional schools. The report ignited a decades-long transformation that drew economists, sociologists and psychologists to build the scientific basis of today’s management education. Now, the debate is whether the pendulum has swung too far to the science-based model—the view of Bennis and O’Toole (2005)—or whether current pressures such as media rankings, financial pressures and the consequent need to treat students as “customers,” is forcing a de-professionalization of business schools and the knowledge they deliver—as claimed by Trank and Rynes (2003).

Bennis and O’Toole (2005) even argue that faculty members should be practicing members of the profession—i.e. managers, themselves—or have at least spent meaningful time inside a “real” business. Research faculty members, they claim, are out of touch with the real problems of the workplace. Previously, Pfeffer and Fong (2002) criticized the insufficient relevance and influence of academic research in management practice. Mintzberg (2004) maintained that the practice of management is too complex to be taught in classrooms far removed from real-world settings. Yet an education system that relied solely or even mainly on practitioners’ wisdom would no doubt help perpetuate management “myths” and best practice tales that pale with time and methodic scrutiny—how job satisfaction is the key driver of employee performance; how the same decision making style is effective in all situations, or how profits may not be relevant in the supposedly new “dot com” economy.
Interestingly, it was the very idea of professionalizing management that motivated the use of science as the foundation for management knowledge and education in the 50s. And critiques of management research’s relevance, though right in many instances, tend to understate the many contributions that have helped shape the thinking of thousands of practicing managers around the world—and that have validated (or not) dominant management practices. Validity generalization studies help explain relationships among important managerial practice variables across situations. Grounded theory-building and testing starts inductively by examining what is happening in practice and yields frameworks to better understand and apply those tools. Action field research; case writing; contingency and configurational approaches to human resource effectiveness attempt to link practices, situational characteristics and strategy to important outcomes—the list is much longer.

Many of these research efforts and results later become the basis for more managerially-oriented articles that bring scientific discoveries back to the hands of the practitioners. If anything, as Ghoshal (2005) has argued, in some instances scholarly thinking could be accused of being too influential—as with agency theory and shareholder value theories, which may be in at least in part guilty of fueling some of the most recent corporate scandals.

Sure enough the amount of codified and validated knowledge underpinning the profession of management pales in comparison to medicine and law, but it should be remembered that management as a profession is 60 to 100 years old, whereas these other professions are centuries old. The scientific research base for management should be developed further, not debunked for its immaturity.

In summary, the future of management practice as a profession will necessarily be built on the application of scientific and technical knowledge to the diagnosis and solution of complex problems—with great potential social impact. But at the same time, effective management education will need (as Bennis and O’Toole argue)
scholars who are engaged in real world problems and are exposed to practicing managers, whether through executive education, applied research or consulting.

*A set of rules for entry to the profession in order to be able to practice*

As far as we know, no country requires a Masters degree or other type of certification as a legal requirement for the practice of management. Yet, the Master of Business Administration (MBA) has become a de facto requirement for management positions in many corporations and professional service firms, and management continues to be one the most popular professional choices among college graduates. According to the Graduate Management Admissions Council (2004), in the United States alone business masters degrees more than doubled the number of law and medical school graduates combined, quite an amazing achievement for a degree that provides at best a voluntary professional certification.
A common critique of MBAs points out that there are great managers who have not spent a day in an MBA program (Mintzberg, 2004). It is true that it is far less likely to find an accomplished doctor, engineer, or lawyer who has not attended professional school than it is to find an accomplished manager who did not get an MBA.

Anecdotal evidence aside though, are managers with a formal business education better off than those without one? Does formal training pay off in the form of professional effectiveness and rewards? Some data indicate that in fact this may be the case. According to Davies and Cline (2005), completion of an MBA in 2002 had an impact of $25,000 in median salary immediately after graduation, a difference that further widened throughout the individual’s career. According to their calculations,
the net present value of an MBA in 2001 (i.e. the discounted value of the additional earnings associated with holding an MBA minus the direct and indirect costs of obtaining the degree) was about $550,000, almost $200,000 more than what it was in 1993. While governments and regulators do not consider the MBA as a requirement for practice, the market does recognize it as a valuable certification for effective practice.

To ensure that the market can assess the common nature and outcomes of an MBA program, a number of organizations have assumed the role of overseeing the content and quality of business programs worldwide. Among them, the Association for the Advancement of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) in the US and the European Foundation of Management Development (EFMD) have become the key international references through their respective accreditation systems, which establish conditions and criteria related to the content of the curriculum, the qualifications of the instructors and the management of the schools’ operations.

Are these criteria up to par with the demands of a truly professional education? According to some authors, we may still be far from achieving that goal. In fact, the new AACSB guidelines can be argued as de-professionalizing business schools and management, given their “mission-based relativity”—as opposed to the older “professional standards” approach—and the allowances for increased use of non academically qualified faculty—who may be both unaware of the underlying common knowledge base and unable to contribute to its more scientific development and validation (Trank & Rynes, 2003).

EFMD’s accreditation system, EQUIS, has always been ambiguous as to the content of a business degree and is even more flexible than AACSB in terms of faculty
profiles and minimum professional standards². While this is seen by some as a desirable recognition of national idiosyncrasies and diversity of schools and approaches, a less optimistic view is that the current criteria fall short of establishing management as a rigorous professional discipline. As market pressures, media rankings and customer (students and recruiters) demands push schools to try non-traditional approaches, accrediting bodies should act as a counterforce to preserve basic professional standards.

In summary, the MBA degree is a valuable portal through which to pass into the profession of management. Yet a lot of work remains to be done to raise its status to a truly professional education, which requires a mix of both public criticism and support by those who regard themselves as members of the profession.

*A shared ideology as to how the profession ought to serve a greater social good (e.g. core values or a code of conduct).*

Professions encourage honoring higher-order values and the renunciation of unabashed self-interest; to serve the public good and not to just pursue self-interested behavior. Other professions have embraced codes of conduct that are a part of the formal education and have adopted mechanisms to ensure compliance (Khurana et. al., 2005). How does management and business education fare against this professional criterion?

A flash-point for this professional feature is the preeminence afforded to the pursuit of profit maximization in management practice and education. Drucker, who has long-stressed management must attend both to profitability and social responsibility,

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² For the sake of full disclosure, at the time of writing this article, the first author was a member of the Board of Directors of AACSB and a member of the accrediting body of EFMD.
addresses the challenge by noting that managers constantly complain about the hostility to profit. They rarely realize their own rhetoric is one of the main reasons for the hostility. For indeed when management talks to the public, there is no possible justification for profit, no explanation for its existence, no function it performs…….But profitability is a crucial need of economy and society.” (pg. 68). In sum, there is a challenge to put profit as a “value” in perspective both for the members of the profession (other values matter), as well as for its stakeholders (the value of profit maximization also matters).

Managers, as professionals, arguably are in a more complicated situation of honoring the “right” values of their profession, given their role in organizations differs considerably from many doctors and lawyers. Professional managers typically work in formal, hierarchical “business” organizations and are a part of those organizations’ very design. Doctors and lawyers, in contrast, may or may not work in such organizations and even when they do they have an identity in part separate from the overall organization itself. In thinking of (business) management as a profession, earlier literature in organizational and occupational theory highlighted the tensions over control issues for professionals working in organizations. Scott (1981) presents Friedson’s (1973) contrast of work governed by an “administrative principle” as opposed to an “occupational principle”. Under the administrative principle, division of labor is determined by hierarchy and the individual employee loses control over task definition and how tasks are to be performed. In contrast, for the most highly developed professional groups, they have gained an organized power to control themselves and the nature of the work they do (Friedson, 1973)

Managers, as professionals, are not among the most highly developed professional groups and thus have not gained the same level of power to control themselves. Professional managers, then, are very much at the intersection of control by occupational principle and administrative principle. This suggests the need all the
more for professional training in transcendental values in business schools and a search for how to enforce professional norms of ethical conduct and social responsibility once employed by an organization.

At least as a starting point, managers as professionals should honor the professional code to “do no harm.” “The first responsibility of a professional was spelled out clearly, twenty five hundred years ago in the Hippocratic Oath of the Greek physician: Primum non nocere----“Above all, not knowingly do harm”. Drucker maintains that this is the basis rule of professional ethics, and that managers violate this every time they know they make a decision that is inappropriate in its impact on the business, but do it anyway to avoid being unpopular in the managerial club; or even when they take excessive compensation they do harm to others economically, socially, and psychologically.

There is the possibility that business education and research actually not only fail to convey the basic “do not do harm” principle, but are harmful to higher order values. A survey by the Aspen Institute (2003) showed how MBA students’ values changed during their program of study. Shareholder value rose in prominence and other more social values diminished in importance. And in his recent article, “Bad Management Theories are Destroying Good Management Practices” Ghoshal (2005) has argued that academic frameworks spread by business schools may be partially responsible for the corporate crises of the turn of the century.

In sum, managers as professionals, and business schools that contribute to their training should be held to the transcendental values-orientation of other professions such as medicine and law. Business schools and management have a long ways to go on this criterion. “Fit” with these values should be considered both in the selection of students and in the content of their education. If the profession could also do more to make these expectations explicit and a point of accountability, post-graduation, that would be a strong step toward professional status.
Global Management as a Profession

Considering the mixed scorecard of management as a profession, what is the status and challenges of the global management subdiscipline? Given the additional complexity of global business, can a body knowledge be developed that provides theoretically-grounded and tested frameworks for effective practice? Will that body be merely an extension and reframing of the existing body of knowledge in management, or are some more unique and discontinuous research streams needed in order to be truly global? Can this global body of knowledge be taught via the MBA or other business school programs as a key credentialing for global managers, or do some of the reservations about MBA programs prove to be even more limiting relative to global management education? And, finally, if shared values and ethical codes prove elusive at the intersection of just professional and organization norms, imagine how much more complicated this becomes when cross-country cultural variance is added to the mix. In what follows, we first provide a glimpse of the “world” of global business and global managers. Then a case example is provided of one school’s ongoing experiment with answering these professionally-relevant questions about global management.

Global Business

According to the World Trade Organization (2004), global trade grew from about 20% of world GDP in 1990, to more than 30% in 2003. With the exception of 2001, international trade systematically outpaced economic growth during that period. In Asia and other transition economies, foreign trade showed double digit growth rates in 2003. The figures are particularly relevant in certain sectors such as manufacturing, which has become a truly global affair. While manufacturing accounts for about 20% of the world GDP, it is the lion’s share (75%) of the world’s total trade of goods and services. In addition to the requirements for the general management
professionals, those engaging in international trade need to master the techniques of foreign trade and finance, they need to be able to reach beyond their comfort zones, understand the needs and preferences of culturally different markets, earn the trust of foreign business partners and negotiate win-win arrangements with them.

Foreign direct investment, the other proxy of economic globalization, has also grown dramatically, from about 4% of total fixed investments in 1990 to about 11% in 2003 (having reached an all-time record of 20% in 2000). In 2003, foreign direct investment mobilized around $600 billion. Investing abroad is a more complicated task than investing locally. Foreign investments require an intimate understanding of different business contexts, an ability to develop and nurture social capital, to interact with suppliers, local authorities and employees, to engage in the new environment as a committed citizen.

Researchers of international human resource management have chronicled the decreasing reliance of multinational corporations on expatriate managers as they expand into new markets. This however does not mean that companies do not need global managers. While companies may rather employ local talent for the advantages of their understanding of the local environment, the managers of a foreign subsidiary—whether local or not—must be able to contribute effectively to the worldwide objectives of their company. They must be effective team players in culturally diverse settings, they must be able to adapt global structures and plans to the local realities, and they must be able to influence the management of the overall group to better serve the needs of local operations. All the evidence indicates that the demand for global managers will only continue to grow in the decades to come.

Global Management

Global management is the art of managing global organizations. Global management is about expanding scale, network or knowledge economies beyond
local markets, about devising business models that exploit economic inefficiencies across national lines. It is about leveraging differences or taking advantage of similarities in markets, human capital, institutional and cultural contexts, and about bridging supply and demand beyond national markets. Through global trade, global managers bring new products and services to the markets that most value them, increasing the returns on their investments by tapping on bigger markets with better and less costly products and services. Through global direct investment, global managers help re-distribute capital resources towards the locations that can use them most profitably. Global managers are in the business of creating supra national economic wealth.

Global management shares the core requirements of the general management discipline but adds its own share of educational and professional challenges along the criteria outlined above: a knowledge base, an agreed upon certification of mastery of that knowledge base and a transcendental value proposition or contract with society. Until now, however, neither of the two international accrediting bodies, AACSB and EFMD specify concrete standards for the practice of global management. AACSB’s only reference to global management is in the requirement to include some exposure to global economic environments in the business curriculum.

Its European counterpart, EFMD, does not specify any disciplinary content for a management (general or international), but it does require a minimum degree of internationalization across the different areas of the school—faculty, students and content. With its emphasis on internationalization, the EQUIS standards are probably the closest we have to a professional definition of global management, although the focus of such standards have to do more with the “how” than with the “what”. So the question remains as to the requirements of global management as a professional sub-discipline.
The case of Thunderbird: An example of work in progress

In the absence of an industry-wide definition of the competence profile of a global manager, Thunderbird offers an interesting case study in exploring the professional demands of the global managers and identifying the key areas for future development. Thunderbird, The Garvin School of International Management, was founded in 1946 as a private, independent, non-for-profit organization—initially known as the American Institute of Foreign Trade—to train experts in international trade. Its main degree, a post graduate program in management, international business and trade was named for decades a Masters in International Management. In 2001 the School adopted the more widely recognized denomination of MBA in International Management while maintaining the spirit of the original MIM (still offered to graduates of other business schools as a post-MBA specialization).

Thunderbird is accredited by the regional bodies as well as by AACSB and EFMD.

Thunderbird’s model is the outcome of a five decade long evolution, shaped by the changing career needs of nearly 40,000 global managers and the expectations of their hundreds of employers around the world. The focus of the discussion will be on the body of knowledge, the context and methods to effectively develop that knowledge and attitudes within students and practicing executives, and the commitment to higher-order social values.

Global Mindset: The foundation for the common body of knowledge

_I am not an Athenian or a Greek, but a citizen of the world. Socrates._

The unique, value-added competence of the professional global manager (as grounded in the other managerial content previously listed) is a “global mindset”. The conceptualization, operationalization, and validation of what is meant by “global
mindset” does not yet rise to a professional standard of well-developed and widely, accepted body of knowledge. There is no consensus on what it is, how it works, and how it varies across cultures. However, here are some indicators for additional theory building and testing.

First, a mindset, in the tradition of cognitive psychology, is a cognitive schema. Every mindset represents a theory of what the world is like; and, as theories do, every mindset exists in the form of a “knowledge structure” consisting of components as well as linkages among components. Global mindset has been defined as one that combines an openness to and awareness of diversity across cultures and markets with a propensity and ability to synthesize across this diversity (Govindarajan & Gupta, 2001). A global mindset is one that can simultaneously differentiate and integrate cultures and markets.

Pucik (2003) has argued that the managerial challenges of globalization can not be met through organizational structure and procedures, but, instead requires changes in managers themselves in terms of the cognitive process through which managers frame business problems. He provides two different and complementary perspectives on global mindset. One is psychological and focuses on how people with global mindsets accept diversity and heterogeneity as a source of opportunity. A global mindset can comprehend cross-county cultural diversity, but also, and more nuanced within-culture diversity. The other is a strategic perspective in which managers have a set of attitudes that predispose them to balance competing business, country, and functional perspectives rather than one at the expense of the other; to balance the simultaneous proverbial demands of global integration and local responsiveness; to create a “matrix in the mind” of the managers, themselves (Pucik, 2003).
The Thunderbird model views “global mindset” as the overarching competency that emerges from the fusion of three knowledge areas: global business, international studies, and cross-cultural proficiency.

**Global Business.** A global manager must first of all understand the different systems, models and techniques of the modern business corporation from an international perspective. Global finance, for instance, expands the basic models and techniques of financial analysis, to include the complexities of country-related risk, currency exchange or capital market differences. So does global marketing, as it ventures in the notions of global brands and cross-national market differences. Or organizational behavior, as it deals with the intricacies of creating a coherent organizational culture across national cultures. The objective is not to create expertise in every possible business environment in the world, but to build an understanding of how specific global dimensions may affect the performance of each of the functional aspects of the organization.

**International studies.** The second component of the model borrows from the academic tradition of international affairs. The objective is to familiarize students with the fundamentals of international political economy and the key dimensions of social, institutional, political and economic variability. Students also explore the systems of international governance, cooperation and conflict resolution. Unlike local or national business, global companies have to deal with an uncertain, ambiguous, often under-regulated environment. Again, the goal here is not just to develop knowledge of specific nations or regions, but to provide individuals with the analytical tools to understand the key parameters of any new environment they need to operate in as well as predict the ways in which their business models may be affected by such differences.

**Cross-cultural proficiency.** As we discussed earlier, management is above all a social profession. As recognized by AACSB, by EQUIS and by all major business schools
in the world, effective managers needs to be able to lead, to sell, to communicate, to negotiate, to motivate, and to resolve conflicts. All those behaviors are a notch more complex when the individuals involved in those relationships do not share common cultural frames of reference. Global managers need to be able to understand how different national cultures establish different sets of assumptions, interpretations of the world and behavioral patterns. Understanding how culture determines customer preferences, employer-employee psychological contracts or client-supplier relationships is a pre-condition for management effectiveness. At Thunderbird we try to develop this competence by creating a culturally diverse environment, engaging participants in explicit cross-cultural training and by requiring proficiency in a second language. Language is seen not as a managerial skill per se, but as a powerful way to develop cross-cultural awareness and a building block for higher levels of cross-cultural proficiency.

Our vision is therefore coherent with Drucker’s suggestion that management education will benefit by incorporating the “humanities” in the curriculum. As Drucker (2001) has described:

“Management is thus what tradition used to call a liberal art—“liberal” because it deals with the fundamentals of knowledge, self-knowledge, wisdom, and leadership; “art” because it is also concerned with practice and application. Managers draw on all the knowledge and insights of the humanities and the social sciences—on psychology and philosophy, on economics and history, on ethics—as well as on the physical sciences. But they have to focus this knowledge on effectiveness and results…..” (page 13)

In order to be consistent with the requirements of true professional education as outlined above (scientific rigor, practical relevance), we have engaged in a school-wide research agenda to uncover the scientific foundations of what constitutes a “global mindset”. A new center has been created with the specific purpose of
articulating the current state of affairs in the area of global leadership (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman & Gupta, 2004), advancing our current knowledge base through new research, and translating the results into tangible curricular innovations and educational tools.

Global business education as professional preparation: Diverse methods

In developing the skills required for the practice of global management, the context of learning may be as important as the content of learning. Mintzberg’s arguments about the need to integrate learning and practice are as valid, if not more, when it comes to global management education. But global management adds its own complexities and requirements to the learning process in terms of the content and context of learning as well as the exposure to global management experience.

It will be interesting to see how the management education industry responds to these requirements, especially when it comes to creating the right global context as well as adequate opportunities for real global management experience. Some schools (INSEAD, IMD or our own) have been very effective at bringing world-wide diversity to one location, thus reproducing a culturally rich context within a campus experience. Other schools have supplemented a relatively homogeneous learning population with exchange programs that allow participants to be exposed to a different culture during a portion of their program. Some of these exchange partnerships may be evolving into hubs or alliances of mutual recognition of students and courses. An alternative arrangement is the consortium program, where two or more partners recruit participants from different regions and expose them to

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3 Garvin Center for the Cultures and Languages of International Management. Director: Prof. Mansour Javidan. http://www.thunderbird.edu/faculty_research/research_centers/garvin_center/
a pre-defined sequence of modules in different locations (One MBA or Trium are good examples).

An interesting arrangement which we believe may offer some unique advantages is the idea of a learning network. INSEAD for example has built a self-contained, fully-equipped operation in Singapore, offering participants the possibility to switch quite seamlessly between their two locations in Europe and Asia. Our own model at Thunderbird is based on the idea of a distributed learning network built around learning centers scattered around the world. These learning centers or “nodes” vary in size and may not be replicas of the head campus. Each of them is built to offer a platform to facilitate the learning experience for participants in other nodes, to help tap onto specific regional expertise, and capture participants from those contexts to enrich the rest of the network. Together they offer a distributed platform for global context and global experience.

As far as global experience again we see already the emergence of different solutions. Many global management programs are designed for practicing managers. While many of these programs were initially devised to simply match the special demands of part-time students, they now offer a better ground to integrate learning and practice. Some programs include projects that involve business plans or management improvements in participant’s organizations, and several require a significant involvement of the organization throughout the curriculum. International internships and consulting projects offer interesting means to bridge theory and practice, but their management is far from obvious.

Most importantly, the delivery of global management education requires that faculty themselves be exposed to business contexts of an international nature. Case writing, consulting activities and the monitoring of student projects can be a powerful avenue to engage faculty in real management situation. Executive education projects with global corporations constitute too a powerful mechanism to connect faculty with
concrete management issues. Whatever the mechanism, effective professional schools will need to offer a good environment for clinical practice to ensure the reality and relevance test of the ideas and frameworks delivered in the classroom.

In sum, delivery of global management education via MBA programs and others must address the unique challenge of multiplying contexts (organization-by-country, for example) and the importance of soft skills acquisition (as enablers of technical skills) to be effective in those contexts. This requires even more experiential and on-site learning to be relevant than may be true of management programs, in general. At the same time, any alleged global lessons learned from this method should also be subjected to as much ongoing scientific scrutiny before this “body of knowledge” is presented as “best practice” to others.

Global Prosperity: The values of the global management profession


The globalization of the world economy is more than an empirical fact. It can be a powerful and positive force bringing about prosperity and opportunities to individuals and societies around the world. In China for example, foreign trade grew from less than 20% of GDP in 1990 to over 40% in 2003. At the same time, the share of the population living on $2 or less a day decreased from 70 to 47% in East Asia (UN Millenium Project, 2005). Researchers still debate about the nature and directionality of the relationship between degree of participation in the global economy and the rate of economic and social development, about the conditions under which the former can help increase the latter. In any case, the persistent correlations between the two are so pervasive that it makes it very hard not to see a connection between them (Bhagwati, 2004).
Engaging in the global economy is far from a clean and automatic recipe for success (Stiglitz, 2003). On the contrary, it is a complex, ambiguous and risky process, which often creates significant challenges to the nations that host the businesses, to the individuals and societies in those nations and also to the corporations that lead the way. Global managers face regulatory, social, political, and ethical dilemmas that traditional, local managers seldom have to deal with. And their education must therefore contribute to establishing a set of core values and higher level goals that guide practitioners in dealing with those dilemmas.

At Thunderbird, international business and hence, the practice of international management, is seen as instrumental in bringing about economic progress, building bridges across nations and cultures and helping secure peace and prosperity around the globe. Financial profitability and share holder value are fundamental requirements for business survival, growth and effectiveness, not the ultimate goals that justify the corporation as a social, economic and legal institution. Core, as well as elective, courses in international development and regional business environments underline that role of business as a factor in the overall quality of life worldwide. Student clubs, case competitions, speaker series and student projects also emphasize the role of businesses in society.

For the first time this year, the student-led Honors Council initiated a project to elaborate a professional code of conduct applicable to the practice of global management. A first draft was produced as a collaborative effort of students, faculty and alumni, in an attempt to identify the basic tenets of professional conduct that could be applicable independently of any specific location. The code drew from universal declarations such as the United Nations Global Compact but focused on the roles and responsibilities of the individual manager as a professional rather than the corporation as an institution. Our goal is to incorporate the code within the curriculum and eventually incorporate it as a formal component of our
commencement ceremony, to signify the importance of the Masters degree as a professional certification with its associated set of core values and principles of conduct.

Conclusions

Whether or not management qualifies as a true profession today—and the evidence seems to give it at best mixed marks—it is important that all key actors—schools, practitioners, professional associations—assume true professionalism as a guiding principle for the future. We agree with the conclusion of Khurna et. al.(2005) when they argue that management needs to assume all the constraints and responsibilities of a profession and not just the appearances and privileges. The same arguments apply to the “global management” subdiscipline, only exacerbated by the added complexities of professional practice in the international arena. The challenges ahead need to consider the ongoing construction of a solid body of knowledge, the revision of MBA degree requirements and the establishment of a set of core transcendental values that should guide professional practice.

As a true professional discipline, global management cannot settle for any less than a body of knowledge—frameworks, theories and techniques—that pass the test of scientific scrutiny and validation. We are concerned about unfair generalizations that question the relevance of science as a method of discovery and knowledge construction in management. We in fact see no substitute for it. And while the challenges for conducting high quality international research seem daunting, we have seen recent examples of how it can be done (e.g. the GLOBE project, see House, at al., 2004). Both academic institutions and practicing executives must share a commitment to building a global management knowledge base—via collaborative research, participation in industry dialogs, etc.—that will not only improve the quality of management practice put will also earn management its professional status.
As the main professional certification available, we agree that the Masters of Business Administration must be subject to careful analysis and constructive criticism, especially as it refers to the needs of global management. But we cannot accept the fatal flaws that some recent commentators seem to ascribe to current programs. Corporations have voted with their recruitment and salary practices and students with their application forms, and the verdict seems a lot more positive than what some insiders think of themselves. Business school faculty and administrators should continue to pursue innovations, to build stronger bridges between faculty and the practicing manager, to better incorporate integrative, multidisciplinary and experiential learning to the curriculum, and to facilitate the exposure of students to global learning environments. But we should not minimize the achievements of business schools in the last decades, in terms of instructional quality and pedagogical sophistication. Accrediting bodies should not let the pendulum swing back and undo those achievements. If anything they should contribute to pushing the bar even higher in terms of professional standards.

Finally, management should make explicit claims about its core, higher order values and its contributions to societal progress and wellbeing. Management as a profession, and business schools as a key supplier and actor, need to earn the trust and respect from society for their contributions. At the very least we need to assume our share of responsibility in the recent wave of corporate scandals and integrate a minimum principle of “do no harm” in everything we teach, from marketing to finance to human resources. Eventually though, we collectively should aspire to articulate a set of core values and professional conduct norms that would guide professional practice around the world. The United Nations has taken the leadership in extracting a set of universal principles of corporate conduct in the areas of human and labor rights, environmental protection and bribery/corruption. The so called UN Global Compact is far from exhaustive, and is targeted to corporations rather than to the management professional, but it has proven that it is possible to escape
the helplessness of moral relativism and agree on basic principles of universal applicability. We see it as a very promising sign that the EFMD has recently partnered with the UN with the goal of shaping the education of future managers who assume their global responsibilities.

The professionalization of management education in general and global management education in particular is a worthwhile agenda which should mobilize the energy, thinking and debate of our industry. It has proven a very useful framework at Thunderbird as we try to improve our effectiveness in educating global leaders. And we believe that it could constitute our shared agenda as educators and practitioners of one of the most important professions of the 21st century.

**Bibliography**


