

DEVELOPING RESPONSIBLE LEADERS

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This paper draws from an extensive research study undertaken with the support of the European Academy of Business in Society (EABIS), as part of its Research, Education and Training Partnership Programme on Corporate Responsibility. This Programme has been made possible due to the financial support of EABIS' founding corporate partners, IBM, Johnson & Johnson, Microsoft, Shell and Unilever.

Developing Responsible Leaders

Abstract

The focus of this paper is to explore how an organisation can enhance the understanding and practice of responsible leadership by developing managers that have the competencies for integrating social and environmental considerations into business decision making processes. Members of the European Academy of Business in Society (EABIS) identified leadership and learning to be two of the seven major themes of the changing role of business and society. This paper draws on a research study undertaken by Ashridge with the support of EABIS.

Based on a questionnaire of managers operating in the public and private sectors in Europe (n=108), and in-depth interviews with eleven leading European-based multinational companies, the realisation emerges that building responsible business practice into the mainstream of management development is going to be a long-term task that will require a process of cultural change.

In order to define and describe the type of behaviours required for corporate responsibility it is necessary to consider leadership qualities, management skills and reflexive abilities.

Leadership qualities are the domain of personal attitudes and beliefs. Management skills are those areas that are taught and developed in the workplace such as stakeholder dialogue and building partnerships. Reflexive abilities can be described as the key competencies required to integrate social and environmental considerations into core business decision making.

They include systemic thinking; embracing diversity and managing risk; balancing global and local perspectives; and developing a new language for meaningful dialogue.

The kind of attributes that practicing managers consider necessary for responsible leadership include not being complacent and assuming things cannot be improved; not letting unethical behaviour go unchallenged; and questioning business as usual by being open to new ideas, challenging other to adopt new ways of thinking.

The paper describes the nature of these reflexive abilities and explores the implications for those responsible for designing and delivering management education programmes.

1. Introduction

Talk to any senior manager in a large company today and they will tell you that the biggest challenge they face is managing complexity. In a traditional hierarchical organisation the role of leading people was relatively straightforward. Influence and authority came with position and status; the boundaries of decision-making were prescribed by functional silos; and the business itself operated in a relatively stable and orderly system.

Today, the picture is entirely different. Companies recognise they are actors in large, complex systems and need to interact in a web of relations with different stakeholder groups. Realising corporate success requires a delicate balance of dialogue and action with groups and individuals inside and outside the organisation. Leadership is now about balancing competing demands and engaging people in collective goals.

Businesses of all sizes, in all sectors and across many different countries are facing increasing pressures to make a positive contribution to society beyond the traditional economic benefits that derive from corporate activities. Developing appropriate management behaviours to operate effectively in this new environment is at the heart of debates about the nature and character of corporate responsibility. However, where organisations struggle is in translating the principles of corporate responsibility into practice. A research study undertaken by the Ashridge Centre for Business and Society (ACBAS) and the European Academy of Business in Society (EABIS) set out to provide clarity in this nebulous area, and resulted in articulating a set of 'reflexive abilities' required for responsible leadership (Wilson et al 2006).

Wilson & Holton (2003) identified the core characteristics that describe the way in which all managers need to act if they are to integrate responsible business decision-making into day-to-day operations. These core characteristics can be described in terms of a mixture of skills, attitudes and knowledge sets, and centre on the following themes:

1. **Questioning business as usual** by being open to new ideas and challenging others to adopt new ways of working
2. **Understanding the role of each player in society** (government, business, social partners, non-governmental organisations and civil society) and how they interact with each other
3. **Building internal and external partnerships** by taking a multi-disciplinary approach and creating strategic networks and alliances
4. **Identifying stakeholders**, building relations with internal and external stakeholders, **engaging in dialogue** and balancing competing demands
5. Understanding difference, **respecting diversity** and adjusting one's approach to different situations
6. **Taking a strategic view** of the business environment.

These six core characteristics were taken as the starting point for the current research which set out to identify the management competencies necessary for integrating corporate responsibility into mainstream business practice.

Competences are used by most world class organisations to help define and drive high performance (Bolden et al 2003) and are expressed in terms of the skills and abilities we practice as managers in our everyday actions, our knowledge, experience and understanding that informs the decisions we make, and the personal qualities, values and attitudes we espouse. (For guidance on the development and value of competences see, for example, Boyatzis (1982) and Lyle & Spencer (1993)). These three components could easily be described as understanding how a manager acts (skills), what he or she needs to know (knowledge) and what they must be (attitudes) in order to implement corporate responsibility into their business decision-making. The three complement each other and it is the combination of each which gives rise to key behaviours demonstrated by people.

The focus of the research study was to understand what are the competencies required by managers in today's organisations that will allow and enable a decision-making process that takes into account a wide range of criteria relating to the economic, environmental and social implications of business operations.

2. Methodology

The programme of research involved two distinct but related strands of inquiry. The first comprised a large scale questionnaire distributed to managers operating in public and private sector organisations across Europe. This questionnaire focuses on an examination of the attitudes and beliefs that drive responsible management practice. In total 108 senior managers responded to the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was distributed by email to a sample of managers drawn from contacts within the EABIS network and was posted on the EABIS and Ashridge web sites. The overall responses totalled 108. Because of the way in which the electronic questionnaire was distributed, it is not possible to assess the effective response rate – however it is less than 5% of those who were directly emailed the questionnaire. The characteristics of the respondents are shown below.

TABLE 1 – Characteristics of Respondents

Gender	Male		Female
	71%		29%
Age	30 or under	31- 40	41 and over
	14%	51%	35%
Managerial level	CEO / Director	Senior Manager	Middle/Junior Manager
	52%	33%	15%
Country of work	UK	Rest of Europe	Rest of World
	74%	25%	1%
Main activity of organisation	Financial and Other Services	Government and Public Services	Manufacturing Production Wholesale & Retail
	50%	19%	31%
Number of employees in company	Less than 500	500 - 10,000	Over 10,000
	37%	32%	31%

The second, qualitative approach comprised a series of in-depth interviews with senior managers in leading European-based multinational companies. For each interview the research team attempted to bring together senior representatives from functions including corporate social responsibility, human resources and operations. The interviews focussed on how to develop managers with the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to operate effectively in today’s complex business environment.

In total these in-depth interviews involved twenty four senior managers in eleven leading multi-national corporations which comprised: BP, Cargill, Dexia, ENI, IBM, Johnson & Johnson, Microsoft, Shell, Solvay, Suez and Unilever.

The interviews were not intended nor designed to be a one-way process of inquiry. Rather they took the form of an open discussion on the issues through a process of action research – an approach developed in the late 1940s as a way to deliver both practical results and help formulate theoretical concepts. Action research (AR) is widely recognised as an important tool for work in organisational development and as a research method for developing new social theory.

Essentially, AR is a diagnostic intervention that allows for the co-creation of a research agenda by both the researcher and the practitioner. As such, it is a research method that supports the concept of tacit knowledge, challenging the idea that any process of research or scientific inquiry is necessarily conducted by an objective observer. Rather, it has the advantage of legitimising the use of the researcher's tacit knowledge to inform the process of inquiry – a concept often referred to as 'engaged practice'.

The semi-structured interviews made use of a discussion guide to organise the data collection process and ensure a degree of consistency across different organisations participating in the research. This approach is widely recognised as being reasonably objective while still allowing an extensive exploration of the interviewees' opinions and experiences.

The very nature of the proposed research inquiry – to develop an understanding of the management competencies required for corporate responsibility – called for a research methodology that encourages and supports the creation of new knowledge, rather than the exploration of existing paradigms. For this reason, the research team used a grounded theory¹ approach to understand the complex issues raised through the interview process involving the generation of findings and theory from data.

In trying to explore the competencies that support corporate responsibility, there were two underlying themes that informed our process of inquiry. The first of these related to the relationship between individual managerial discretion and organisational influence. There are a wide range of contextual or organisational factors that either encourage or discourage individual management actions and behaviours that are congruent with corporate responsibility. Such factors as the prevailing economic conditions, the stage of business development (start-up or mature) or the complexity of business relations might all have an impact on how managers address the broader social and environmental implications of business decisions.

In addition, organisational culture, the strategy and vision of the company and its business goals will all affect an organisation's willingness to embrace broader social and environmental responsibilities. So will such factors as the degree of transparency within a company, its corporate climate, performance and reward systems, peer behaviour and so on.

¹ An excellent summary of this research methodology can be found at:
<http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/arp/grounded.html>

However, while these contextual and organisational issues are of great importance, the deliberate focus of this study is on the area of individual managerial discretion and how this discretion is used. In particular, we wanted to find out more about the internal locus of control exercised by managers and how they might learn and develop the competencies related to responsible decision-making behaviour.

Following the analysis of Schneider et al (2005) we saw previous debates focussing too much on the organisational level of analysis rather than the individual's role. As such, the aim is to move beyond an examination of management culture and organisational capabilities and concentrate on how leaders and managers operationalise responsible business practice into day-to-day decision making.

3. Defining Responsible Leadership

The starting point for analysing the data generated by the survey is to examine whether there is consensus on the nature of leadership qualities that are likely to support corporate responsible behaviour within organisations. The survey invited respondents to assess the importance of 30 key attributes or characteristics of responsible leadership identified through a review of the literature in the area (see for example Maclagan (1990), Trevino et al (2003) and Kirkbride (2004)).

Respondents were presented with a total of 30 attributes which were ordered into seven categories as follows:

- Acting with integrity
- Caring for people
- Demonstrating ethical behaviour
- Communicating with others
- Taking a long-term perspective
- Being open minded
- Managing responsibly outside the organisation

Respondents were asked to rate each these different attributes on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 is very important and 5 is of little or no importance). The results of this analysis are reported in Table 2 below. Acting with integrity is clearly seen as the most important, with caring for people and demonstrating ethical behaviour also scoring highly.

TABLE 2 – Attributes of Responsible Leadership

ATTRIBUTE	Ranked # 1 (%)	Ranked # 1,2, or 3 (%)
• Acting with integrity	49	74
• Caring for people	26	69
• Demonstrating ethical behaviour	26	53
• Communicating with others	16	42
• Taking a long-term perspective	18	41
• Being open minded	9	28
• Managing responsibly outside the organisation	4	17

However, this broad brush ranking does disguise some important differences across the 30 detailed characteristics identified in the survey. The following attributes were ranked as the ‘top ten’ from the complete list of 30 identified and were considered to be “very important” by well over half the respondents:

- Respect for employees at all levels (rated as very important by 77%)
- Honest and trustworthy (76%)
- Will not be complacent and assume things can’t be improved (72%)
- Commitment to the growth and development of employees (66%)
- Won’t let unethical behaviour go unchallenged (63%)
- Being honest and open with staff in the organisation (61%)
- Questioning business as usual by being open to new ideas, challenging others to adopt new ways of thinking (60%)
- Respect for diversity and equal opportunities for all (58%)
- Taking a strategic view of the business environment (57%)
- Ethical behaviour embedded in personal actions and day-to-day behaviour (57%).

Some statistically significant differences did emerge across respondents from different age groups (see Table 3). Among those aged 30 or less, proportionately fewer respondents consider each of the attributes to be “very important”. Also among this sample of managers, younger people rate attributes like honesty and trustworthiness as less important than their older peers.

TABLE 3 – Attitudes to Responsible Leadership by Age

ATTRIBUTE	Age Groups			Total Sample
	30 or under	31- 40	41 and over	
Won't let unethical behaviour go unchallenged	47%	72%	53%	63%
Honest and trustworthy	53%	78%	82%	76%
A belief that bottom line success can be achieved in an ethical way	26%	43%	32%	37%
Willing to take the organisation beyond minimum legal standards	20%	28%	35%	29%
Willing to be a public role model for ethical behaviour	13%	28%	32%	27%
Being honest and open with staff in the organisation	40%	61%	68%	60%
Total Sample	16	55	37	108

Although the impact of age on attitudes towards responsible leadership was not a central focus of this study, the data in Table 3 supports concerns in the literature regarding the ethical approach of younger managers. For example, Glover et al (1997) found that the amount of work experience an individual had correlated with levels of ethical behaviour, such that the more experienced an individual is, the more ethical their behaviour is likely to be. Ford and Richardson (1994) found that seniority within the company hierarchy seems to lower the levels of ethical decision making, such that the more senior within the organisation a person becomes, the less ethical their decisions become. Taking these two findings in parallel suggests that some talent management ideas might actually lead to the development of less ethical leaders in the future. If an organisation has an accelerated talent management system which results in people being fast-tracked through the ranks of promotions, they could actually be raising their seniority levels while reducing the amount of experience they have at each level, and thus contributing to a downward trend in ethical considerations and decision making on both fronts.

The findings from our sample of managers tend to confirm this view and raise important questions about some of the inherent dangers in fast-tracking younger, high potential managers to positions of seniority. Unless specific action is taken to address the issue, such ‘high fliers’ might miss out on the direct experience of management that seems to instil a greater respect for the importance of certain qualities of responsible leadership in business.

Before leaving this issue of defining responsible leadership, it is worth noting that respondents were invited to put forward their own definitions of the concept. In total, some 68 respondents added to the list of attributes. An analysis of this data shows that many responses reframed the concepts identified in the questionnaire but described them in slightly different terms. Some of the new issues or attributes that did emerge from the data related to:

- The importance of financial and commercial success to responsible business practice
- The need for a specific focus on the environmental impacts and performance of organisations
- A greater commitment to work-life balance and recognising an organisation’s responsibilities to the families of employees (not just the employees).

While these additional observations are relevant and interesting, they appear to apply more to organisational behaviour rather than the attributes of individual managers and hence were not pursued further in this study.

4. Competency Frameworks

During the interview process, interviewees were invited to consider a number of ‘critical incidents’ in their own organisation’s recent past. These incidents might be examples of business decisions that successfully took account of the wider social or environmental responsibilities of the organisation, or recent incidents where the company had failed to take into account broader issues of corporate responsibility. In either case, the aim was to identify those competencies that were influential (either through their presence or absence) in the decision making process.

From an analysis of this data it is possible to draw up a generic list of competencies represent the sample view as to what constitutes responsible business behaviour. These are shown in Table 4 below.

TABLE 4 – Generic Competencies that Constitute Responsible Business Behaviour

<p>KNOWLEDGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understanding the competing demands of different stakeholder groups• Understanding how the core business activities create opportunities for other actors in society and how the company can make a contribution to society• Understanding the social and environmental risks and opportunities of the company and its industry sector• Understanding the institutional debate on the role and legitimacy of the firm <p>SKILLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Well founded and balanced judgement• Critical thinking• Team player• Creativity, innovation and original thinking• Communicating with credibility• Business acumen• Listening skills• Managing stakeholder network relationships• Emotional intelligence <p>ATTITUDES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Honesty and integrity• Long-term perspective• Open mindedness• Appreciating and embracing diversity• Conviction and courage• The drive to contest resistance• The capacity to think outside the box
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If 'emotional intelligence' is taken to include 'care for people' the list presented in Table 4 includes all seven categories covered by the questionnaire, increasing the validity of these categories as core to socially responsible behaviour within a corporate environment.

While Table 4 outlines areas of knowledge or understanding, it is what is done with this knowledge that is important. Hence knowledge is not necessarily the best indicator of responsible behaviour. The leadership qualities that stem from the application of this knowledge could be more appropriate for the purposes of competence frameworks in this area. The same can be said about attitudes. An individual may hold a certain attitude but if they don't act in accordance with that attitude then it holds no value in their behaviour. Hence it is how the individual behaves in accordance with their attitude that is relevant – something that can be termed 'reflexive ability'. These are the key to integrating social and environmental considerations into core business decision making as they are behaviour resulting from the combination of the individual's skills, knowledge and attitudes. Hence we move from knowledge, skills and attitudes, to leadership qualities, management skills and reflexive abilities.

Leadership qualities fall within the domain of personal attitudes and beliefs. These are values-driven and almost by definition relate to the moral aspects of decision making – distinguishing between right and wrong, good and bad. As such, they comprise those characteristics of the individual such as honesty and integrity. They are the deep seated personal qualities that change and develop only slowly over time.

Management skills can be seen as the antithesis of leadership qualities – they are amoral, normative and entirely instrumental. They describe those aspects of management practice that are the tangible manifestation of socially and environmentally responsible business behaviour. They include expertise in areas such as stakeholder dialogue and building partnerships. Unlike leadership qualities, these management skills are amenable to being taught and developed over the short term.

The reflexive abilities identified through this research are the synthesis of leadership qualities and management skills. They are analogous to the core characteristics identified in the survey and interviews. Reflexive abilities are a mixture of skills, attitudes and knowledge sets and should be considered as the key competencies required in order to integrate social and environmental considerations into core business decision making. Five reflexive abilities have been derived from the survey and interview data:

- Systemic thinking
- Embracing diversity and managing risk
- Balancing global and local perspectives
- Meaningful dialogue and developing a new language
- Emotional awareness.

5. Reflexive Abilities

5.1 Systemic Thinking

Dealing with complexity requires the ability to think strategically, to understand the bigger picture and to appreciate the diverse networks in which an organisation operates. At its simplest, systemic thinking concerns the ability to understand the interdependency of systems across the business and between the business and society.

Interviewees suggested that systemic thinking requires a deeper understanding of both internal organisational relations and external social, economic, environmental and cultural dynamics. To be successful, managers are required to undertake a key strategic shift in the way that they view the world – they need to recognise that the company is not operating in a closed system. In addition, they are required to interpret the signals given by actors in the market and must be able to respond appropriately.

Several interviewees drew a distinction between systemic thinking and an appreciation of complexity that is required in traditional management disciplines such as finance or engineering. More traditional management disciplines often call for a form of analytical thinking that seeks to understand complex situations by breaking them down into their constituent parts and analysing the impact of individual components on the problem being addressed.

In contrast, encouraging an appreciation of social and environmental complexity (which is at the heart of systemic thinking) is simply not amenable to this type of analysis. It requires a new form of complex reasoning which moves beyond the consideration of individual

components and involves an analysis of the interrelations across the whole system, understanding how things interact with one another at the broadest possible level.

5.2 Embracing Diversity

The second reflexive ability is the competence to embrace diversity. Clearly at one level this is simply about building corporate teams that reflect the diversity of the societies in which they operate. Although this is considered necessary, it is not sufficient for managers to be truly responsive.

Diversity in its broader sense is seen as the answer to complexity. Interviewees were aware that heterogeneous groups (whether based on gender, race, culture or other aspect) are better able to use their differences to appreciate the complexity of the situations in which they operate. It was suggested that the wrong way to deal with complexity is either to deny its existence or increase its amplitude by dealing with issues using homogenous groups.

There was a strong consensus that individuals and organisations need to respect diversity by acknowledging it, building bridges across different groups and seeking common ground without forcing consensus – respecting difference is vitally important in acknowledging diversity. Overall, the message was that the business decision making process needs to structure relations which will maximise the exchange of ideas and learning across different groups – inside and outside the company.

5.3 Balancing Local and Global Perspectives

The third reflexive ability concerns the capacity to see and appreciate the impact of local decisions on the global stage. The organisations involved in this research are largely decentralised companies that operate in many different countries dealing with a huge diversity of cultures and values around the world. At the same time, they are often striving to operate according one set of values and beliefs.

In itself, this is simply a reiteration of the oft repeated dilemma of a company trying to be both global and local. This raises issues of how to maintain a global framework of values and at the same time respect local diversity. It also relates to difficulties in ensuring consistent operational standards while encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship in operating units.

However, most pertinent to the issues raised in this study, interviewees felt that the biggest challenge is understanding where the limits of corporate responsibility lie. Part of this challenge is a willingness to take action on issues for which the company is considered to be accountable, even though it has no direct responsibility as an individual organisation – examples of such issues might include climate change, access to medicines, or addressing social inequality.

5.4 Meaningful Dialogue

The fourth area of interest is the ability to maintain meaningful dialogue with others by listening, inquiring and responding appropriately. One interviewee provided specific examples of how this approach has changed the decision making process. He described it as moving from taking action where one “decides, announces the outcome and defends the decision” to a process of “dialogue, deciding and implementing”. This simple description is a

powerful short-hand portrayal of a much more comprehensive method of stakeholder engagement.

The value in developing new forms of meaningful dialogue is that they can offer the opportunity to explore assumptions, ideas and beliefs that inform individual and organisational behaviours and actions. In this way, companies and their stakeholders can begin to explore how cultural differences between groups can cause clashes – often without an appreciation of what is occurring.

One of the key advantages of building external connections and getting engagement from others is to provide an external perspective into the business. This does not diminish the difficulties of deciding which are the appropriate issues the organisation should address, and which are the legitimate external viewpoints to be heard. Interviewees highlighted this as a hugely important aspect of building meaningful dialogue – understanding the pertinent issues at the intersection between business and societal issues by being able to distinguish between the potential indirect impacts of the company and the core contribution it can make to society.

5.5 Emotional Awareness

The final area mentioned by many involved in this research was that of emotional awareness – described variously as empathy, perception, curiosity and the ability to use the right-hand side of the brain in decision making. One interviewee described this simply as the ability to understand the broader implications of decisions and actions on others.

The capacity to identify the inter-relationship between thoughts, behaviours and emotions is considered a vital skill to operating successfully in today's business environment.

Interviewees observed that all too often reactions to business decisions are not based on rational analysis but on feelings and perceptions. Frequently, when going through the decision making process managers describe their "thoughts" on business issues in entirely rational terms – ignoring the fact that their viewpoint is not only the product of conscious intellect but is also coloured by their feelings, emotions and desires.

Hence, it is important that managers have the ability and willingness to recognise that business decisions are not always driven by a process of economic rationality. Another element of emotional awareness is a tolerance of unusual approaches. Integrating corporate responsibility into an organisation requires managers to go beyond the well known (and well worn) analysis of business issues. In order to deal with uncertainty and complexity they need to adopt unorthodox approaches to addressing the competing demands different stakeholder groups place on the business.

A final aspect of emotional awareness related to the characteristics of managers themselves – interviewees spoke of the need to develop and enhance personal qualities of reticence and sensitivity. This often revolved around the recognition that in today's rapidly changing business environment one must accept that it is not always possible to be in control or to have perfect knowledge of the outcomes of one's decisions. While this was not put forward as a reason for abdicating responsibility, it was argued that a successful manager must retain a sense of humility – a characteristic in sharp contrast to the model of heroic leadership.

6. The Implications for Leadership Development

Having outlined in some depth the five 'reflexive abilities' that represent the management skills and qualities required for responsible leadership, the question becomes – what are the implications for the way we develop managers and leaders?

It is clear that the companies involved in this study do feel that business schools can constructively participate in helping to develop the reflexive abilities they identified. However, at the same time they did identify some challenges.

First, it is clear that management development for corporate responsibility needs to address fundamental questions of how an individual views the world – how he or she ascribes value to certain types of management and corporate behaviour.

Developing a person's knowledge and skills will inform their world view and values to a certain extent. However, the reflexive abilities identified through this research describe the more fundamental features of an individual's character and personality. Giving people the opportunity to question, explore and make meaning of the values and assumptions that inform their decision-making process requires a carefully structured process of analysis and reflection – something that is not necessarily compatible with much of the traditional content of management development programmes in business schools.

Second, the experience of businesses involved in the research suggests that this process cannot necessarily be done in the traditional classroom environment. There is a strong need for greater use of experiential learning techniques – exposing people directly to different

situations and giving them the opportunity to reflect and experiment with potential ways of dealing with the experience.

Third, it is vitally important that a traditional Anglo-American or European business education should avoid what some describe as “cultural imperialism” – inadvertently promoting the social, political and economic norms and values of a developed world perspective. Interviewees argued strongly that responsible leadership requires an appreciation of cultural diversity. This view was extended by some to question the use of business models that focus exclusively on maximizing shareholder returns to the exclusion of other stakeholders.

The final challenge set down by business was one that is currently the subject of great debate in the academic community – to what extent should corporate responsibility be integrated into existing business disciplines, rather than being taught as a separate subject. Perhaps not surprisingly the jury is still out on this issue.

Some interviewees were adamant that traditional management disciplines needed to extend their scope to include issues of corporate responsibility. So, for example, finance and accounting should incorporate issues of transparency and accountability; marketing could encompass cause-related partnerships and classes on organisational behaviour might examine different styles of leadership and their impact on boardroom behaviour.

Others argued that the issues are, by their very nature, multidisciplinary and so require treatment and consideration in their own right. If business school participants are to understand the changing relationship between business and society they need to study this

complex phenomenon from a systemic perspective – explicitly exploring the competing demands and interests of different stakeholder groups.

This debate is not yet resolved, and the companies involved in this study had yet to reach a consensus – even within the same companies corporate responsibility is both integrated into existing leadership development programmes and taught as a stand alone discipline for managers.

7. Concluding Remarks

It is clear that corporate practice in developing responsible business behaviour is relatively well-developed in the companies involved in this study. While all of these companies would be quick to point out that they have a lot yet to learn, the evidence is that they have much experience from which business schools can benefit.

In conducting this research, we heard many examples of management development initiatives that are introducing people to topics and issues that make them question existing models of business behaviour.

Managers are being encouraged to critically analyse the potential future for the company. They are addressing real world issues and developing the capacity to innovate, stretch and challenge conventional wisdom on how to deliver business success in a way that respects the society and environment in which they operate.

In short, the companies involved in this research are beginning to rise to the challenge of developing responsible leaders for tomorrow's business. Those of us who are involved in management training and leadership development can learn much from their experience.

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