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# Management Focus

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## Featured article

HRD 2003: A  
review of the  
fifteenth Human Resource  
Development Conference



## Guru interview

Martin Lindstrom –  
*BRANDchild*

*Interview by Sarah Powell*

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# Welcome to Management Focus

...and welcome to the very first issue in our brand new format!

Throughout the last 12 months we've been very busy at ManagementFirst gathering feedback and re-designing our products and services to ensure we meet the needs of all our customers. From our journal re-designs to our brand-new Web site, we've undergone a radical transformation.

100% management, 100% focused – we're sure you'll agree that our new look Management Focus is the perfect complementary newsletter to your Emerald subscription.

In this issue we provide you with an overview of the prestigious UK event "HRD week 2003." Find out what empowerment, mentoring, development and communication all have in common and read an inspiring tale of success at Rabobank. Then it's time to spend a few minutes with marketing guru Martin Lindstrom as he talks to us about his latest book *BRANDchild*, which has been praised as "simply amazing" by icons such as Philip Kotler and Lester Wunderman.

Also, don't miss our brand new feature – Ask the Expert! Our resident management expert is here to help you with your organizational dilemmas. If you have an issue that you just can't resolve, look no further! Take the pressure off and send your query to [expert@managementfirst.com](mailto:expert@managementfirst.com) for an insightful, objective and professional opinion.

For even more management articles and interviews, get online and visit [www.managementfirst.com](http://www.managementfirst.com) Use your Emerald username and password to gain instant access to a whole host of information that you can use to achieve real results.

We do hope you enjoy this first issue. As always, your feedback is both welcome and encouraged.

Best Wishes,

Alistair Craven and Caroline Firth  
**ManagementFirst.com**



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# HRD 2003: a review of the fifteenth Human Resource Development Conference

What do “empowerment”, “mentoring”, “development” and “communication” all have in common? As well as being concepts that are recognized as critical to organizational success, they were also the buzzwords that emerged from this year’s fifteenth Human Resource Development Conference in London, UK.

The event, organized by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), raised some interesting issues, as well as touching on some old debates. Management development was still a big concern, e-learning was also on the agenda and since the last CIPD conference five months ago, the emphasis seems to have shifted away from coaching towards mentoring. This was talked about in close conjunction with management development

and there were still the same parallels being drawn between sport and business.

## Sports and business – still a link?

In his talk on training, mentoring and coaching, British Olympic medallist Roger Black described his need for one over the other at various times in his career. For example, when he was training for the 1996 Olympics, the 400-meter runner realized that his coach was not enough – he needed

someone to guide him on a “higher level”, to give him philosophical advice as well as put him through his paces on the track. Black found his mentor and consequently ran to victory in the Olympic 4x400 meters relay, as well as obtaining silver in the 400 meters individual event. He firmly believes that without the wisdom of his mentor, it would have been a very different story.

Although pretty basic, the link is clear when it comes to executive coaching and management development. New managers benefit from being trained and coaching is certainly a useful tool, but once you reach a certain level it is invaluable to have a mentor who is not involved in your day-to-day activities and can therefore step back and offer detached, insightful advice. Black’s talk on the empowering qualities of a mentor alone would not be enough to make you want to implement this strategy the second you returned to your organization; however, the subsequent session by Microsoft entitled “Everyone needs a mentor” served to validate Black’s perceptions on a corporate level.

Other speakers included David Clutterbuck and Stephen Sonsino of London Business School, as well as representatives from British Airways, Centrica, Rabobank and



Freeserve. Clutterbuck was one of the few speakers who addressed the topic of teams, providing an interesting insight into how learning took place within this context. Although still in its early days, this research demonstrated the scope of a topic that, according to many, has had its day.

### E-learning at British Airways

When it came to e-learning, the big question was still, how can you accurately evaluate ROI? Alison Walker, Manager of Training Design and Development for British Airways went some of the way when she gave a talk on how e-learning could produce massive savings for large organizations. Making no secret of the huge

still available where necessary. Walker acknowledged that e-learning had saved BA huge amounts of money but also pointed out that the wide-spread acceptance of this method across the organization was essentially down to lack of choice. Similarly it was accepted that this kind of program worked best when bringing a large number of employees up to a basic standard. In terms of management development there was still no indication of how e-learning could be effectively employed and accurately measured. Although reactive rather than pro-active, it was interesting to hear of a major organization that had made genuine savings with e-learning instead of finding it to be a costly mistake.

After nominations from two line managers, participants attended a development center to assess their strengths and weaknesses, attended a business school course to develop strategic thinking, created a personal development plan, then received ongoing personal coaching and support. Line managers are involved throughout, so that they "own" this program (often the most resistance to such initiatives comes from line managers who are under pressure to deliver day-to-day results and can sometimes feel threatened by developing managers below them), and there is also a great deal of focus on how to apply all learning to your everyday role. As a result of this initial program, Rabobank has introduced talent identification processes, job rotation, succession planning and is looking to introduce performance- and development-based salary structures by 2004. As Steven Sonsino pointed out, this case study is a great example of what can happen if you have the courage to ditch all processes that you already have in place, and focus on one area of training and development. It also goes to show what can be achieved when a grass-roots pull is combined with senior management support.

In terms of over-riding themes or recurring messages that came out from this conference, there was not a great deal new. The general consensus appeared to be the usual advice of continuous communication (listening as well as talking) and development of existing talents within the organization. Common sense perhaps, but also easier said than done. Although this event did not come up with any startling revelations, it did provide a good deal of useful advice on how to make these commonsensical notions an embedded part of your organizational culture.

The HRD Conference and Exhibition 2004 will take place 20-22 April 2004.

For details visit: [www.cipd.co.uk/HRD/](http://www.cipd.co.uk/HRD/)

For more information, insight and expertise on the latest issues in the HR field, visit the HR community online. Go to our homepage and click on HR.

by Anna Torrance

“Making no secret of the cut-backs that the airline has recently experienced, Alison Walker of BA described how a staggering 400 off-the-shelf e-learning courses were brought in to replace the soft-skills training and save £450,000”

cut-backs that the airline has recently experienced, Walker described how BA introduced 400 off-the-shelf e-learning courses to replace the “soft skills” training and save £450,000. She also emphasized the importance of continuous refinement of the packages and the danger of locking yourself into a huge library of irrelevant courses.

After the “soft skills” courses, BA introduced e-learning for compliance training and then security training which ensured further savings. As these courses have evolved, a blended approach has developed where face-to-face training is

### Rabobank's success story

Another business success story came from Rabobank International, this time in the area of management development. Senior Advisor for Learning and Development, Sylvia Verheijden, described how Rabobank re-designed its management development program in order to retain the young talent that was leaving the organization each year. After instigating bottom-up “provocation” in order to involve potential development candidates as well as line managers, the company came up with a young professionals program that was, according to Verheijden, based on self-awareness and dialogue.



# Martin Lindstrom – *BRANDchild*

Interview by Sarah Powell



*Martin Lindstrom is recognized as one of the world's primary branding gurus. He is the author of several best-selling branding books including his latest, **BRANDchild** ([BRANDchild.com](http://BRANDchild.com)), a book which has been praised as "simply amazing" by icons such as Philip Kotler.*

*For more than a decade, Lindstrom has advised Fortune Top 500 brands including Mars, Pepsi, LEGO, Cartoon Network, American Express, Mercedes-Benz, VISA, Ericsson, HSBC, Gillette, Yellow Pages and Microsoft. He is a former COO of British Telecom-LookSmart, co-founder of BBDO Interactive, Europe's largest Brand Dialogue Company, and founding CEO of BBDO Interactive Asia, the region's largest BRAND Dialogue Company.*

**Q: Your book *BRANDchild* explores how "tweens", i.e. 8- to 14-year-olds, can be categorized into four broad consumer peer groups. It advocates "tapping into the leaders of the packs" to achieve brand acceptance among the whole group. How can this be achieved?**

**A:** In the old days a "pack leader" would set the ground rules for followers. That has changed and today we see a "fish streaming" trend. Groups of tweens are like shoals of fish. If you remove the lead fish, the rest of the shoal still swim in the same direction. It is not the lead fish that controls group behavior. What creates the dynamic is the internal dialogue or network between the fish. The same is true for tweens. Decisions are effectively taken by the group as a whole as a result of the dialogue between them.

Marketeers must now communicate differently with tweens. In the past marketers tracked the pack leader because he or she determined the direction of the rest of the pack. Now pack behavior is determined by several kids, if not the majority or the group as a whole.

Marketeers can adopt different approaches. First there is "wild" marketing, i.e. using servers such as hotmail as communication tools. Such servers are very accessible and effectively "spread the message" worldwide. The key is to post a message which is both unique in content and new to the audience targeted. The message must be customized to meet the interests of specific groups, i.e. tailored to fit their mood and their particular interests. This makes them feel special and their enthusiasm for the product can set a trend.

Second there is peer-to-peer marketing which involves targeting not one person but a whole group. This group is seen as attractive to other groups. This idea underpins products such as those launched by the Mambo clothing brand. Mambo is the third largest surfing clothing brand in the world. It made its name among the surfing community in Australia and the "news" spread around the world among surfing communities and then among other communities that admired surfers and wanted to dress like them. Mambo is a brand with attitude and other groups want

to buy into that. In fact Mambo goes one step further because there is a political message concealed in the designs on the clothing. It's a sort of "secret" shared among the brand's fans in Australia.

**Q: What were the particular values and aspirations among young people of different cultures and how are these taken into account in international brand development and building?**

**A:** I was shocked and saddened to see from our research the degree to which kids around the world are concerned about the future. Of our sample, only some 60% of kids are looking forward to growing up. In the northern part of Europe this negativism is particularly strong while in the South, children are more positive. The problem appears to be rooted in lifestyles. In the South, (India for example), children are not bound up into "commercial behavior" to the same degree as in the North. In northern Europe, meanwhile, they tend to spend considerable time indoors; and many feel obliged to assert their "identity" by sporting brand names.

On a far more positive note, tweens are a very honest and remarkably positive generation in many ways. Tweens rarely lie, they care about the environment, they understand global issues and are sensitive to and respect global cultures. Their values mean they expect the brands that woo them as potential customers to be equally true to their word and sensitive to their needs.

The paradox is that, while exposure to the media – particularly the Internet – has bred such insecurity among this generation, this same exposure has promoted their positive characteristics. Brought up accustomed to interactive technology and a media environment, tweens have a far more extensive "picture" of what is going on in the world. Crucially, they are far better equipped than older generations to "filter" the information that surrounds them. There is no such thing as "information overload" for the young. They know nothing else. ■

**Read the full version of Martin's interview in the Marketing Community at [ManagementFirst.com](http://ManagementFirst.com)**

**[www.managementfirst.com/marketing/interviews/lindstrom.php](http://www.managementfirst.com/marketing/interviews/lindstrom.php)**

# Questions & answers

Welcome to our brand new Q&A feature created for readers who need an expert opinion. For our opening advice page, we received a number of questions around the issues of corporate social responsibility. The broadest but most pertinent one was selected – sent by a reader from Wisconsin, USA:

**“What factors should be considered when increasing corporate responsibility and how well can this be aligned with the overall corporate strategy?”**

**Our resident management expert says:**

It's important to remember that unless social responsibility is seen to be good for business, it isn't going to hold up when times get tight. So don't make soft-hearted and soft-headed promises. Remember that what Enron, Tyco and the rest did wasn't just bad ethics – it was bad business! So don't try to make a socially responsible position fit within a strategy when it patently doesn't. You will just be fooling yourself and you won't fool your customers and community. “Greenwash” tactics just don't work.

Some practical tips:

Be honest with customers. If you can create a trust relationship with your customers, big profits lie ahead. Businesses don't sustain on duplicity or rip-offs. You will lose in the market long term, and are increasingly likely to also lose short term in the law courts. Audit your promises to customers – in your contracts, in your advertising, in your market positioning – and come down hard on those who break them. What we call customer orientation is good socially responsible practice.

Quality assure your reputation. Be future-focused. Put your policies on the line with environmental protection groups, student lobby groups – anyone who can give them a good workover and really test their robustness. A friend of mine in a big energy company in Canada used to take his staff

and policies to vocal and radical green groups, to expose them to challenges by the environmentally aware. Make sure you aren't featured on an Internet lobbyist site, or in the next “No Logo” or “Fast Food Nation” books.

Quality assure diversity. In Western society, discrimination is more than a moral issue, and more than a legal one. Be found out behaving badly to ethnic minorities, to women, to disabled people and not only might you feel bad, you will surely end up in court and, in some form or another, damage the net worth of your organization. Managing diversity doesn't mean indulging blindly in the outer reaches of absurd political correctness, nor the adoption of mindless quota systems. In successful firms it means addressing the issue, that is to compete effectively for a very scarce commodity – top-notch knowledge workers.

And finally, in and amongst all this – keep your eye on the ball. Stay in business; stay successful. If you haven't got it, you won't be able to give it away. Ex-British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher once famously misinterpreted the Good Samaritan story from the New Testament as a defence of capitalism; the Samaritan was only able to help because he had some money. You are an employer, and that puts you in a responsible position in giving or withdrawing work. Work defines most people's lives. Treat the power with respect and don't fail in your business.

**Our resident expert has over 25 years professional experience in management, ranging from academic journal editor and management consultant to senior board member.**

**If you would like to send him a question, write an e-mail to site editor Alistair Craven at [acraven@managementfirst.com](mailto:acraven@managementfirst.com) and the best submissions will be featured in a future edition of *Management Focus*.**

# Take Control



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Take Control is a regular feature that has been reserved to bring you latest updates from ManagementFirst. From new product launches to prestigious events – we help you to take control.

style with in-depth articles that aim to directly assist the reader with the development of successful business strategies.



This issue, we would like to keep you up to date with our brand new look by introducing the select number of journals that have received the ManagementFirst treatment and undergone a radical transformation. Gone are the long columns of black and white text – to be replaced with images, tonal colors and informative quotations. Whilst the content has remained unchanged, as a reader you stand to benefit from an interesting and easy to follow format that is not only more visually pleasing but that also ensures a clear understanding of the main points within the text.

Each issue focuses on the practical application of business theory, covering a host of topics on areas such as product strategy, forecasting, planning, trend spotting and business development. With regular respected thought leaders contributing as columnists, this journal is packed full of insightful information that, when put to good use, could mean you no longer walk the fine line between success and failure.

To find out more visit:  
[www.managementfirst.com/strategy/journals/business\\_strategy.php](http://www.managementfirst.com/strategy/journals/business_strategy.php)

## New Title



Take a look opposite at the re-styled front covers and the titles that are now available in the brand new ManagementFirst format.

## New Site Feature

This month we have launched a brand new site feature that will provide you with a weekly business news round up. Use your exclusive top level membership (awarded as part of your subscription to an Emerald journal or database) to gain immediate access and keep your finger on the pulse. You can find the “weekly newsbrief” at [www.managementfirst.com/newsbrief/newsbrief.php](http://www.managementfirst.com/newsbrief/newsbrief.php)

## New Journals

ManagementFirst are also pleased to announce the launch of a newly acquired title – the **Journal of Business Strategy**. Written specifically for top level senior management, the journal has an informal



## Final Thought...

“The best preparation for tomorrow is to do today’s work superbly well.”

Sir William Oster

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