



# PIONEER



# GOT WHAT IT TAKES?

## THE ROLE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION ACCENTURE'S HELP VENTURE  
MANAGING IN LIBERIA SPOTLIGHT ON UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

## Elite status

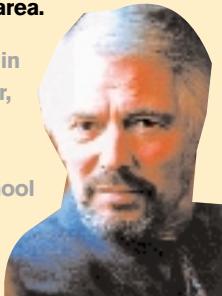
► At the end of last year we were delighted to be told that we were listed in the top 50 MBA programmes in the world by the UK Government, confirming our position as a leading MBA provider. We started 2005 with an undertaking to reinforce the growing knowledge that we are one of a handful of schools in the world with triple accreditation. We instigated a marketing campaign in journals such as *The Economist* and *Business Week* to get the message across that less than one per cent of business schools are accredited by AMBA, EQUIS and AACSB, with Strathclyde being one of them.

Recent developments with the MBA include the launch of an Associate MBA scheme. This is aimed at those not ready to embark on the Strathclyde MBA but keen to experience formally some elements of the course, meaning that individuals can participate in intensive seminars at our centres.

A range of MBA specialisms is also now being offered in response to feedback from applicants who want the benefits of the general MBA programme, but who from the outset know how they want their studies to develop.

**Strategic management and change, operations and project management, entrepreneurship, and international business specialisms have been designed, allowing students at the elective and project stages to focus on their chosen area.**

**Professor Colin Eden, Director, University of Strathclyde Graduate School of Business**



## Scottish association offers networking opportunities

**THE SCOTTISH ALUMNI ASSOCIATION WAS RELAUNCHED IN 2002. HERE IS A MESSAGE FROM ITS PRESIDENT, MATT WATTS**

► Since its relaunch, the Scottish Alumni Association's primary goal has been to encourage greater interaction between its members, through a series of regular guest speaker and networking events.

To date we have had a wide mix of speakers, ranging from entrepreneurs and people from private sector blue chips, to representatives of public sector bodies. These have included: Jeff Watson, who is Head of Delivery Ecommerce and Internet at Royal Bank of Scotland Plc; Wai-Yin Hatton, the Chief Executive of Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board; and John Robertson, who is Operations Director of Spirit Group.

The events have been well attended and they provided useful insights into the roles and industries of our speakers and the challenges they face. Lively interaction among attendees has also been a main feature during the networking sessions that conclude each event.

Membership is free and is welcomed from alumni and current students of USGSB from across the range of courses offered. So whether you currently live in Scotland, or visit occasionally, you're more than welcome to get involved by simply attending our events.

The next one will take place on 19 May at USGSB, 199 Cathedral Street, Glasgow, from

6pm to 8.30pm. The evening will consist of a presentation from John Needham, who is Director, Account Management Operations, at the Royal Bank of Scotland.

John will talk about his career path since completing the Strathclyde MBA. He will discuss changes in the financial services industry, and some of the challenges and successes of leadership in his current role.

John's remit includes 14 customer and corporate service centres, which employ more than 5,000 staff who carry out back-office processing and telephony services on behalf of the bank's customer-facing businesses, including RBS, NatWest, Tesco Personal Finance, Coutts & Co and RBS International.

If you are interested in attending this event, email your name and contact details to [alumniscotland@gsb.strath.ac.uk](mailto:alumniscotland@gsb.strath.ac.uk). Places are restricted, so confirm your attendance as soon as possible.

Please also email us your views on what you would like the association to offer. With an expanded committee now in place we are keen to make the association bigger, better and more effective. Let us know, too, if you'd like to become more actively involved in the association on a voluntary basis and one of our committee members will get in touch.

## STEVE'S A MAN ON A MISSION FOR MBAs



► Making the Association of MBAs more global is the mission of Strathclyde MBA alumnus

Steve Hooker, who was elected to AMBA's international management board late last year.

Steve, who graduated in 1989, is the DIY store chain B&Q's general manager for direct sourcing and is responsible for the sourcing of all products from outside the UK.

"I would like to help make AMBA a world-class organisation that MBAs around the world will want to join and remain in, benefiting

both UK and non-UK members," he says. "While business is global, the association is 85 per cent UK-based and I want to see that changed."

Steve's ideas to help achieve this include virtual networking through the use of weblogs, electronic newsletters, webcasts and web meetings, helping local face-to-face networking – he is organising an initial meeting in Shanghai, for example – and the development of some strategic alliances with other business schools and companies.

AMBA has a professional paid staff for the day-to-day running of the association for its 9,000 members. Steve's

role has a strong strategic element involving regular board meetings and making key decisions such as recruitment of the senior management team. He has been elected for three years initially, but can stand for a second term.

"I'm a great believer in networking," he says, "and one way is through the regional organisations' events. Also I'd like to ask anyone who has thoughts on virtual networking for AMBA to get in touch with me. I need people with experience in this area to help get this idea off the ground."

- Steve can be contacted by emailing [hookeste@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:hookeste@yahoo.co.uk)

Professor Susan Hart speaks on behalf of Strathclyde University at the awards ceremony.



## Let's celebrate our success

► Ian Percy, chairman of Kiln plc and Companies House Steering Board, paid credit to USGSB at the Scottish plc Awards at Glasgow's Hilton Hotel in March. He noted "the enormous amount of work and effort" put into the research process.

Professor Percy was speaking as chairperson of the awards judging panel. "We are fortunate in Scotland in having such a quality university sector," he said. "One of the themes that came through to me in this process is that we in Scottish business should be partnering with that sector much more effectively than I think many businesses do at present."

He picked out the two new awards for 'innovation' and 'development of your people' for particular comment.

"Long-term sustainable growth and profitability come from having an empowered, motivated, well-trained work force. Having quality people around who can embrace change and keep their eyes on the horizon is an essential ingredient."

For the fifth year, GSB has acted as research sponsor for the annual awards. Professor Susan Hart spoke on behalf of Strathclyde at the awards dinner, decrying "Scottish miserablism and the unworthy performance of Scotland plc" and saying that Scotland should be celebrating success. She pointed

out that since last year the Top 500 list\* reveals a major recovery for the country's leading companies – a 64 per cent leap in profits.

She too picked up on the theme of innovation: "The new award category for innovation has no home for negative traits, and our finalists here are bucking this trendy discourse of depression."

"The Scottish Executive's drive towards the rejuvenation of the Scottish economy focuses on growing a healthy crop of innovative companies working at the leading edges of tomorrow's technologies, operating globally."

Professor Nic Beech, Dr Phyl Johnson, Dr George Burt, Dr Tom Mullen and Peter McInnes of USGSB, together with business school colleagues Professor Brian Ashcroft and Professor Hart, were involved in the judging interviews. BIS manager Christine Reid carried out the research.

The winning companies were HBOS (Scottish plc of the year), Schuh (best private company), Royal Bank of Scotland (developing your people), Wolfson Microelectronics (innovation, and mid-size capitalisation plc) and Cairn Energy (shareholder value). Sir Fred Goodwin of the Royal Bank of Scotland was voted CEO of the year.

\* List compiled by *Insider* of Scotland's top 500 companies.

## New dean hails Strathclyde reputation

► Professor Charles Harvey is the new Dean of Strathclyde Business School, as of May 1.

Most recently dean of Bristol Business School at the University of West England, Professor Harvey was previously Director of the School of Management at Royal Holloway, University of London.

He joined Bristol Business School in 1999 and raised the profile of the school in research, as well as recently launching postgraduate programmes in partnership with Tsinghua University in Beijing.

He said: "I'm thrilled to be appointed Dean of Strathclyde Business School, which is known worldwide as a centre of excellence for management education. I consider it a great honour to be asked to lead a school recognised for its commitment to combining outstanding research with excellence in teaching and the development of future business leaders."



## and...

### JUST PUBLISHED

► Professor Gerry Johnson's book, *Exploring Corporate Strategy*, is now in its seventh edition. Sales worldwide have reached over 600,000 in English language editions alone. Richard Whittington, Professor of Strategy at the Said Business School, Oxford, has joined Professor Johnson and Dr Kevan Scholes for the new edition. ► USGSB professor and Senior Fellow of the Advanced Institute of Management (AIM), Chris Huxham, and co-author Dr Siv Vangen, have a new book out. *Managing to Collaborate: The Theory and Practice of Collaborative Advantage* (Routledge) is based on 15 years of research.

### MASTERCLASSES

► Dr Alf Hatton will give a masterclass as part of the Continuing Professional Development (CIPD) Masterclass Series on June 22, entitled An Experiential Introduction to NLP (neurolinguistic programming) and Richer Interpersonal Communications at The Teacher Building, 14 St Enoch Square, Glasgow.

### INDIA RESEARCH

► Research Fellow Shameen Prashantham's study on the internationalisation of software SMEs in India has been attracting global interest. The study relates to Shameen's doctoral work within Strathclyde International Business Unit. Shameen is currently assisting Professor Gerry Johnson in USGSB on two research projects.

### SPEAKERS' CORNER

► The inaugural Scottish Business Strategy Challenge, organised by USGSB and Genesis Consulting, took place in April in the Barony Hall. Among the companies taking part were ScottishPower, Clydesdale Bank, Jacobs Babtie, Weir Group and Cisco Systems. ► Tim Clissold spoke to a large audience as guest speaker in February describing his experiences of doing business in China and his book *Mr China*.

# THE FRAGILITY OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

CEO – THE TOP JOB, THE ASPIRATIONAL ROLE, THE CAREER MOVE YOU WANT TO MAKE NEXT. OR IS IT? DR PHYL JOHNSON EXAMINES THE PITFALLS

**M**aking it into the executive suite as a chief executive brings up and downsides. Latterly, it has been the downsides that have gained both academic and practitioner interest. The key questions are: just how fragile are our CEOs and what can we do about it?

Being the chief executive of an organisation is about being the lead steward of resources and about acting responsibly and effectively to please shareholders and stakeholders alike. This brings with it inevitable

tensions. There will, in the stewarding or leading of an organisation, always be tensions between the interests of the different stakeholder and shareholder groups. The role of the CEO is often to negotiate, act and decide within this space of tension: sometimes the villain, sometimes the hero, but usually the instigator of most things.

US-based leadership academics James Mambil and Janet Dukerich highlighted some time ago the extent to which we have a 'romance' with the CEO role and love to attribute organisational successes and failures to the actions of the CEO – more than any

other explanatory element of organisational performance. The turn or trend post-Enron, however, has been to mistrust and blame rather than trust and praise the actions and activities of CEOs and their boards. We seem to be falling out of, rather than in, love with them.

This turn in public opinion, and burdensome regulatory change surrounding corporate governance in Europe and the USA, has heaped additional pressure on already pressured CEOs.

Quite apart from the tension created from being in the lead stewardship role – balancing the wants, needs and aspirations of multiple stakeholder groups – simply being the prime holder of power in the organisation brings difficulties. Kets de Vries, author of *The Leadership Mystique*, describes the role of CEO as one that involves being on a stage and under constant observation.

Others talk about employees' favourite habit of boss-watching. While it's nice to be in the limelight and have everyone's attention – at least, when you need it – being in the limelight all the time becomes problematic. Continued and close observation brings with it yet more inevitable potential fragility for the CEO. The more you are observed and talked about, the higher the chance of being misread and misunderstood.

The paradox for the CEO is that they are so psychologically accessible to others and yet very rarely fully psychologically known in their roles. They are accessible in terms of being on stage, they are accessible as the source of organisational success or failure and they are supposed to be accessible to simultaneous and often competing stakeholder needs.

## SOUND FOUNDATIONS

Here are some generic rules of thumb that may act as a starting point for other actions and activities concerning CEOs.

- 1 **Ensure the hire is right in the first place.** Succession and succession planning is key to organisations and yet is very rarely engaged in or engaged in well. It is rare that a single hire, even a CEO, is going to turn an organisation round overnight.
- 2 **Ensure that the newly-appointed CEO is strongly supported both in the early days of their appointment and in a continuing sense by the company chairman – someone within the organisation to whom they can and ought to speak to in confidence.**
- 3 **Ensure that the CEO learns to support him or herself by fully using time away from the organisation.** It's healthy for both the firm and the CEO to break away psychologically from the dependency of a 'messiah' complex where it's believed the CEO has to be there or things will go wrong.
- 4 **Think about outsourcing CEO support in terms of external coaching and mentoring.** The relief of being able to speak the unspoken that does not have much of a place in the performance of the CEO role, such as self-doubt, often helps relieve the pressure of the inevitable job-related tension.
- 5 **Watch out for churn rates.** If the CEO that has been appointed isn't right for the post, then churn them fast – why wait two years? Conversely, if they are right, then patience beyond two or three years may well pay off.



# 10 TOP TIPS FOR CEOs

- 1 Have a vision for your organisation and give direction.**
- 2 Create a culture based on innovation and co-operation.**
- 3 Listen to your customers and your staff.**
- 4 Identify key areas to improve and focus on them until they are right.**
- 5 Hire the best staff you can.**
- 6 Develop a 'learning' organisation – invest in your staff through training and mentoring.**
- 7 Share the load – let others do the day-to-day running of the organisation.**
- 8 Utilise new technology, perhaps by improving communication with customers or creating new products.**
- 9 Know when to lead.**
- 10 Lead by example and make sure you have a management team that you can trust and which trusts you.**

CEOs seem to take the full allocation of time out that would help them recover from a highly demanding role. A recent survey revealed that as many as 85 per cent of CEOs don't take their full annual leave allocation.

This trend may be related to the 21st century phenomenon described as 'CEO churn'. What is being referred to here is the brevity of CEO tenure and the realisation that an incoming CEO usually has a two-year period to 'get it right' (execute an effective turn-around) before they themselves decide they can't hack it or are removed for their post.

This is less time than was afforded to incoming CEOs 10 to 15 years ago. And, according to some authors, this CEO churn factor is part of the hubris that leads CEOs toward dramatic and high-profile strategic change such as mergers, take-overs, acquisitions and revolutionary change, rather than opting for a slower pace of incremental change and growth.



Yet, according to Professor Cary Cooper, in the midst of all this accessibility, one of the biggest sources of stress, tension and fragility for CEOs is their sense of isolation. They are isolated from their employees for obvious reasons: confidential knowledge, difficult and sensitive decisions. They can even be isolated from their senior executives, for whom they also perform a role rather than appear in person as themselves. Their long hours even keep them isolated from their own private lives.

For a newly appointed CEO, the palpable sense of psychological and physical distance – no one wants to look like a suck-up or too much of a political animal and sit next to the CEO in meetings – is something of a shock that requires not only initial adjustment, but also continued management. One could

argue that in the void created by the management of this isolation, the self-destructive mode of the CEO that Kets de Vries mentions can come to the fore. In the mode of a Shakespearean tragedy, CEOs can end up making decisions and life choices that contribute to their own downfall.

Studies speak of 'executive ill-health', which can include long-hour fatigue, impacted family life (marital separation and difficult parenting relationships), physical manifestations of stress and mood disorders. All this is not helped by the fact that very few

Illustration by Miles Cole

QUESTION  
TIME

LIZ MOODY IS DIRECTOR OF THE CONSULTANCY ICD PARTNERSHIP LTD

**Liz, when did you graduate?**

I did the MBA full-time and graduated in 1992.

**So what was your background before the MBA?**

I originally qualified as a PE teacher, but my heart just wasn't in teaching, so I started work with a voluntary organisation while studying for a diploma in Management Studies. I then moved into pharmaceutical sales.

**Do you recall any memorable moments from your MBA studies?**

Almost too many to list! Our year group had loads of fun people – we toured distilleries, bagged Munros, had a fancy dress party, a Burns supper, a weekend jazz festival, a volleyball tournament, five-a-sides and numerous other nights out. Most memorable was our year challenge trip to Skye to scale the Inaccessible Pinnacle. We ran down a scree slope which was a first for me and really exhilarating.

**What effect did the MBA have on you?**

It changed my way of thinking about many aspects of business and helped me to understand my interests and where I felt my strengths lay.

**What are you doing now?**

I'm a director and consultant with the ICD Partnership Ltd, which is a specialist customer management consultancy. We've been in operation for over two years now and have a terrific client base.

**What's the most memorable thing from your career to date?**

I made the step from being employed to starting up my own business five years ago. I haven't looked back since and every new contract we sign still gives me a buzz.

**Find out more about Liz's business at [www.icd-partnership.co.uk](http://www.icd-partnership.co.uk)**



# Management in a time of national upheaval

► After 14 years of civil war in Liberia, the United Nations is now in the west African country assisting the people in rebuilding the shattered state.

As civil affairs officer with the UN mission in Liberia (UNMIL), USGSB alumnus Tesfu Taddese (MBA Alligen) is tasked with the challenge of helping to restore state authority throughout the country following the peace agreement signed by the various warring factions. He is assisting the national transitional government to establish its authority by helping to build the capacity of the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs and the Civil Service Agency to pursue their mandate and duties.

"It's a major challenge where all veneers of normality have been shattered by years of open and

disguised civil conflict," said Tesfu.

He has been in Liberia since last June but it's not his first time there. His first assignment with the UN in Liberia from 1996-1997 was as humanitarian affairs officer. This involved managing rehabilitation projects for former combatants who had just been disarmed by the UN and its west African partners. This meant writing guidelines for screening project proposals submitted by non-governmental organisations, screening submissions and presenting them to a funding panel set up to approve funds.

Setting up his own consulting firm in Addis Ababa and working as a management consultant – for UN agencies in Ethiopia interspersed with stints abroad on short-term contracts for the UN – has given him a head start with

his new role.

Operating in such an unsettled environment means normal rules do not apply. "What I realise from working in a conflict situation is that many of the management disciplines that apply in contexts of normality may not necessarily work. When you have a non-functioning state, the problems you're confronted with are different from those in a functioning one."

"We know that the factions are lining up barely literate ex-combatants to be placed as officials in ministries, commissions, agencies and public enterprises. Of course this bloats the civil service, but do we have the right to refuse the 'guns-for-jobs' swap? At what cost? Standards and codes of behaviour expected of 'normal' governments only serve to frustrate local parties on whose name the missions are here in the first place."

On arrival, Tesfu completed a survey of the human, systems and infrastructural assets at the Ministry of Planning. He is also following up on the launch and implementation of a comprehensive programme of reconstruction for the Liberian politic, economic and social fabric.

In addition, he has also become a consultant to the Governance Reform Commission which oversees the transformation of all institutions in Liberia.

## fuzzy words

### GET DEFUZZED IN OUR SEVENTH STROLL THROUGH THE JARGON ALPHABET

**OT-mail:** An unnecessary, after-hours email sent to a supervisor or colleague with the sole purpose of letting them know how late you worked, or how early you clocked in.

**Stealth parenting:** Claiming you have a business appointment or breakfast meeting to hide from a less-than-understanding boss the fact you're really taking your children to school.

**Thought leadership:** What occurs during a meeting when someone states the obvious before anyone else can get it out.

**Tourists:** People who use training classes as a way to get a break from their jobs.

# Gib pioneers scheme to help others

► MBA alumnus Gib Bulloch spent a year working in Macedonia with the Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) business partnerships scheme in 2000, assisting small businesses. His employers Accenture gave him the time out to do it and Gib returned to work for them at the end of his time overseas – but the volunteering bug wasn't entirely out of his system.

On his return Gib and a few other volunteers from the VSO business partnerships scheme set up the Accenture Development Partnerships (ADP) programme in 2002, a not-for-profit project that consults to Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), foundations and donor organisations. The project has grown significantly over the past three years and is now an independent charity, registered in the UK.

Gib describes ADP as "a vehicle for channelling Accenture's capabilities to organisations that wouldn't normally have access to them, organisations that we wouldn't normally work with, in countries where the need is greatest for our skills, but access is least". He adds: "We don't make a profit for Accenture, but we don't lose money either and that means we are sustainable within Accenture."

"Following the tsunami disaster in December, a number of Accenture people wanted to help out in more practical ways than simply giving money," said Gib. "ADP is taking the lead role in providing support to organisations in affected areas. This, on top of the existing work ADP has been doing, means that we have a good pipeline of projects."

Gib now heads all ADP activities, with a core full-time team of eight and many more working on projects in the field. Those working on the ground in the developing world come from Accenture's mainstream practice and volunteer to work for six months at a time on 50 per cent of their salary.

The ADP programme delivers the same



high level of innovation and best practices enjoyed by all Accenture clients, but at rates in line with development industry norms.

Initially ADP targeted organisations in three main groups – donor organisations, foundations and NGOs.

"Organisations are starting to approach us as ADP grows and becomes better known in the market place," said Gib. "There's still a lot of business development work that the team does in approaching organisations in the development sector, and making them aware of how ADP skills and services can be

applied to their development needs."

Accenture staff have been involved in providing organisational development for ostrich farmers in Namibia, capacity building with HIV/AIDS NGOs in sub-Saharan Africa and enterprise development in the Balkans and beyond. They have worked with NGOs like CARE in Bangladesh, WWF in Cambodia and ActionAid in South Africa.

"We aim to be there long enough to have an impact, but not too long to create dependence," said Gib. "Our teams transfer their skills and knowledge to individuals in the local organisations so our work is sustainable after ADP leaves."

"Accenture staff are very enthused by the scheme and we have a very strong pool of people wanting to do ADP. Those who've been through the scheme return more motivated, having learned new skills which they're able to apply to their work back in the business. They see ADP as a great way of being able to do something fulfilling without having to resign from their jobs at Accenture. ADP is therefore an integral part of the Accenture career."

Gib and his team are rolling the scheme out to Accenture offices worldwide.

# Will you be part of the UAE success story?

► Business is booming in the United Arab Emirates, a country that only came into being in 1971. While still heavily dependent on oil revenues, the UAE is protected from periods of low oil prices by successful moves towards economic diversification, large foreign exchange reserves and overseas investments.

The UAE is a federation of seven autonomous states: Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ras Al Khaimah, Fujairah, Umm al Qaiwan and Ajman.

The population of these seven emirates is estimated at around four million and is growing every year. The success of the country is attracting people from around the world to live and work there. Approximately 25 per cent of the population are nationals – with people from other Arab countries, the Indian subcontinent, the Far East and Europe making up the rest.

Perhaps the best known of the emirates are Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Abu Dhabi has approximately 10 per cent of the world's proven oil reserves and five per cent of the gas. It has significant investments financed from oil income. It is the dominant member of the seven emirates, not least because of its financial strength. The future for Abu Dhabi will undoubtedly continue to be heavy investment in oil and petrochemicals.

Dubai has been forced to diversify and, necessity being the mother of invention, has been at the forefront of most new initiatives in the Emirates, emerging as the region's service hub.

Dubai's economy is based on its reputation as an intermediate centre of trade for the region, as well as its vibrant tourist industry and thriving free trade zone.

## BUSINESS ETIQUETTE

**It's important when doing business to know something of the culture surrounding you as it's important not to offend your hosts. In the UAE, with so many cultures present in the population, the task is made even more difficult.**

**Emiratis normally entertain at home, but will often accept a foreigner's invitation to a hotel or restaurant.**

**For Emiratis, eating with the left hand is improper and the left hand should be reserved only for 'unclean'**

**usage. No one should offer something with the left hand.**

**The standard greeting is 'As-salam alaikum' (peace be upon you) to which the standard reply is 'Wa alaikum as-salam' (and upon you be peace).**

**The basic working week is five days, with the week beginning on Saturday.**

**Prayer times vary around the year, but visitors should find out when they are and keep this in mind when making appointments.**

**Where carpeted, shoes should be left outside the room to avoid bringing in impurities and making the carpet ritually unclean for prayer.**

**Business dress is conservative and formal, such as dark business suits.**

**Visitors should check what is expected of them if they are visiting during the holy month of Ramadan, a special religious time for Muslims. Visitors may be requested not to eat, drink or smoke in public places during sunrise and sunset.**

More recent ventures such as the Dubai Internet City and Media City have diversified the Emirate's economy even further.

The free zones are testimony to Dubai's forward-looking policy-making and its commitment to promoting balanced growth, economic diversification and encouraging foreign direct investment. Within the free zones, multinational companies find the state-of-the-art infrastructure and liberal regulatory framework that are conducive to quick and efficient operation establishment in the region.

Incentives vary between free zones, but

can include 100 per cent foreign ownership, exemption from certain taxes and efficient transport and distribution facilities.

Dubai's rise to a position of leadership as an international trade and commerce hub can be largely traced to the policies that created the free zones and it continues to move forward with similar incentives and investments at government level.

While the oil industry will continue to drive the UAE economy forward, it seems growth in non-oil industries will become increasingly important economically.

• USGSB's local partner is the Higher Colleges of Technology, Dubai and Abu Dhabi. Tel: 00 971 4 208 9280 Email: sheida.mahdavi@hct.ac.ae

