

## WINNING STRATEGIES IN CHALLENGING TIMES

The 10th Annual Conference of Baltic Management Development Association was held in Gdansk on 10-11 May 2012. BMDA is well known for undertaking current and future-oriented business issues that are of crucial importance for the theory and practice of management. The leading theme of the Conference was “Winning Strategies in Challenging Times”. The Conference gathered 116 participants from 18 countries, mainly from Baltic States but also from other European countries, as well as the USA, Republic of South Africa, Kazakhstan. The majority of the participants came from the academic world but the Conference attracted also representatives of the business community.

Presentations during Conference sessions provided examples of companies such as Microsoft, Apple, Google, and Facebook which stormed the market and became dominant global players in a remarkably short period of time. Their success has been possible thanks to the visionary leaders like Steve Jobs Bill Gates and Mark Zuckerberg who have naturally adopted an unorthodox “garage” rather than a heavy “corporate” approach. Also companies such as Wrigley or General Electric which have built their market position over decades with well-defined goals and strategies need to be very innovative in the way they manage their brands and markets. As a contrast to those positive examples some of the presentations illustrated cases of companies which ran themselves into crisis because they were unable to adjust to the changes in the market environment and continued to operate in an old fashioned, ineffective manner.

Apart from presentations, panel sessions and round table discussions the Conference offered an opportunity to visit companies which have developed and implemented remarkably effective strategies that allowed them to achieve outstanding and sustainable success: LOTOS Group (refinery), DCT (Deep Container Terminal), Meritum Bank, SKOK (financial institution), and Intel. The main purpose of these visits was to learn from these “live cases” but additionally the relations established during these meetings may also result in productive business co-operation.

All the Conference sessions were received with great interest, inspired dynamic discussions and were highly evaluated by the participants. The conclusion of the Conference was that innovative, entrepreneurial strategic thinking is necessary for business survival and may ensure outstanding performance even in the turbulent and challenging economic environment.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual BMDA Conference was organised by the Faculty of Management and Economics of the Gdansk University of Technology in co-operation with Gdansk Foundation for Management Development (GFKM). It is worth noticing that BMDA itself is an example of a successful organisation. Within ten years it has become one of the major associations of management education in Europe. Its success may be attributed largely to Dr. Virginijus Kundrotas, BMDA President, whose commitment and leadership has been the driving force of this initiative.

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