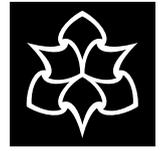


Welcome to the 16th Edition of the MBA Newsletter



Manchester
Metropolitan
University

October 2013



(Front left) Sophie Williams - 1st runner up, Nick Cook - Managing Director at Williams BMW, Michael Lee - winner, Rachel Stringfellow - 2nd runner up



Michael is winner in MBA Challenge

ASPIRING business leader Michael Lee has been crowned winner in the Business School's MBA Challenge, and receives a full £16,500 tuition fee scholarship for its flagship Executive MBA. Michael, currently a tenancy and support officer with Adactis Housing Group will begin his studies part-time in October.

The Challenge which is sponsored by Williams BMW, attracted ambitious candidates from across the country to compete in four business tasks, designed to test their analytical thinking, leadership skills and all round business acumen. From all the applications received the best twenty were chosen to compete. Michael said: "To have won the challenge feels amazing; I'm stunned and it's still sinking in. I took every challenge very seriously, and put time aside for each of them, alongside a lot of effort."

Lifelong ambition

"I've always wanted to study for an MBA, and the Challenge looked like good fun and gave me a taster of what I would study. The Challenge has taught me about myself too; I didn't think I had a 'business mind' as I work predominantly in the public sector, but actually I do have an understanding of how business works, and it's taught me that I shouldn't be frightened of networking with people, and that I'm actually quite adaptable. I hope that completing an MBA here at the Business School will allow me to progress in my existing career as well as options to

change career in the future, as it will give me a grounding in a wider business context."

As well as providing financial support to the Challenge campaign, Williams BMW awarded the winner and two runners up cash prizes.

Nick Cook, MD at Williams BMW, said: "Supporting the managers of the future is vital if the region is to benefit from the fantastic research and applied business knowledge that courses such as the MBA at Manchester Metropolitan University provide."

25th anniversary

Manchester Metropolitan University has been teaching its MBA programme for almost 25 years. Its Executive MBA (EMBA) is tailored for senior managers who want to combine part-time study with their full-time careers, and is accredited by the AMBA (Association of MBAs).

The Challenge has also been supported by Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce; Chartered Management Institute; Institute of Directors; Pro-Manchester; Manchester Evening News; Matrix 247; MMC Learning; Williams BMW; Yang Sing restaurants; Stroke Association; TalentHawk, Airangel, The Stroke Association, Sensory International, High Legh Park, Magnesium Elektron, The Law Society.

MBA International Field Study Trip – Beijing, China

Stock up on your sleep and eat three Weetabix a day for a week before you embark on this trip, for it is certainly not for the faint hearted. A jam-packed relentless schedule, with early starts and late finishes (to varying degrees depending on your chosen after dinner activities) will test your stamina and inner strength. I suggest there is much more to learn on this trip than only about China.

The trip was extremely well organised – big praise and thanks to Daniel (MBA Programme Manager), Joy (MBA Programme Administrator) and 'TK' (Tour Guide). Not even monsoon weather on the third evening appeared to present much of a problem to them. A tickle of the itinerary, a change of dinner venue, and a walk to the coach (in said monsoon weather) – no problem. Although sleep was something you soon had to learn to live with much less of – it was a small price to pay to fit in all of the activities in the week we were there. University lectures (very well received) and visits to local businesses (also well received – especially by the men in the group, of the female at Dalian Wanda Group Corporation Limited) were punctuated by some also very well received sight-seeing, and even a Kong Fu Show (especially well received by the ladies in the group). By the time the end of the week came around, the visit to the 'Silk Market' when we were set free for an afternoon of shopping, was a great way to unwind and enjoy some down time. Here is where we got to practise our 'haggling' techniques, with some enjoying better results than others. As well as having a lot of fun (thank you to my 'second husband' Karl for saving me from being seriously ripped off), I also made an amusing discovery which related to an earlier experience I had back in

England. I found 'Mont Blanc' pens on sale for (the equivalent of) £50, and being (eventually after the haggling process had concluded) sold for anything between £5 and £40. This, I found very amusing, due to my recent experience purchasing a 'Mont Blanc' pen, the tale goes like this...

I had ordered a 'Mont Blanc' pen on the internet in around May of this year, from a very authentic looking website, advertising a 'Sale' and handed over 80 English pounds (I know, I know, if it seems too good to be true, then it probably is) in good faith. When I received an email in broken English, I admit I started to become suspicious. Long story short – I managed to get a £40 refund, but had still paid £40 for a fake (the Chinese person on the other end of the email suggested it was a replica and that I should have realised this by the price. Oh, and that they are very good replicas and this was a very good deal for me). Well you see, I had already studied China as part of the 'Contemporary Issues in an International Environment' module, and was fully aware of the challenges faced by western firms doing business in China – the lack of transparency of laws and regulations being one of them. I had read literature suggesting that intellectual property rights are not well protected. At the time I chalked this down to experience, hoped that maybe

the pen was worth £40, tried not to feel that I had been stung, and vowed to be more wary when buying on line in future. Clearly the experience in the Silk Market proved my fears that I had paid £35 over the odds for the pen (taking in consideration my £40 refund). However, on the subject of China copying, one senior employee at a business we visited in Beijing suggested the Chinese had been 'learning' from the Western world for the last 30 years, not 'copying'. I found myself having to agree, because they have had a lot to catch up on over the last 30 years since Prime Minister Deng Xiaoping's reforms in 1978, and catch up they have.

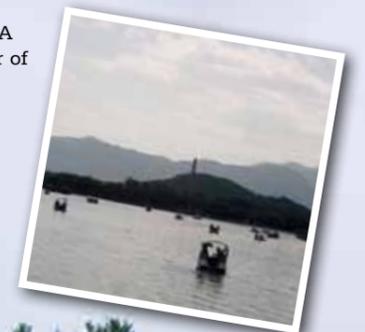
The thing that immediately struck me when I arrived in Beijing, was that I could have been in any international city. Eight lane highways carrying the 5 million cars of Beijing (although not quite – not all cars are permitted to drive on all days), lined with sky scrapers – it really is impressive – and very big. But then it has to be big I suppose, to house its 21 million residents. TK, our tour guide gave a very interesting description of how, due to the one child policy and male births outnumbering female births, that only the men with money and prospects would be successful in finding a wife – indeed the ladies have the pick of the bunch – sociologists expect there to be around 35million 'extra' men by 2020. (I wonder if this will bring fresh challenges to Western business?)

There were so many high points to this trip; I won't attempt to list them all, but I will offer a few headlines... The Great Wall was a special moment – especially coming down on the chair lift (again in the rain – but honestly, it didn't rain all the time). The hotel was great and the hospitality (both at the hotel and Chinese people in general) was great also. It was really good to get to know fellow students and staff a little better and my, were there some good laughs over the week.

I learned such a lot... academic, professional, personal. Low points – the clear winner by far is the toilets (hole in the floor, ladies – yes, really). Enough said about that. Those who were there will know why I will expand no further on this point. (Future female trippers – don't be put off – just always carry tissues, wipes, and always wear a skirt – never trousers... ok, now I have said too much).

All in all a wonderful time and I, as I am sure are my fellow students, am extremely grateful for such a fantastic experience. I think we should learn from the Chinese and give weight to the importance of 'Guanxi'. As those who have already studied China as part of your MBA will know, this is the development of relationships, and was very important in the earlier days of the economic growth period - it was more important to Chinese businessmen than credit or formal checks. Who you knew, your network of contacts, carried more weight than tangible business track records, and even the individuals being well educated and having university degrees. Whilst I wouldn't promote ditching the usual checks and balances, I would suggest that network contacts are extremely valuable – not for getting your business ahead – but to have trusted people to call on when you need to ask the silly question. For me, that's one of the invaluable things this course gives you. Oh, another thing I learned that I am really proud of, is my use of two local words... "Nihao" (Hello) and "Xiexie" (Thank you). It was interesting to note that the results of using these words were the same as in any foreign country; a more appreciative and friendly response because you had given their language 'a stab'. Maybe I should email my friend about the 'replica' pen using my new found language, and try and get the other £35 back!

Sue Sutton is an Executive MBA student and Managing Director of S26 Consultancy Ltd
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Red Noses Visit Jaguar Land Rover, Halewood

If like any professional, you have a vested interest in supply chain management, then a trip to the world-class manufacturing facility at Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) in Halewood, Liverpool, is highly recommended. As part of this years EMBA programme, students were given the opportunity to visit the birthplace of the Range Rover Evoque and Freelander 2, and witness for themselves the pride and mastery that goes into their production.

Like most childhood trips it started with a school packed lunch (Flashbacks of trips to Blackpool come to mind), and the standard process of sandwich switching soon ensued!

As we approached the Halewood site, I remember feeling slightly overwhelmed by the sheer scale of the plant, and a never-ending sea of Range Rover Evoques out the side window of the bus. Ford sold JLR back in March 2008 to the TATA Motor Group, and since then it seems that the company has gone from strength to strength, reinvesting within its supply chain, and driving up efficiency.

Currently employing around 4500 employees at the Halewood site alone, JLR have the new Range Rover Evoque to thank for their continued success. JLR claim that their production capacity for the Evoque alone is circa 120,000 units a year, with their

largest market no longer being UK - 21% of JLR's production of Evoques is for export to China, which is now seen as their biggest growth market.

To maintain this level of production, JLR have to be able to produce more than 320 Evoques per day, which requires a tightly run ship, with a dedicated number of teams to keep production running 24 hours a day; a world class automated picking line, with a full roller coaster type track system in the roof for body panel transportation; a 60 minute time limit from start to finish; and a JIT supply chain system which is out of this world, whereby JLR only hold enough parts for 3 hours of production. Can you imagine the difficulty of managing such an operation normally? But when you then consider that JLR only manufacture to order, things become a whole different ball game.

We were told that JLR never build something, which is never needed. As you walk down the production line, and look at the data sheets attached to each car chassis, it soon becomes obvious just how difficult this game gets, with specifications of vehicles changing from one to the next. The build itself is done on a mile long continuous line (flow production), with each member of the team having just 60 seconds to complete his or her jobs, before the vehicle is moving into the next cell (Takt Time). It was interesting to also hear that all members of staff

have the authority to halt the production line, if they feel the need to do so. JLR feel that an issue solved at source is easier to manage and re-educate those involved, than to wait until the vehicle is sat at the end of the line.

As we continued down the line, we we're warned a few times to watch out for stacker trucks driving around like madmen. When questioned upon this, I was surprised to hear that JLR subcontract the transportation of goods and parts around their factory to DHL, a global logistics company. DHL, essentially employ a team of drivers, who's sole job it to get from A to B within certain time frames, thereby keeping the stock of parts up, and allowing the production line to keep flowing smoothly. As previously mentioned, JLR only hold enough parts for 3 hours worth of production, so the constant supply of parts needs to be well managed. Bar from the actual chassis itself, everything else is subcontracted, and built outside JLR. This means that items produced outside of a 40 mile radius of the factory have to be stored by the suppliers locally, in order to meet the strict time frames of the JIT system.

However, even with all of their investment since 2008, JLR are still forced to use Ford engines, as they don't have the ability to build their own. With Ford mainly producing engines for the US market, its easy to understand how many of the engines built aren't very eco friendly, and tend to be big V8's. Couple this with the move in the UK to calculate road tax in accordance with emission ratings, and the new trend on global warming and carbon footprints, JLR have seen that it's in their best interests to take the next step, and are currently in the process of building their own £500m engine manufacturing facility, just outside Wolverhampton, UK.

All in all, the day was a real success, and people's spirits weren't even dampened by the typical English weather, and we even managed to raise a little bit of money for red nose day!

Richard Farrimond, EMBA student and Marketing Manager at Edgar Brothers



MBA Graduate meets Richard Branson

"I consider the correct choice of MBA Programme to be a decisive step in the development of my future career path.

"I chose England for its significant role in world history, its dominant position on the European financial markets, the best educational facilities, professional lecturers and its highly developed infrastructure; and Manchester due to its prominence at the heart of the industrial revolution.

"One of the most interesting aspects that I discovered is the challenging entrepreneurial zeal of the British people, their eternal drive for navigating business decisions and modern pioneering in the frontiers of space.

"I felt honoured to participate in a conference on 'Leadership' at Kaunas in our neighbouring country Lithuania, where an opportunity arose to meet personally with Sir Richard Branson. I felt the event was the apogee of my successful graduation this year and I am very thankful to my lucky destiny for such an amazing chance."

Alex Judins Full Time MBA Graduated 2013

Siemens Congleton Visit

Recovering from the recent festive period, February was kickstarted with a visit to Siemens' Congleton factory. We all left the Business School, not all made the trip south.

Upon arrival and after a swift coffee, we received a warm welcome and a presentation from the Siemens Systems Design Team. The process methodology shared was a bespoke system that incorporated elements of Lean, Six Sigma, Deming and common sense. Measurement was key and it was apparent that pride in the quality of production was across the site. It was a real privilege to receive such a clear insight into the Siemens Congleton approach and theory, even more so as an introduction to the factory and associated assembly processes.

We needed to dress as the occasion saw fit; white coats, goggles and conductive strips on our shoes. Better safe than sorry and compliance was the sensible option!

As we entered the operational core of the factory it was clear we were in for a treat. MBA students with recent memory of the Managing Business Excellence module were to experience a shop floor that would have had W.Edwards Deming smiling. Operational excellence and value stream mapping were well served with a clear, logically laid out shop floor with skills matrices abound and Kanban influenced design. Theory, for many, became reality as we followed the production and assembly process end to end, observing continual quality control and operators who were equally happy and productive.

The visit was much more than a factory visit, we were able to understand the methodology employed and process controls that drove a productive successful regional employer. The kindness, professionalism and hospitality we received from the Siemens Congleton site was gratefully received and enhanced our theoretical learning significantly.

If you get the chance to go, make sure you have the correct postcode in your sat nav, this is not one to miss.

Jason Kingston, EMBA student and Business Improvement Partner at Your Housing Group

Institute of Directors

The Royal Albert Hall has played host to the Institute of Directors Annual convention for over 60 years, and after a two year hiatus, the who's who of business and politics returned in 2013. With over three thousand of the country's leading directors in attendance, it provided the EMBA students of MMU an opportunity to rub shoulders with the men and women that Boris Johnson described, as being pivotal to sustained recovery of the British economy in the years ahead.

This was the central theme of the convention, with Europe and the spirit of enterprise, innovation, and entrepreneurship rooted in many of the speakers' messages. A broad political spectrum was on show, George Osborne explained his policies as providing credibility in a global market. Chuka Umunna inferred that short-termism in the political landscape was stifling business growth. Tijane Thiam crossed this political business divide, with his insightful analysis of global markets and demographics, and his assertion that we are in the Asian century.

Technology industry experts provided flamboyant colour to the proceedings. Joanne Shields called for disruptive innovation and open platforms, while Dan Copley spoke about Google's mantra of ten times better, while showcasing the future with Google Glass. From iconic leaders in Jack Welch and Sir Richard Branson to the energetic young successful entrepreneurs, this convention provided a source of inspiration to everyone in all industries and at whatever stage they were in their business careers.

These views were held by the MMU EMBA students:

"Very grateful of the chance to attend such a prestigious event, the value added to our MBA studies will be significant and was much appreciated."

Jason Kingston

"A very enjoyable and interesting event that brought together leaders in UK politics and International Business. To hear the latest and sharpest insights, as an MBA student, was a great privilege. The day left me motivated, inspired, and looking forward to getting back into studies again following the summer break."

Dominic Henry

"With keynote speakers such as the legendary Jack Welch (GE), Richard Branson (Virgin), Boris Johnson (Mayor of London) and Dan Copley (Google UK), I couldn't help but feel truly inspired by their words - If you're aspiring to become a director, then I strongly recommend attending!"

Richard Farrimond

Stephen Moore, EMBA student and Professional Cricketer

Caption Competition

Below you will see a set of photos from the start of the annual trip to China. Please choose two photos and provide suitable captions. The top three most amusing captions will receive a MMU pen! Do have a go - we would love to hear from you (and tell us news). Please send your suggestions and news to Patricia p.l.rees@mmu.ac.uk



Reunion

A reunion for current and past MBA's was held in the New Business School in July. Pictured are alumni Joan Shanks and Paul Davenport with current EMBA students Jenny Neville and Simon Hindley.



Connected on LinkedIn? - Join the MMUBS MBA Alumni Group now!

Your Views are Valued

Have you got any ideas for the MBA newsletter?

Any interesting stories, internet links, information, contacts or questions you would like to share?

If so, we would be delighted to hear from you.

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