

ACADEMY
of **SOCIAL SCIENCES**

SOCIETY FOR THE
ADVANCEMENT OF
MANAGEMENT
STUDIES



MAKING THE CASE

FOR THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

No.6 MANAGEMENT

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Foreword

Business Schools, as major sites of inter-disciplinary social science research and teaching, are well placed to address some of the key issues of our times. For instance, the impacts of globalisation and financialisation on the roles of the state, corporate elites and cross-national organisations in shaping the contexts of economies and societies are central in current research being conducted by scholars from accounting, finance, economics and organisation studies. Approaches to organising and managing our public services, effective development of social enterprises, contribution of medium enterprises to growth, the production and consumption of knowledge, organising employees to contribute to innovative, high-value added activities, the development and management of networked organisations, are all features of a vibrant research landscape involving social science researchers in business schools, often in collaboration with other academics, businesses and policymakers.

From econometric modelling to the study of organizational narratives, business schools are amongst the most diverse social science departments in our universities. The UK has considerable strength in terms of academic research across this range and its leading schools are prominent on the international stage.

Alongside this academic excellence, management researchers are active in engaging with practitioners, working with them to solve problems, providing new insights from the evidence that they have gathered, and challenging taken-for-granted assumptions in order to open up new possibilities. Sometimes the beneficiaries are big businesses who find news ways to improve their operations, performance and profits. But management researchers in the UK are not solely interested in the corporate world. UK business schools are home to a range of disciplinary approaches and encompass both critical and mainstream orientations. As befits the breadth of research conducted in business schools, the beneficiaries are therefore diverse and widespread.

This booklet can only give a glimpse of the work that is conducted in the UK's 100 or so business and management departments. Still, it includes research that has impacted upon large corporations and small firms, policymakers at regional and national levels, cross-national and international organisations in the public, private and third sectors. This research has variously contributed to improvements in customer experiences, better environmental outcomes, enhanced economic efficiency and innovation in private and public organisations large and small, produced fairer and more equitable outcomes for employees, brought better performance through the development of new management practices and improved the lives and experiences of our citizens beyond the workplace in many different ways.

This booklet has been produced by the Academy of Social Sciences in partnership with SAMS (the Society for the Advancement of Management Studies). We have been pleased to work in collaboration with the British Academy of Management and the Advanced Institute of Management Research in bringing together the cases featured. You can find many more examples of how high quality management research is having wide impact on the AIM Research website (aimresearch.org).



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C Cooper".

Professor Cary Cooper
CBE AcSS
Chair of Council,
Academy of Social Sciences



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Thorpe".

Professor Richard Thorpe AcSS
Chair, Society for the Advancement
of Management Studies



Responding better to extreme events

Extreme events such as accidents, crises and disasters often hit the headlines but also occur regularly beyond the public gaze in organisations of all types. Investigations into such incidents typically highlight systemic failures, raising fundamental issues about management and organisation. Following an extreme event such as Deepwater Horizon or the cases of Victoria Climbié and Baby P, organisations often instigate new practices, redesign processes and procedures and implement new work methods to prevent or limit recurrence. In many instances a Board of Inquiry also publishes recommendations for change, codifying practices to be implemented not only in the organisations that suffered the extreme event but also throughout the sector.

However, it often proves very difficult to get the new ways adopted.

A team of researchers, led by **Professors David Denyer** and **David Buchanan** of Cranfield School of Management, looked at six particular cases across different sectors. They interviewed people involved and looked at company documents and inquiry reports, using a change management perspective so that they could usefully help managers improve the process of putting changes in place.

The findings included new ways of bringing out and resolving underlying systemic issues, showing how to move from learning passively from events to setting up effective systems of bringing about change and new processes and how to develop the attitudes and practices seen in 'high reliability' organisations.

The research has been used by Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge to help review its strategy for ensuring patient safety, by Bedford and Luton Combined Fire and Rescue Service to look at its procedures for investigating incidents, and



by Centrica Storage Ltd to inform its programme to bring about high reliability. Professor Denyer also helped the senior management at Broadmoor Hospital create a safety and service improvement strategy and develop a safe working culture. Sellafield Ltd and NHS Southwest have used the research to train large numbers of their managers. The potential of the research to

inform change management in less extreme or 'normal' situations has been developed in conjunction with Lane4, a UK-based management consultancy. Lane4 produced a new product offering a portfolio of practical tools, diagnostics, frameworks and other support to facilitate the development of 'organisational resilience'.

<http://managingextremechange.com>



The Academy of Social Sciences is the voice of the social sciences in the United Kingdom for the public benefit. It promotes research, publishes learned material, distributes information, organises workshops and events, and contributes to public debates. Its focus is multidisciplinary and encompasses both theoretical and applied work. The Academy is composed of over 800 individual Academicians, who are distinguished scholars and practitioners from academia and the public and private sectors, and most of the UK's Learned Societies in the social sciences plus individual and organisational affiliate members.

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Society for the Advancement of Management Studies (SAMS)

The Society for the Advancement of Management Studies (SAMS) was established in 1963 to provide a governance structure for the *Journal of Management Studies*. SAMS focuses its charitable activities on advancing education in the field of management studies and developing the management studies community with particular reference to early career academics. An international group of Academics oversee the Society's charitable activity and focus on capacity building and the provision of funding where opportunities might not otherwise exist.

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