

# IRANIAN BUSINESS SCHOOL PROJECT

## Quarterly Newsletter

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## Introduction

There is no doubt that the vision and mission behind the Iranian Business School (IBS) Project, which aims to establish an independent, not-for-profit, international business school in Iran, are ambitious. There is also no doubt that once established, IBS can play an important role in helping to shape the next generation of business leaders in Iran and provide them with the necessary resources and training to positively impact the country's economic path and its standing on the global economic stage. However, the success of even the most compelling endeavours depends on the ability of an organisation to ensure there is awareness of its objectives and support for the benefits it aims to provide to all of its constituents, at an individual and corporate level. The IBS Project is no exception. The strong foundations for this unique concept have already been well established and the Project continues its advancement with the help of a group of volunteers including business leaders and academic experts from inside and outside Iran. There also continues to be rapid and ongoing progress in each of the core areas of the School's development - these are elaborated upon in the Project Progress Report section of this publication.

In order to build global awareness of the Project and the important contribution it can make to

economic advancement in Iran, we have established a dedicated Marketing Committee to address this critical challenge. Members of this Committee bring to bear a broad range of skills and experiences in both traditional and on-line marketing and communications. Working from Tehran and London and in close conjunction with the Academic Committee and the Project's other sub-committees, the team has put in place a number of initiatives to both enhance the Project's profile in Iran and internationally, and to keep our many supporters, partners, donors and prospective students apprised of all the major developments at IBS as we move towards our first intake of students for the Executive Education Programme, which is expected to commence in September 2010.

Most recently, we have launched a new and enhanced website both in English and in Farsi ([www.ibsprjct.org](http://www.ibsprjct.org)) to ensure that comprehensive information on the Project including our vision, mission, development and operational plans are clearly expressed and that those wishing to get involved and support the Project know how they can contribute and how and where to contact us. Additionally, to supplement the information available on our website with live updates, our supporters can now view our progress via Facebook and Twitter.



# Project Progress Report



Summer is usually a time to rest, especially for those involved in academia. For the IBS Project, however, the summer of 2009 was both a busy and productive period.

First and foremost, Dr. Ali Mashayekhi, a leading international academic and the 'godfather' of management education in Iran formally accepted the position of President of the Iranian Business School. His election was by a unanimous vote of the IBS Board of Governors and has been officially approved by the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology (MSRT). We are delighted that Dr. Mashayekhi has further entrenched his involvement with IBS by accepting this important position and look forward to continued cooperation with him as the School approaches its operational phase.

A second important milestone in the progress of the IBS Project is the fact that a temporary campus for IBS has now been secured in central Tehran. The premises are rented and have been equipped in preparation for the launch of the School in autumn 2010. Securing adequately equipped premises for an educational establishment is one of the major sequential pre-requisites of the educational licensing process of the MSRT, and without passing an MSRT inspection in this regard, a full and final educational permit cannot be issued. The members of the IBS Project are therefore very pleased to have fulfilled this critical stage with such a well located building.

Another important activity over the past three months was the undertaking of a number of in-depth surveys and interviews with top executives of major private-sector firms and corporations operating in Iran. These surveys focussed on executive views regarding training requirements and the aim was to gain a better understanding of the most pressing needs and perceived gaps in management knowledge and expertise. We were greatly helped in this endeavour by a number of Chief Executives of major industrial companies and banks in Iran, who

were willing to share their observations with the IBS Project team and provide advice and suggestions about how the IBS Executive Training programmes could be shaped. This was a valuable first step in helping IBS to further customise its short term non-degree courses aimed at Iran's top-tier executives. There are, of course, other management training programmes frequently offered in the country, and in some cases, even run by international faculty. The distinction of the IBS model is that we strive to introduce programmes that are not only relevant to the market, but also provide learning opportunities inspired by the current issues and the real challenges of specific sectors and industries. This need-focused approach to executive training is something that will make IBS courses different from the other offerings, and in our view, much more result oriented and effective. Based on the findings of these surveys and with the aforementioned objectives in mind, the IBS Academic Committee is now working on developing course content and identifying the qualified faculty for conducting the courses.

On the fundraising front the IBS Project team has also been quite active and successful. We now have three additions to the IBS Development Board - the top-tier of the major benefactors of IBS. We are profoundly grateful for their donations and their continued support and endorsement of all that this not-for profit aims to achieve.

Finally, over the course of the summer, the Event Committee began plans for the next IBS Annual Fundraising Event, the date of which has been confirmed for Friday 5th February 2010. The 2010 event will be hosted at The Dorchester Hotel in London and the keynote speaker will be Mr. Omid Kordestani, the Senior Advisor to the Office of the CEO and Founders at Google. Further information will be made available in due course via our website [www.ibsproject.org](http://www.ibsproject.org). We hope that you will be able to attend what promises to be another exciting event and we look forward to welcoming you.

## Higher Education in Iran



### Accession to Management Positions: The Great Concern of Educated Iranian Women

The results of recent research released by the Women's Social & Cultural Council indicate that the greatest concern among young, educated, Iranian women at the moment is accession to management positions, only followed by their concerns for employment, marriage, and continuing education. Currently, over 60% of university seats in Iran are currently occupied by women. Statistical surveys however, have revealed that employment among women accounts for only around 32% of jobs. This is while only 9% of high level management positions and only 26% of professional and technical jobs are occupied by female employees in Iran.



### Organising Preliminary Management Courses for Fledgling Business Leaders

The Tehran Technical Institute, a non-governmental centre, is organising a Diploma Course in Business Administration as part of its preliminary business

management courses. The course will be held in cooperation with ITEC (International Technology Education Centre) in Dubai. The requirements for admission are simpler than those for similar programmes and applicants with a minimum requirement of a high school diploma can register for participation.

### 4th International Conference on Strategic Management in Tehran

The 4th International Conference on Strategic Management will be held in Tehran from 16-17 January, 2010. The conference is a joint endeavour by the Faculty of Management at Tehran University and McKenzie Management Consultancy. Professor Pamkaj Ghemawat will address the conference as a guest speaker and offer a workshop on related issues. Professor Pamkaj Ghemawat is the youngest ever professor at Harvard University. The themes of the conference will include strategic thinking, knowledge, innovation, and entrepreneurship; business ecology and teleology; competitive intelligence; organisation and business strategy; implementation and strategy execution; national scale strategy, operations, and strategic management.





# The World of Business Schools

## The iTunes University

CNN reports that a growing number of business schools are making recordings of lectures, seminars and conferences available to the general public via web sites such as iTunes and YouTube.

Leading business schools including Cambridge University's Judge Business School, Duke University's Fuqua School of Business and Yale School of Management make course content available for download through 'iTunes University' (iTunes U), part of the iTunes online store. That means those whose budget won't stretch to a two-year MBA can simulate the experience at home, at work or anywhere else they choose. Moreover, for money-conscious learners, the iTunes U content can be downloaded free of charge.

The French business school HEC Paris is due to launch its iTunes U content in the next few months, but it has been running an ambitious podcast programme since 2006. Begun as an experiment in partnership with Apple, all new MBAs at HEC are provided with an iPod Touch. Approximately half of the MBA lectures are filmed using an automatic camera system and the footage is made available for students to download and view on their iPhones. Vanessa Klein, HEC's project manager for iTunes U, told CNN that the iPod-enabled curriculum has proved a hit with students. As well watching lectures, she said the students' own presentations are recorded and made available for download so they can review their performance. Klein says that

by making lectures available via iTunes U, HEC wants to be at the forefront of providing content for the rest of the world, but she acknowledges that the technology is also a great way to promote the business school.

## Jordanian Women Study at Thunderbird

Jordanian female entrepreneurs and businesswomen will begin a two week programme at Thunderbird, in Arizona, next week. The programme is funded through a \$1.6m grant from the US Agency for International Development to the Business Development Centre in Jordan, secured in 2008.

The programme has been designed to give women intensive teaching and mentoring as well as access to the kind of resources that will enable them to start a business back home in Jordan. Half the women have businesses in the start-up phase, and the other half are already successful businesswomen looking for ways to build their companies. The women work in industries as diverse as handicrafts, publishing, consulting, construction, security systems and consumer products.

The SEEDS Programme - SEEDS stands for Supporting Entrepreneurs and Enterprise Development Seminar - is modelled on Thunderbird's Project Artemis, which provides women with similar levels of training and support to enable them to start or grow small businesses in Afghanistan.







## The MBA Curriculum – Steering a New Course

Business schools from around the world have spent the past 12 months wondering whether they need to re-invent themselves in response to the global financial crisis to which many believe they lent a helping hand. For those involved in curriculum development at business schools, there also exists the trepidation of a new beginning.

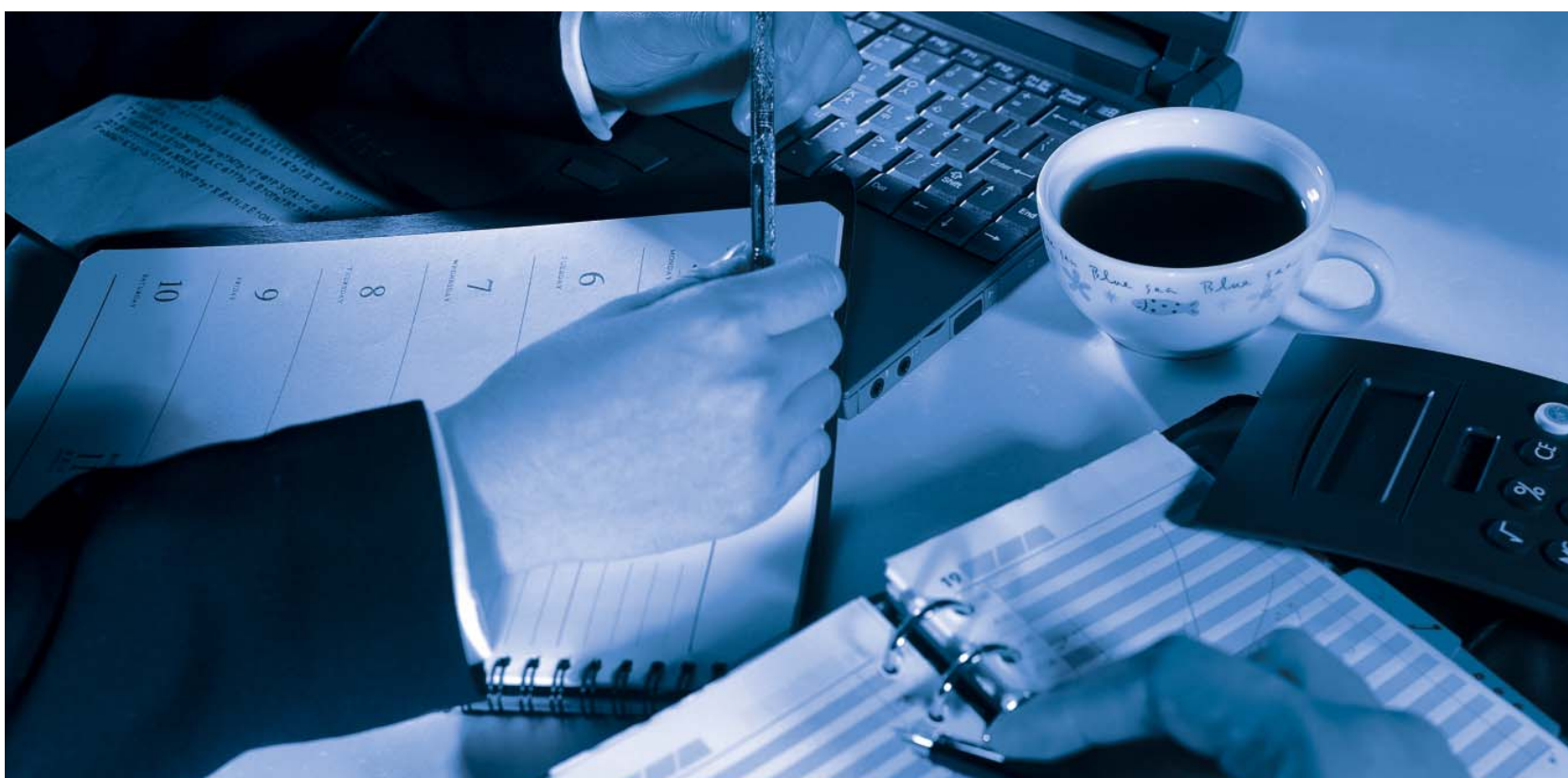
Few business schools would disagree that the credit crunch has become their defining moment. The arguments - that failed firms such as Lehman Brothers were full of the alumni of prestigious schools, who were complacent and greedy, too focussed on the short-term and unwilling to question financial instruments of which they had little understanding - are well rehearsed. But regardless of whether such criticisms are valid, it is certainly true that the crisis has fundamentally changed attitudes towards both business schools, and the art of management itself.

As a result, schools have agonised over how to save their flagging reputations. MBA programme directors have spent months pondering what constitutes a proportionate response: totally overhaul their curricula and they may appear hasty and ill-considered; change nothing and they would be seen to be in a state of denial. Most have settled for modest adjustments. Columbia Business School in New York, for example, set up a faculty committee that delved into every aspect of the MBA programme. But it is introducing just two new modules - on the future of finance and the collapse of the auto industry. Similarly, at INSEAD in France, there is to be no ripping-up and starting afresh. Instead, students on the MBA

course are brought together during the programme for a newly created module on global citizenship and business ethics.

One area in which the crisis seems to be having a more fundamental effect on curricula is a renewed interest in economic history. New York University's Stern School of Business and Chicago University's Booth School of Business both expect brisk interest in their new courses examining the lessons from America's Great Depression in the 1930s. At London's Cass Business School, Professor Ilt's MBA students will study the formation of 18th and 19th century companies, such as Cadbury's or old Quaker firms, which, he says, "started with a view that the long-term sustainability of the enterprise depended on responsible behaviour in all aspects of the organisation."

Furthermore, it is not just the academic curriculum that is changing. MBA programmes have for many years been a strange hybrid of academic degree and vocational course. Equally as important as teaching theory is imparting the "soft skills" needed to brave a difficult job market after the programme. One area in which this is becoming more noticeable is a greater emphasis on personal development. At Cass Business School, the new intake is, for the first time, being psychometrically tested during the first week of the programme. The idea is that students will go through their MBAs more aware of their strengths and having addressed their weaknesses, making them more employable when they graduate. With a sceptical post credit-crunch world awaiting them on graduation, MBA students from all over the world will have benefited from programmes that have been adapted to help them meet new management challenges.



**Editorials:** Payam Dadgar, Laila Danesh, Mohit Mamudi, Alieh Ashtari

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