

# Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School

the Autonomous Management School of  
Ghent University and Katholieke Universiteit Leuven

## Corporate & Individual Giving • Corporate Partnerships



"The giving campaign – helping to build  
our future success"

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One school, three campuses

# Partnerships in the spotlight

Welcome to the second edition of our "Corporate Partnerships" Newsletter!

By this newsletter, we want to keep you updated on new Partnerships with the School and on the renewal of existing Partnerships. A Partner is a company/business who believes in the mission and vision of the School and has decided to support the School for a long period of time.

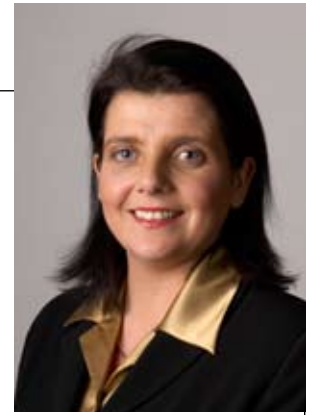
In this edition, we highlight the "Giving Campaign" which was launched in 2006 and thank all the Donors who have contributed to this Campaign. Also in this edition, we show the Launch Event of the Research Chair - "Doing Business in Europe - Doing Business in Southern Africa" and we also have exciting news to bring to you on our newest Research Chair Partnership.

Together we deliver added value for the further development of your business.

Together we create visibility & networking opportunities as privileged business partners.

We hope you enjoy reading our Newsletter and with that please accept our very best wishes for 2008.

Thank you for your continued support.



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## Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School Giving Campaign

In 2006, the first giving campaign aimed both at individuals and organisations, was launched. Companies, organisations and individuals could endow Chairs or make a personal donation to support the school in the pursuit of its mission and strategy for internationalisation. The Target for the Campaign was €3,000.000 and who could have imagined that such a target was achievable! I can with great pleasure officially announce that the grand total up to November 2007 is €2,877.835. A truly incredible achievement!!

Through these donations we have created four new chairs:

1. The Belgacom Chair 'Building organisations that last'
2. The Joint Chair 'Doing business in Europe - The Legal context'
3. The Joint Chair 'Doing business in Europe - Doing business in Southern-Africa'
4. the Swift Chair 'Market-driven Innovation'

And with the substantial number of individual donations, we have been able to develop our new Leuven Campus with top class facilities and services.

We would like to thank most sincerely all of the donors for their most generous contributions. Attaining and maintaining excellence in management requires ambition, entrepreneurship and new resources. Every donor has individually contributed to the school attaining its goal and being recognized as one of the leading international management schools.

You can still be a part of this dynamic project by adding your support to our endeavour. Donations can still be accepted up to the end of 2007. Please join us on our continuing journey to excellence.

## Chairs

The Belgacom Chair 'Building Organisations that last'



The Goodman Chair 'Logistics Management'



Joint Chair 'Doing Business in Europe - Doing Business in Southern-Africa'



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Chair 'Doing Business in Europe - the Legal Context'

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# SWIFT Chair

The SWIFT in-company programme "Leading for high performance", organised in collaboration with Vlerick, has been running since 2003. Having built a relationship that has evolved into a trusted partnership, SWIFT has now decided to endow a Chair, involving a large-scale five-year research project on the subject of market-driven innovation.

## Where did the idea for the SWIFT Chair come from?

**Mark Waller:** "We've partnered with Vlerick since 2003 so it was a natural progression to take the partnership to the next level and go beyond just customised leadership development. For us, research was a way of partnering that would benefit both SWIFT and Vlerick. That's how the idea for the Chair developed. Various research topics were considered, and we eventually chose a topic that is highly relevant to our strategic direction."

## What is the new strategic direction?

**Mark Waller:** "SWIFT has embarked upon a new era. We want to build upon the strength of our technology and our messaging infrastructure to become more customer-centric and market-driven. In September, we re-organised the company to get close to our customers and to be better aligned with our commercial activities and established a Product Group and a Market Group, which together are tasked with developing innovative products driven by market demands."

## How will the Chair support this strategy?

**Mark Waller:** "Access to meaningful academic research can support a real business need that will inform, guide and support our thinking in terms of market-driven product innovation. It will also help our market management and product group in terms of how they function and how we are organised as a company. It's just as important to look at the skills we have in our new organisation, how we communicate and how we align these capabilities to address these challenges. That is what is exciting for us."

**Prof. Marion Debruyne:** "The overarching framework of the Chair that we proposed to SWIFT contains all those elements. Market-driven innovation starts with being more market-oriented and customer-centric. When you listen to your customers and adapt your products, innovation plays a key role. Lastly, you need to match customer value opportunities to the company's resources and capabilities. From a business school's point of view, embarking on a partnership is not just about disseminating knowledge, but also about furthering knowledge by gaining new insights. The idea is to develop original research that is in line with SWIFT's strategy. Obviously that starts with knowing what is already there. Part of the challenge for me is to recognise the patterns and phenomena within the research that we'll conduct and to be able to link that with management theory and literature."



## "ACCESS TO MEANINGFUL ACADEMIC RESEARCH CAN SUPPORT A REAL BUSINESS NEED"

>> Mark Waller, Head of Human Resources, SWIFT

## "DEVELOPING ORIGINAL RESEARCH IN LINE WITH SWIFT'S STRATEGY"

>> Prof. Marion Debruyne, SWIFT Chairholder, Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School

## What benefits does the Chair hold for SWIFT and Vlerick?

**Mark Waller:** "Having access to research is the main benefit. Apart from that I believe it could also influence the way we function as an organisation, how we share knowledge, how we understand our market needs and translate them into product offerings. There will be an opportunity to share the research with management groups within other organisations. SWIFT is a relatively small organisation, but the impact that we have far exceeds our size. The constituency of the SWIFT community is much bigger than the company itself. Being a co-operative, we can extend that research within our community, which wouldn't be possible if we were a purely commercial company."

**Prof. Marion Debruyne:** "You can look at this partnership from three different perspectives. First of all, research insights gained will help SWIFT in its decision-making. They can also share those insights with their community. Thirdly, they can obtain recognition and visibility on a certain topic that is of strategic importance to them. Ways of achieving that recognition might include a conference, a book or a case study to be used in education and training. Other insights might only be of interest to SWIFT."

## Info

[www.swift.com](http://www.swift.com)

## GOTTFRIED LEIBBRANDT, HEAD OF MARKETS, SWIFT

"Our partnership with Vlerick will help us understand how cooperatives like SWIFT can become truly market and customer oriented and come up with appealing value propositions."

## BRIAN HAUGHAN, HEAD OF PRODUCTS, SWIFT

"Strategic insights based on leading academic research are key to becoming more innovative in developing products that are much simpler for our customers to use."

# Joint Chairs 'Doing Business in Southern Africa' –

On 19 September, Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School launched the Joint Chairs 'Doing Business in Europe – Doing Business in Southern Africa'. It's a unique alliance between Vlerick and the University of Stellenbosch Business School. The chairs will perform research and arrange exchange of information, networks and students.

**"THIS PROJECT IS A FIRST FOR BOTH INSTITUTIONS. WHAT WE REALLY WANT TO DO IS TO WHET PEOPLE'S APPETITE FOR STUDYING MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA"**

>> Dr Elias 'Eltie' Links, incumbent 'Doing Business in Southern Africa' Chair



## What are the main challenges for future managers in Southern Africa?

Dr Elias 'Eltie' Links: "Over the past five to ten years, the Southern African economy has been growing at a tremendous rate and there are now a lot of new business opportunities. We want to identify those opportunities and help students to deepen their knowledge of Africa. Although they're African, we find that our students don't know as much about Africa and its economy as they should do. We want to teach them the critical success factors for building a successful business in Africa."

## What's the Chair's target group?

Dr Links: "The courses offered within the scope of the 'Doing Business in Southern Africa' Chair are optional. They are intended to whet the students' appetite for studying management in Africa and cover a whole range of subjects. The first two sessions were really successful. We welcomed 30 students, more than we expected. There's also a lot of interest on the part of international students. Not only is it important to teach Africans how to do business in Africa; we also need to give European students insight into the principles and aspects that are peculiar to Africa and that differ from the western approach."

"As we move forward, we also want to explore the possibility of attracting executives who are planning to do business in Africa or

who are already working here. There are a lot of large companies, banks, construction firms and telecom businesses that have taken the plunge and started up in business in Africa. We want to teach them what business here is like. Companies that have been operating here for a while can also offer us a lot of practical experience and case studies. That definitely enriches our courses."

## How does management and doing business in Africa differ from practices in western countries?

Dr Links: "It's not really the management topics that differ a lot from Africa to Europe, but the way they are approached. Marketing, for instance, is not so very different here but you have to take into account institutions and cultural aspects peculiar to Africa. When you talk about human resources, you have to ask questions about how business relates to society. When you consider the old chestnuts sustainability and governance, you find that these issues are addressed in European courses; we look at them from an African point of view."

## The 'Doing Business in Southern Africa' Chair is linked with the 'Doing Business in Europe' Chair. What's your view on this exchange?

Dr Links: "The Chair in South Africa will benefit European students at Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School who would like to find out more about the African economy and how it works. Africa is made up of 54 countries. We will help students to understand how the various aspects of business work over there. There has been a massive increase in European interest in Africa. For European companies that want to enter the African market and are transferring personnel to our continent, it's important to have a deeper understanding. There is huge potential for Europe in Africa, and the European Union – apart from its important developmental role – is playing an important part as a business partner. We want to teach European students about all the issues they will come up against that are very different."

## Apart from teaching, research is another important feature of the Chair, isn't it?

Dr Links: "It's certainly our aim to conduct a lot of research into doing business in Africa and Europe. We hope to see a lot of papers by students and professors on specific topics. One idea is to build a large library of case studies of companies working in Africa. Complementary to our teaching and research remit, we hope to include a more active element in the shape of a field trip to Europe and Africa so that students can see the situation for themselves. It's good to read and study, but meeting people and seeing things in context enhances understanding as well. This project is a first for both institutions and what we really want to do is to whet people's appetite."

# Doing Business in Europe'

## Is the "Doing Business in Europe" Chair a response to a specific market need?

**Prof. Jacques Pelkmans:** "Definitely. It's remarkable how little attention business schools devote to the importance of the EU for businesses and various business sectors. This Chair is a first attempt to fill that gap. Nor do companies really consider the impact of the EU on business practice, except perhaps competition policy as it relates to acquisitions and mergers. Companies are, of course, well represented in EU circles thanks to lobby groups, but these activities are far removed from day-to-day management problems and strategic developments. Businesses do not need to be experts on EU matters, but all too often, as a result of gaps in their knowledge, they let opportunities slip or fail to recognise a potential threat, or else see it too late to make an appropriate strategic response. The Chair enables Vlerick to fulfil a pioneering role in exploring the interface between business and the EU, while drawing the attention of companies to the importance of EU legislation, liberalisation and areas such as competition policy, trade policy and environmental policy via pertinent case studies, research, publications and training."

## What are the objectives of the Chair?

**Prof. Pelkmans:** "In the short term we want to make MBA and Masters' students aware of the importance of the EU for anyone wishing to do business in Europe. We also want to develop business cases that show the specific impact that interaction – successful or otherwise – between companies and EU policy can have. These will also be useful for executive courses and in-company training programmes. Our longer term aim is to build on Vlerick's growing reputation in this field, with both companies and employers' organisations. I'm also hoping to research a few key aspects of the interface between business and the EU, for example the true impact of EU legislation on companies' cost effectiveness. Many claims are made in this area, but there's been remarkably little in the way of solid research."

## An international business school attracts both European and non-European students and companies. How does Vlerick respond to this diversity?

**Prof. Pelkmans:** "The demands and needs of the two groups are substantially different. Every so often Vlerick organises a 'familiarisation with business in Europe' workshop for non-European companies. We now want to position this type of training more firmly in the market. European companies are usually quite familiar with the market environment and with the concept of cultural diversity. In their case, the emphasis will be more on gaining a deeper understanding of the importance of the EU for business practice in general, and for their



**"THE CHAIR ENABLES VLERICK TO FULFIL A PIONEERING ROLE IN EXPLORING THE INTERFACE BETWEEN BUSINESS AND THE EU"**

>> Prof. Jacques Pelkmans, incumbent 'Doing Business Europe' Chair

sector or core activities in particular. Vlerick has the opportunity to acquire an unparalleled reputation in this area."

## The "Doing Business in Europe" Chair is linked to another Chair, "Doing Business in Southern Africa". How do you see the interaction between the two developing?

**Prof. Pelkmans:** "One aspect of the Joint Chair arrangement is that both Prof. Eltie Links, the incumbent in South Africa, and myself will visit each other's campus and give seminars. Other colleagues will also make exchange visits in order to teach specialised classes. Africa – specifically Southern Africa – is of particular interest to my fellow Vlerick colleagues and our MBA students as a promising 'emerging market'. They view the South African business community as exciting, because it leads the way in opening up Africa as a continental market. We can learn a lot from that. It would be an excellent idea to encourage PhD research on each campus in areas where this will deliver added value. Both incumbents are also expected to be active in the public domain, in the European Union and in Southern Africa respectively. Lastly, we're looking at the possibility of organising joint conferences and, if possible, issuing joint publications."

Read the full interview with Prof. Jacques Pelkmans at [www.vlerick.be](http://www.vlerick.be).

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