



University of
Strathclyde
Business
School

PIONEER



WHY DOES A PROJECT GO WRONG?

LOOKING BEYOND THE EXCUSES

WORKING IN IRAQ THE BIG ACADEMY A CONSULTANT'S STORY
BIDDING FOR PLC AWARDS SELLING SCOTLAND

Our new dimensions

CHANGES ARE UNDER WAY AT STRATHCLYDE BUSINESS SCHOOL. THE DEAN OF THE BUSINESS SCHOOL, PROFESSOR CHARLES HARVEY, EXPLAINS HOW SOME OF THE CHANGES WILL AFFECT USGSB

► **Strathclyde Business School is undertaking a series of strategic developments. As part of these developments the activities of the Graduate School of Business are being reorganised to reflect the changing nature of undergraduate, post-experience and international activities.**

The business school is creating a new Department of Management that will consist of academic staff from the existing Graduate School of Business. This department will focus on a general management programme and introduce a new undergraduate programme in management.

The business school also expects to expand and develop overseas activities. At present the MBA is delivered in 10 centres across Europe, South East Asia and the Gulf. These centres graduate more than 300 MBA students every year. In addition, there are other specialist MSC programmes offered overseas. It is our intention strategically to develop these overseas activities, with anticipated developments in Russia and India.

To reflect the importance of these developments, the business school has created a new International Division with the Director of GSB, Professor Colin Eden, transferring to become an Associate Dean, taking overall responsibility for the division. The post of Director of GSB will not continue, and developments to the MBA will be led by the Department of Management with the continued involvement of the rest of the Business School, as well as the International Division.

These changes represent a significant investment in management education and international activities and will ensure continuity, managed within the context of strategic change.



What makes an exceptional manager?

► A new book, *The Exceptional Manager*, draws on the combined insight of the Advanced Institute of Management (AIM) fellows.

Edited by Professor Gerry Johnson of USGSB, together with professors Rick Delbridge and Lynda Gratton, it asks why British firms lag behind rivals in the US, France and Germany in terms of productivity. Most businesses face the choice of either competing on cost or on innovation and value. The book asks how businesses, and the people who manage them,

can go beyond 'business as usual'.

The book offers managers a range of ideas on how to develop the competences, practices and values that can make a difference, and is aimed at policy-makers, analysts, managers, and business and management academics and students.

USGSB's Professor Chris Huxham is one of the 18 AIM fellows who have contributed to the book, the first to be produced as a result of the AIM fellowships.

Awards underline Scotland's successful economy

► Strathclyde Business School has just completed its sixth year of involvement with the Scotland plc Awards. These annual awards recognise excellence in both the country's listed and private companies and are seen as the premier business awards in the Scottish corporate calendar. They are promoted jointly by PricewaterhouseCoopers and Scottish Business Insider with the business school acting as research sponsor. Christine Reid, Brian Ashcroft, George Burt, Peter McInnes, Phyl Johnson and Susan Hart have all contributed to the research.

The school's involvement with the awards has led to a close following of an ever-changing plc marketplace over the years and the number of listed companies has decreased since 2000, mainly as the result of takeovers.

The Scottish economy is currently in a healthy position and Scotland is home to global players such as the Royal Bank of Scotland, HBOS, Aggreko and Weir Group. Three years ago an award for outstanding private company was introduced to

recognise the substantial achievements of unlisted Scottish companies. This year, 110 Scottish-based parent companies, with a turnover exceeding £30 million, were eligible.

The business school is involved in this award and four other categories – Scottish plc of the Year, Mid-Size Cap plc, Developing Your People, and Innovation. The research process includes studying a wide range of financial and operational evidence, plus site visits to short-listed companies in order to gather in-depth information for the judging panel. Being involved in this way has resulted in link-ups with previous short-listed companies and has resulted in contributions to the content of the school's Masters programmes.

The chair of this year's awards is Keith Skeoch, chief executive of Standard Life Investments. The awards dinner takes place on May 4 in Glasgow where the school will comment on the research before an audience of Scotland's business and political elite.



The judging panel prepares to deliberate: (front, l-r) David Thorburn of Clydesdale Bank, Angus Cockburn of Aggreko and Andrew Bolger of the *Financial Times*; (back, l-r) Susan Hart of SBS, panel chairman Keith Skeoch of Standard Life Investments, Alasdair Northrop of *Scottish Business Insider*, Hugh Aitken of Sun Microsystems and Christine Reid of University of Strathclyde Graduate School of Business.

New roles for alumni

► MBA alumnus Matt Watts has been elected to AMBA's International Management Board, joining fellow alumnus Steve Hooker. This makes Strathclyde the only school to have two representatives on the board.

Two posts on the IMB became free after two non-executive directors retired. Matt and eight other AMBA members volunteered for the posts and Matt and Katie Porkess from the Open University were duly elected by AMBA members.

The IMB is responsible for driving AMBA strategy, governance, policy and financial management. Board meetings are held every two months in London and non-executive directors' time is given free of charge. Matt, who is change manager with the Royal Bank of Scotland Group, had his first board meeting in February and will be co-ordinating his visits to London with work trips where possible.

Matt said: "With my change management and business development background I'm keen to help AMBA realise its goals and aspirations. The role also gives me an excellent opportunity to obtain board-level experience and broaden my professional network."

Anne Miller has now taken over from Matt Watts as the President of USGSB's Scottish Alumni Association. Anne was recently appointed CEO at The Prince and Princess of Wales Hospice in Glasgow.

She said: "I'm delighted to have this opportunity to introduce myself as the new President of the USGSB Scottish Alumni Association.

"My involvement began last year as a full-time MBA student. The committee is keen to provide

opportunities for increased, ongoing interaction between alumni, but wants to include current students in this. We organise a number of events, all of which are posted on our calendar (www.alumni.strath.ac.uk/reunions/groups/usgsb/calendar.html).

"I'd also like to take this opportunity to ask: do you know of any alumni who do not receive *Pioneer* or email advice of events coming up? Please encourage them to register up-to-date details on the website – or contact me (amglasgow@btinternet.com).

"We are working with organisations, including essential (www.essential.strath.ac.uk), to provide interesting and relevant events for as many alumni as possible. Your help in finding 'lost' alumni would be much appreciated."

Heasgarnich reunion

Morag Nicolson (formerly Stewart) and Igor Brkic are organising a reunion of MBA Heasgarnich classmates over the weekend of September 16. Activities are currently at the planning stage but anyone interested in attending and who wants more details should email heasgarnich@gmail.com



Anne Miller,
President
of
Scottish Alumni.

and...

PROJECT COSTS

► Professor Colin Eden has had a paper, *The Amoebic Growth of Project Costs*, published in *Project Management Journal*. The paper was co-written by professors Fran Ackermann and Terry Williams.

Another paper by Professor Eden, *Cognitive Mapping*, has been published in the 30th anniversary issue of the *European Journal of Operational Research*, which has gathered together 30 influential articles previously published in it.

DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES

► Dr Shameen Prashantham is presenting a paper at the Advanced Institute of Management (AIM) sponsored workshop on May 5-6 at Lancaster University. The paper, on the practice of dynamic capabilities, is entitled *Internationalisation Routines and Capability Learning* and was co-written with Professor Steven Floyd, chair of strategic management technology and manufacturing at the University of Connecticut and an AIM international visiting fellow, working with Professor Gerry Professor of USGSB.

EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME NEWS

Babcock International Group's BIG Academy

► The first phase of the Babcock International Group's foray into executive education – the BIG Academy – began last September and so far has been very well received. To date, three cohorts of the Directors' programme have completed their course, which included strategy, managing change and people, and finance. The latest cohort is due to finish in June.

There are also six cohorts of the senior managers' programme and so far they have completed the strategy and project management modules, managing change and people, and finance.

More than 150 people have thus far participated in phase one of the programme. A timetable for phase two is currently being put together, which is due to start in the new academic year, with both the directors' and senior managers' programmes running.

Scenario course

Scenario Planning and the Art of Strategic Conversation, a three-day practical introduction to scenario planning, took place in April. The programme was a specially tailored learning and development programme delivered to a wide audience of interested specialists from several countries.

Academics from the University of Strathclyde Graduate School of Business, other UK and international institutions and research groups worked together to develop and tailor this short programme, which was led by Dr George Burt. Emeritus professor Kees van der Heijden and Ron Bradfield joined him as tutors. This is the first event held at USGSB. There are plans to hold a similar event next year, with the likelihood of an advanced scenario planning course being offered in the future.



Pictured is the latest Directors' cohort which shows: Ben Davey, head of tax, Babcock International Group; Jim Duffy, managing director S&T, First Engineering Ltd; John Howie, managing director, Babcock Naval Services; David McGinley, business development director, Babcock Engineering Services; Michael Pettigrew, managing director, Babcock Design and Technology; Nigel Russell, managing director, Babcock Defence Services; Kevin Thomas, managing director, Babcock Infrastructure Services; Bob Whiley, managing director, Eve Group; Bill Williamson, managing director, port and property services, Babcock Engineering Services; Douglas Wilson, SQE director, First Engineering. Not pictured is Janette Anderson, chief executive, First Engineering Ltd.

PROJECT FAILURE – IT'S ALL DOWN TO THE WEATHER

STEVE PATON LOOKS AT HOW ENGINEERS, DESIGNERS AND MANAGEMENT CAN AVOID SOWING THE SEEDS FOR DISASTER

For those of us who follow the news it has been commonplace for years to be confronted with tales of global disaster due to war, political upheaval or changing economic conditions. Two new contenders now seem eager to join the fray. First, in the red corner, are disasters caused by climate change and second, in the blue corner, are disasters caused by the failure of major engineering projects to perform to plan in terms of time, cost and quality.

Global climatic conditions and complex engineering projects share two similarities: both are talked about endlessly (especially in Britain with the national obsession with the weather) and both are seemingly impossible to predict, plan and control.

When a disaster strikes in either arena its cause is endlessly debated, committees are set up, investigators appointed, reports issued and scapegoats sought. While it is understandable that planetary conditions driven by the forces of nature and governed only by the laws of physics may perhaps be difficult to manage, it is less understandable that major projects conceived by man should involve the same uncertainty.

Britain has had its share of high-profile project failures, with the Scottish Parliament building being a case in point. Although costing a sizeable amount of money and having supposedly been built to rigorous quality standards, a news report indicated that parts of it are falling off. Autopsy of project failure has almost become an

industry in itself, the end product of which seems mainly to be fodder for journalists and industry commentators as the findings apparently do little to prevent future reoccurrence of these problems.

Project failure

Common reasons quoted for project failure include: poorly specified technical requirements, poorly understood scope of work, over-complex designs, lack of detail within the design information, inadequate planning, inadequate budgetary controls, lack of communication, poor co-ordination and of course (the current favourite) weak leadership. While these conclusions may be an accurate, if generalised, representation of events, this type of causal analysis is akin to reporting that the weather is bad due to rain, hail, sleet or snow – all very obvious but in no way indicative of the true failure mechanisms that produced these effects.

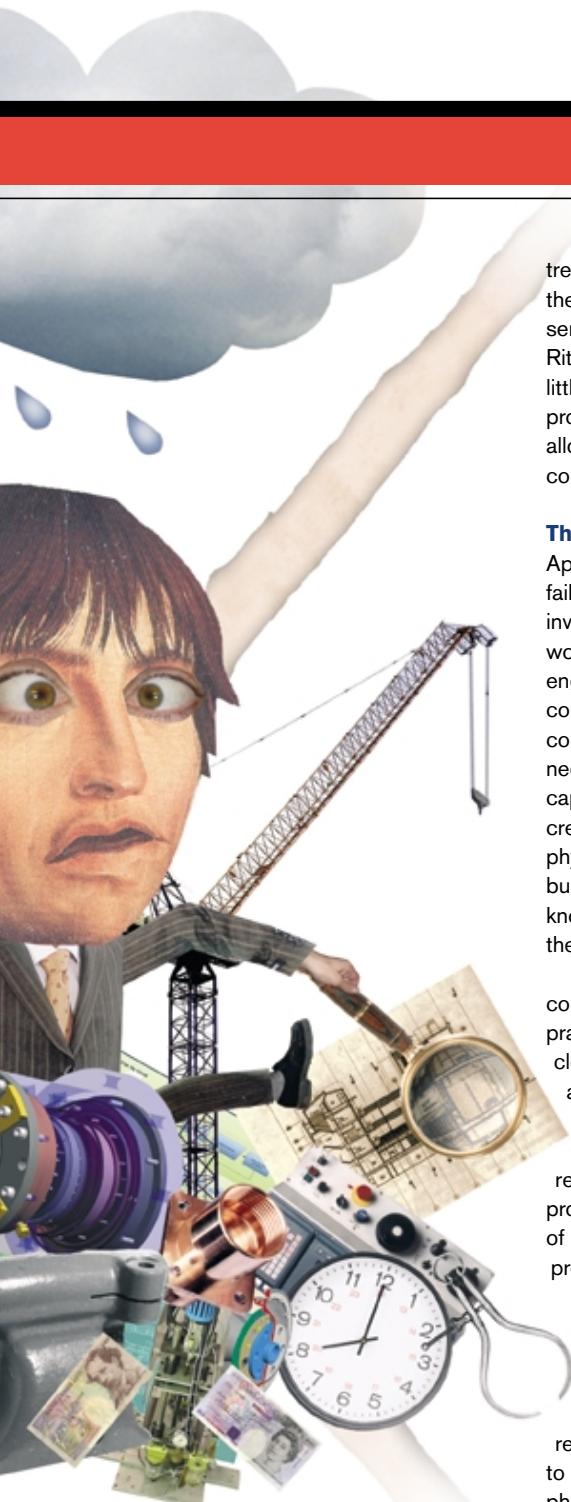
This situation is understandable, as the scale and complexity of most major projects undertaken today makes detailed after-the-fact analysis very difficult to carry out and even more difficult to report in a clear and transparent way – even if the politics of these highly sensitive undertakings can be put aside. This problem, coupled with contemporary organisational reluctance to analyse and report on worker performance at anything below managerial level, makes it impossible to cut through the confusion to distil both the systemic and individual failures that led to the disaster.



The problem with projects

All large-scale engineering projects have one thing in common in that they begin with a phase of design and development work. Further analysis of the reasons for failure reveals that most are born in the design phase of the project:

- **The specification of the technical requirements, upon which the design is based, is either inadequate or is subject to ongoing change**
- **General requirements for safety and quality are not properly engineered into the detail of the design**
- **The design or creative vision becomes too complex to engineer efficiently and build**
- **The design information is poorly translated into manufacturing instructions and processes of work.**



trend has continued more recently with the application of these principles to the service sector, described by George Ritzer as "McDonaldisation". However, little has been done to characterise the processes of creativity and innovation to allow the provision of a similarly consistent output.

The problem with people

Approaching the issue of major project failure from the bottom up, and investigating from the perspective of the worker, reveals that the nature of engineering design work is extremely complex, including varied and sometimes contradictory elements. The engineer needs to be creative, possessing the capacity for abstract thought, but this creativity has to be implemented in a physical product within a timescale and budget. The engineer requires specialised knowledge in specific areas combined in the correct mix with general knowledge.

Engineering work calls for a combination of theoretical knowledge and practical skill. The engineer must work closely with specialist engineers, while always retaining responsibility for his/her own design.

These sometimes contradictory requirements have implications for the process of design work and the systems of management control used within the project. In short, this issue can be

summarised as the dilemma created by combining the two seemingly opposite concepts of creativity and control.

Perhaps much of the responsibility for project failure is down to both the worker engaged in the design phase and the work system utilised to control the design process. This position is supported by the proposal that there is currently little understanding surrounding the combination of work types that require creative thinking and the need to work to strict deadlines and technical requirements.

Engineering, however, has had a hand in the creation of the structured processes of work that can be seen in many industries today because the principles of Taylorism were forged in the crucible of engineering companies. Indeed, there is some commonality between engineering design and Taylorised manufacturing processes.

The identification of the need for specialisation and the consequential need to integrate these specialisms with the use of some sort of system for co-ordination of work is paramount in both cases.

These issues lead to a high level of re-engineering and the embodiment of large numbers of modifications throughout the life of the project. This makes the original budget increasingly irrelevant and leads to escalating time and cost overruns.

Why, then, in many cases does the design phase fail so comprehensively? It is characterised by the generation and development of ideas – a process that requires high levels of creativity. Much work has been done in the past to understand and manage the process of repeatability and consistency – mainly in the context of manufacturing, headlined by the 'isms' of Frederick W.Taylor and Henry Ford. This

Here the similarity ends as it is impossible to support this with a step-by-step process for creativity. It looks as if the 19th century ghost of Frederick W. Taylor is of limited use in solving this 21st century problem.

Limited research in the aerospace industry suggests there are some fundamental issues with the management of creative labour working within the constraints of a controlled project environment. The scope of the specialisms defined as areas of engineering expertise can frequently be wrong. This requires over-complicated and inefficient systems of co-ordination to be implemented within the project to ensure the overall package of engineering fits together.

The training and experience of the engineering labour is often inadequate to carry out the tasks as it is difficult to select workers with such high levels of knowledge and skill, especially when the requisite knowledge is often rare and of an esoteric nature.

The scope of responsibility of the management function can often be incorrect with the balance between empowerment and control wrongly set. At one extreme, where high levels of management control are used, a lack of decision-making authority at the engineering level may result in slow progress. At the other extreme, where too much engineering autonomy is granted, the result can be a lack of consultation on important matters and even the wrong decisions being taken.

The supervision with engineering labour is difficult to perform effectively as often only another engineer with similar skills is qualified to carry out this function. This results in the need for a hybrid engineer/manager skill-set often difficult to find in one individual.

Issues to be tackled

This leaves two related problems. What can be done to better educate and train engineers to make them useful in major projects, and what can be done to select and integrate them into a performing unit?

If these issues are not addressed, the industry would be doomed to an escalating scenario of cost and time overruns, substandard engineering quality and ultimately loss of public confidence in the ability of industry and governments to spend money efficiently and wisely.

● **Dr Steve Paton is teaching fellow in organisational behaviour and human resource management at USGSB.**

QUESTION
TIMEURS BRUETSCH IS
HEAD OF MARKETING
COMMUNICATIONS AT
ZURICH AIRPORT

When did you do your MBA? I studied at USGSB from 1998 to 2000 at the Swiss centre in St Gallen, graduating November (McCallum).

Is what you're doing now different to pre-MBA?

Before my MBA I was vice-president of one of the biggest three-star hotels in St Moritz. I was responsible for sales and marketing as well as the cultural programme and conference facilities. After graduation, I took a leading position in a new business field in a different industry, responsible for cargo infrastructure at Zurich Airport and deputy to the strategic business unit head.

What did the MBA mean to you? Broadening my mind and stretching my limits. I learned about intercultural behaviours and gained knowledge of all business fields from a global perspective. I also looked at solving realistic business cases, coached by experienced tutors.

What have you been doing since graduation?

After a year in the cargo business at Zurich Airport, I found myself in the real estate department as allocation planner and, after another year, inaugurating a marketing communication department from scratch. Today I'm responsible for airport advertising, market research, marketing services, customer and travel trade relations as well as customer relationship management, strategic partnership and special projects.

Any career high-spots to share? Managing to increase the revenue stream from airport advertising using creative ideas was a high. So was creating strategic partnerships with partners in the tourism industry, which led to a cost-saving way of marketing the airport.

Gordon takes a rail route to consultancy

HOW AN UNEXPECTED JOB IN INDUSTRY HELPED MBA ALUMNUS GORDON STEWART TO DEVELOP HIS STRENGTHS

► When terrorists flew hijacked aeroplanes into the World Trade Centre on 11 September, 2001, the human repercussions were many. The global jobs market also suffered a huge blow and MBA alumnus Gordon Stewart (MBA Westray) was just one of the many affected.

Gordon had just graduated with his MBA that year, with a career for IBM and Compaq behind him, and a planned future in consultancy ahead of him. Just before finishing his MBA he took voluntary redundancy from Compaq to further this aim, but his plans were thwarted when the consultancy market disappeared as a result of the terrorist strike.

"I'd gained my MBA to get a broader business understanding and more financial acumen," said Gordon. "I had consultancy in my sights, but sadly that was not to be at the time. For a while my full-time job became looking for my 'ideal' job, and I eventually found that job through hard work and perseverance. I landed on my feet by gaining a role with Bombardier, the world's largest train manufacturer. I gained invaluable experience and I'm now heading back on my original path."

While at Bombardier in his role of director of risk management and project management training, Gordon was invited to implement a project risk management process globally. "This involved implementation into all 11 of Bombardier Transportation's divisions – over 600 projects worldwide in more than 28 countries – which meant training over 3,000 people in five different languages," he said. "But I didn't know anything about risk management when I started, couldn't speak five languages and discovered that, when abroad, a Scottish accent is not always recognised as speaking English!"

Gordon faced the challenge head-on. He found a lot of organisational changes were going on at Bombardier which involved a lot of "politicking" but, he says: "Using the MBA's stakeholder

management technique I was able to successfully manage my stakeholders to achieve my goals.

"I spent two to three weeks each month abroad and had to take into account the cultural differences when conducting my business.

"My role proved I enjoyed diversity and being my own boss as I had a very autonomous role with Bombardier."

This realisation led Gordon back to the world of consultancy, where he is now setting up a Glasgow office with Facilitators UK, as they expand from Aberdeen into the Central Belt. "By working as a facilitative consultant I get diversity and I get to be my own boss.

"I'm getting to apply all aspects of my MBA here – marketing our services, developing our strategy and so on – and I particularly enjoy forming the client's perspective, helping them improve their business performance with results that make a difference.

"I now want to develop a global consultancy with Facilitators UK with headquarters in Scotland, tapping the international talent potential here and the nice life/work balance that can be achieved living here.

"My MBA hugely increased my confidence through the knowledge I gained and it also upped the bar as regards my aspirations. Although my career plan altered as a result of the September 11 implications, I don't believe in looking back and wishing things had gone differently," said Gordon.

"It's all worked out in the end and I tend to spend a lot of my time now thinking about what I can achieve and do differently in the future."



fuzzy words

GET DEFUZZED WITH OUR SEVENTH STROLL THROUGH THE JARGON ALPHABET

management consultancy: When management hires a team of outside consultants to do what it should be doing; namely, deciding how best to run the company.

pockets of resistance: What you encounter at your annual review when it's time for the boss to calculate your pay rise.

working off the side of your desk: To be so

overloaded with work there's no more room left on your desktop. "I'd like to help, but I'm already working off the side of my desk."

zerotasking: We've all heard of multitasking but this is for the times when you are doing nothing or have nothing to do – something few of us will be familiar with...

DAVID GUNN REPORTS ON HIS TWO CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS IN IRAQ



Gunn goes into battle

► Being on the receiving end of a rocket or mortar attack can't be classified as a normal day at the office, but for David Gunn that's exactly what it is.

David (MBA Raineach) is currently project manager for ECC International in Iraq. ECC is currently supporting the Air Force Center for Environmental Excellence (AFCEE) throughout Iraq on fast-track engineering and construction projects as part of the US government's reconstruction efforts in the country.

It's nothing new for David to be surrounded by danger. Pre-MBA he spent 11 years in the RAF, including a period with the UN in Bosnia at the height of the conflict.

Following on from the RAF, he decided to build on his communications knowledge with a degree in communications systems and after graduation worked for National Air Traffic Services (NATS) at Gatwick Airport as an air traffic control engineer, dealing with the UK's air traffic control engineering network from the Isle of Tiree to the Isle of Wight.

Expanding his business knowledge was the next objective so he could step away from being an electronics engineering specialist.

"The MBA seemed the next logical step in my academic qualifications for career development," said David.

David handed in his final project 18 months ago and started looking for a new position. He had already decided not to move back down south permanently and was concentrating on applying for jobs in Scotland when he was approached by a friend from his RAF days, now ECC's IT manager in Iraq, who persuaded David to send in his CV.

"The next day I had a telephone interview and the deal was done – it was Iraq for me!"

David is enjoying the unique challenges that being a project manager in a conflict-ridden country throws up. "In construction project management in Iraq there are more



than your usual business issues to deal with. One of the most challenging times on a construction project is the mobilisation. Getting offices and housing camps set up while prioritising the primary job – the construction – can be tough. Generally we live and work in trailers, getting them in fast and then bringing them up to a standard we're comfortable with. On both my projects I have South African or American protection wherever I go and the living/working compounds are guarded as well.

"In Iraq, every day is a challenge. I constantly deal with a wide variety of Iraqi stakeholders, such as the subcontractors, owners, managers, workers, the Iraqi army, the Iraqi police and my local project engineers.

"There are many daily challenges associated with Iraq that you wouldn't normally find on a construction project in the West – security issues being the most obvious challenge – and there is no 'let go'."

Despite armoured cars and security personnel being with him at all times, David finds being out on the road the most dangerous place. "Just watching machine gun fire head your way as it ripples across a wall is quite surreal."

As well as the unique challenges and danger he encounters, David also has the

everyday challenges to tackle – finance and schedule issues, dealing with stakeholders, writing client reports or working to bring in new business.

"The MBA definitely assisted in my general overview of all disciplines that are required in a business. I've pulled on all my experience – the RAF/NATS and the MBA – in order to get the job done and there is a real sense of satisfaction relating to my responsibilities despite the 14-hour days seven days a week and being away four months at a time!"

David is obviously enjoying his time in the Middle East as he has recently signed another year's contract. "In the construction industry, you work yourself out of a job, but if the work is still available I plan to stay at least three years. I enjoy the work and I also enjoy the company culture and personnel, so I have no immediate plans to move on at all."

His job brings him into contact with hundreds of Iraqi workers each day and he says there is a positive attitude to the work going on in the country from the vast majority of people he has been in contact with.

"It's not all doom and gloom as the media likes to portray. There's a lot of good happening and just about everyone, Iraqi and non-Iraqi, has the same objective of a safer and better Iraq."

"In the end it will be the Iraqi people that decide the future of their country. We can already start to see the sharing of intelligence from the local communities in the fight against the insurgency."

"I continually remind my teams that we are guests in a country with a culture that goes back thousands of years."

"I feel I've gained professionally and personally from working here and with the different cultures and I'll undoubtedly have some very good memories from my time in Iraq."

A life in the day of Louise MacDonald

► Louise MacDonald was senior director of customer operations with Scottish Enterprise before being seconded to the Scottish Executive to set up a new division – International Projects Division. This was formed to drive forward some priority policies of Scotland's First Minister, Jack McConnell; namely Fresh Talent and Scotland's International Image.

Fresh Talent aims to attract bright, talented people to live and work in Scotland as projections indicate that in the future Scotland will have more old people, and fewer young people of working age. Scotland's International Image is about promoting Scotland as a great country to visit, live, learn and work in, do business and invest in. There are four teams in Louise's division – the Fresh Talent and International Marketing teams are based in Edinburgh and the Relocation Advisory Service and International Networks team are based in Glasgow so Louise splits her time between both cities.

Louise (MBA1995) gives us a glimpse of her typical day.

7.30am I'm either leaving home in Glasgow to get to the office by about 8am or, if I'm going to Edinburgh – and this is usually three to four days each week – I'll be on the train, arriving at Victoria Quay in Edinburgh about 9am.

If I'm in Glasgow I take the car as I'm usually out and about at meetings. If I've got an office-based day I'll take the tube.

There's a lot of travel – having a division split across two cities can be challenging and means I'm not a stranger to the staff on ScotRail! We also work with partners, or have events across the country, so quite often I might be on my way to another city, such as Aberdeen. We are now stepping up our efforts in some key markets, and overseas travel will increase in the coming months.

9am Once in the office, I get down to answering email and phone calls and attending meetings.

Morning Typically, I spend a

lot of time with my teams as we are still quite a new division. About half my staff are civil servants and half have been seconded from partner organisations or sourced externally. We have secondees from Scottish Enterprise, the Home Office and Immigration Advisory Service UK. In the past year my focus has been getting people into place within the teams and ensuring things happened on time. For example, we got the Relocation Advisory Service up and running within a demanding timeframe – to date this service has provided in-depth assistance to over 9,000 people and more than a quarter of a million people have visited our website.

1pm Lunch! Usually soup or a sandwich at my desk or during a meeting.

Afternoon I do a lot of presentations to a wide range of organisations and individuals. My international marketing team organises a lot of tailored itineraries for members of the international press so I often have sessions with them talking about initiatives such as Fresh Talent. There is a lot of international interest in topics such as management migration and Fresh Talent and these sessions are useful to promote Scotland's approach. Similar sessions also take place with industry associations, overseas representatives from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and students at Scottish universities.

I recently spoke at a conference organised by the European Economic & Social Committee of the European Union in Barcelona and at a World Bank Conference in Prague.

My teams are involved

in a wide range of activities, from organising receptions and events for the First Minister, to running marketing campaigns around the world, and liaising with the Home Office on managed migration. We provide a lot of briefing and updates to Ministers so it's important for me to be up to speed with all the activities my team are taking forward.

We often meet with partners such as Scottish Enterprise, British Council Scotland, local authorities or business associations about Fresh Talent. With Scotland's International Image, meetings may be with organisations such as VisitScotland, the Scotch Whisky Association and some of our large private sector organisations that are very active internationally.

There are regular meetings with my team leaders every two weeks and a gathering for all the staff once a month. I also have to attend meetings with my boss, the Head of International and Communications Group, about budgets and staff matters.

6pm Those emails again.

6.30pm Usually I leave the office around now, if I've been in Edinburgh I don't get home until about 8pm, but there are regular evening functions to attend, in Edinburgh or Glasgow, which means often getting home later.



Invariably it's a long day for Louise MacDonald.

