



## **CENTRE FOR ORGANISATIONAL STUDIES**

**The José M. de Anzizu Foundation**

# **COS**

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### **NEWSLETTER No. 18 – FEBRUARY 2006**

## **LETTER FROM THE EDITORS**

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

We are now well into 2006 and we hope that the year has had a good beginning for you.

We are pleased to be sending this Newsletter to you now, with a review of our activities for the past year and our first announcement for the next International Roundtable in November at Ashridge in the UK.

Last September we published with EADA a research document which includes papers and articles related to and capturing the work and atmosphere of the 2004 International Roundtable. It shares the same title as the event: “Managing Cultural Diversity: Making it Work” This was sent out to all participants of the Roundtable in Collbató, Barcelona.

If you would like to receive a copy, please let us know and we will make arrangements for this to be sent. Cost of Publication 20€

Last February , Lalit Johri, Professor of International Business at the Asian Institute of Technology in Thailand and contributor at Collbató, formally accepted the invitation to chair the next Roundtable and the planning process began.

Feedback received after Collbató indicated that the theme of Intercultural Diversity should be further developed for the next Roundtable. This time we are placing emphasis on Asian companies coming west and we want to look more at Asian best practices with regard to this particularly topical issue.

The title of the November roundtable is:

**“Creating Culturally Competent Firms; Strategies for Gaining from Cultural Pluralism”**

Please see the end of this newsletter for further details.

During 2005 within the COS Barcelona Group, we decided to inquire into a theme that was of particular relevance to us at “home”. Jose Maria de Anzizu’s family company: **Fincas Anzizu**, now part of a French multinational, La Caisse des Dépôts, celebrated 100 years of business at the beginning of 2004. Inspired by this special event, we decided to take a selection of local and international companies who have been in business for a 100 years or more and study “What were the keys to their survival for over 100yrs?” and compare their conclusions with the famous piece of Research by Arie De Geus on “Living Companies”

We include a brief summary of these meetings overleaf.

The issues of cultural Diversity in Spanish organisations is now becoming increasingly important. The economic boom which Spain is currently enjoying coupled with a shrinking local, active work force , (downward demographic trends in Spanish families), means that increasing number of immigrants are now being employed across the spectre of manufacturing, service industries and agriculture.

Another major preoccupation is “deslocalización” or the uprooting of foreign and local manufacturing investments in Spain, to developing countries in Asia or the new Europe.

Spanish companies now find themselves investing not only in South America, but in cultures with which they are not so familiar such as Central Europe, Asia and the Far East.

In the run up to the November Roundtable within the COS Barcelona Group, we will explore the implications of these issues on our local market place.

We look forward to receiving your news and comments and in particular to working together once again in the very special atmosphere that will be created in the beautiful surroundings of Ashridge.

Our very best wishes,



Jose Maria de Anzizu

Founder COS



Louise Schubert

Director COS

## **BARCELONA GROUP ACTIVITIES for 2005**

A cycle of six meetings was held to inquire into *“What have been the key factors that have contributed to the survival of these organisations for over a hundred years”*.

### **16<sup>th</sup> February 2005: Fincas Anzizu**

*Estate Agent: founded in January 1904.*

#### **Keys of Success**

- Survival of the Founder's initial values (Financial integrity, serious and professional approach, strong internal organisation, human approach)
- High level of confidence between the different proprietors and the small highly professional team at Fincas Anzizu.
- Strong feeling of group identity.

### **7th April 2005: Escola Joan Pelegri (Fundacio Cultural d'Hostafrancs)**

*A co-educational school which started in 1904 as a neighbourhood catechism class.*

#### **Keys of Success**

- Plural Institution and open to change
- Ability to identify needs within society as a whole and in the local neighbourhood
- Selection of good professionals
- Investment in materials and equipment
- Strong unselfish leadership.
- Strong feeling of belonging to the school.

### **8th June 2005: COTTET SA**

*Spanish high street opticians and manufacturers of optical equipment: still a family run company. First Optician was opened in 1902 in Barcelona.*

#### **Keys of Success**

- Importance of Communication between family members.
- Help from external consultants to draw up a “family code of Practice”
- Quality of service which has always been a factor of distinction, particularly in the Barcelona area.
- Family pride of belonging to optical profession; the founder came from the Jura in France, which was famous for the production of optical and other precision instruments.
- Importance of the location of new outlets and careful selection of employees.
- Business planning for the future.

**10th May 2005: ALIER SA**

*Paper manufacturers. Company was first founded in 1833. A family company now run by professional non family members.*

**Keys of Success**

- Innovation and continued development of new products.
- Strength of family members during times of crisis.
- Courage, imagination and tenacity of Leaders throughout the different generations.
- The introduction of Professional outsiders who respect the traditional family values that have been established throughout the company history.

**26th October 2005: NESTLÉ**

*A global household name; Manufacturer of food, drinks, beauty and associated products. Founded in Switzerland in 1866.*

**Key areas of success:**

- Culture of the company
- Principles of Management and Organisation
- Profile of Management Professionals
- Training and Development
- Marketing

and above all:

Commitment to quality  
Respect for Diversity

**12th November 2005: BODEGAS TORRES SL.**

*International famous, family run Wine Producer founded in the Penedes, south of Barcelona. Founded in 1870*

**Keys of Success**

- Family
- Quality and Innovation
- Policy of auto-financing of investments.

**A Research Document is being prepared with details of each presentation and an Overview of Arie De Geus work “The Living Company” (HBR, March-April 1997). This will be in Spanish. If you are interested in receiving this, please let us know.**

## **First Announcement**

*Following the Success of our last Roundtable in Barcelona in 2004; we are pleased to announce the details of the twelfth*

## **2006 COS Roundtable**

Ashridge, November 3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup>

### **Creating Culturally Competent Firms Strategies for Gaining from Cultural Pluralism**

Globalization obliges us to accept cultural pluralism as a way of life. In our work life continuum we meet, interact and work with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. Is cultural pluralism a real phenomenon? Why do some organizations consciously promote cultural diversity whereas others like to preserve their “pure” mono culture? What are the gains of culturally diverse firms as against the losses of the culturally limited firms? What does it take to create a culturally competent firm? What does it take to sustain a culturally competent firm? These are some of the fundamental issues which we are going to address during our 12<sup>th</sup> COS Roundtable 2006.

#### **Venue**

This year's COS RT is being held at Ashridge, UK – one of the world's foremost business schools which attracts students from all over the world. Originally built as a Monastery over 700 years ago, it continues to be an inspirational “place for learning and debate”. It is located 30 miles north of London. Ashridge offers an ideal working and living environment for the Roundtable participants.



#### **Date**

The Roundtable will begin on the afternoon of the 3<sup>rd</sup> November and end on the afternoon of the 5<sup>th</sup> November 2006.

## **Who**

We encourage executives, consultants, academics or students who have a particular interest in creating culturally competent organizations to attend. We hope as usual to attract participants with differing cultural backgrounds (last time 17 different nationalities). For enhanced debates the number of participants is limited to 35.

## **New Features**

To achieve a measure of depth in our discussions and to take advantage of new technologies we have added several new features in COS RT 2006. Some of these features are:

- A community chat-board for pre roundtable discussions.
- Focus on issues faced by organizations in their journey for internationalization and cultural pluralism.
- Invite senior executives, consultants and experts from Asia.
- Interactions with managers with hands on experience in raising and managing culturally competent firms.
- Socratic debate on ‘developing a culturally competent firm’
- Experience “village life” in the vicinity of Ashridge.

## **Themes**

During the Roundtable we will address several themes that form the core of cultural pluralism a real phenomenon. Amongst these are:

- Cultural pluralism as a source of competitive advantage.
- Impact of cultural differences on organizational learning.
- Cultural differences and the art of value creation.
- Cultural diversity and organizational innovations.
- Influence of cultural differences on decision making.
- Ethnic communities and work ethos.
- Creating and sustaining a culturally competent firm.
- Transition from cultural divergence to convergence.
- Economic value creation in a multicultural organization.

## **Fee**

Conference fee 600€ +VAT

Single accommodation and meals at Ashridge for 2 nights and 2 days 467€ +VAT.

Details of early bird prices and methods of payment to follow soon.

## **Chair**

The Roundtable 2006 is chaired by Lalit Johri, MBA, PHD. Professor of International Business, School of Management at the Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand. He is a consultant to several international companies is well known for his thoughtful and personal approach to Cultural Competence and has expertise in the fields of East-West joint ventures and alliances and internationalization of firms particularly in the context of Asian markets.

**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN RECEIVING MORE INFORMATION ON THIS ROUND TABLE, PLEASE SEND A REPLY TO THIS E-MAIL.**

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