What is the Executive Sounding Board?

How many times have you asked yourself, “Is this the best possible solution?” “How have others addressed this problem?” “Have others used this approach and, if so, what was the outcome?” “What other issues should I consider in finding the best alternative?”

Prior to founding the Institute for Management Studies in 1974, I served as Chief Financial Officer for TVG, and I can tell you that I asked myself those questions frequently. What I really needed was someone, an expert in the field, to “sound out” my ideas. The problem was finding the right person and then, of course, negotiating some arrangement whereby they would “consult” with me on the problem. This usually meant a full day, when all I needed was 10 or 15 minutes to help me clarify my thinking. I suspect that most senior executives today deal with it as I did…by going it alone.

The Executive Sounding Board is the Institute’s response to this dilemma. It allows senior policy-making executives to draw upon a wide variety of outside experts in order to “bounce ideas off them.” The Institute has already done the work of identifying the best resources. They are all world-class experts in their respective fields. Each has conducted extensive research, is a published author, is highly respected by professional colleagues, and each has considerable experience working with major organizations on solving problems. Each is easy to talk with and will treat your inquiries with the utmost confidentiality. And best of all, each is only a telephone call or email away.

It is intended that the IMS Sounding Board serve two functions: first, to assist in the transfer of the various management ideas that are discussed at the Institute’s sessions, and second, to encourage the use of other resources in the development and execution of policy, plans, and practices. Typical situations might be: “What if I…?” “Is anyone doing…?” “How have others…?”

The resources of the IMS Sounding Board are available exclusively to senior policy-making executives of IMS sponsoring-member organizations on an as-needed basis. You may call or email any member of the Board as often as necessary. The services of the Board do not extend to on-site consultations, but are limited to telephone discussions. In the event Board members have to return a call, they may call person-to-person, collect. Other than the cost of the telephone call, there is no charge to the member. This unique service is available only to our IMS members and is included in your regular membership fee.

Gordon A. Peters  
Chairman and CEO  
The Institute for Management Studies
Areas of Expertise:
Technology and organizational design, managing knowledge workers, emerging competencies

Examples of Questions:
How will information and communication technology impact organizational structure and our management processes?

We know that knowledge workers are the engine of growth in the new economy, but what are some of the special challenges of recruiting, developing, retaining and leading this special workforce?

What is the profile of an effective knowledge worker, and how will we know what to look for?

What is the impact of remote work and how can we prepare our company to better manage it?

Given the new pattern of work and organizational design, what are some critical competencies needed to excel during rapid change?

What are the implications of new management practices on career trends?

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If contacting faculty through email please make sure to mention you are contacting them from the IMS Sounding Board.
Areas of Expertise:
Coaching, performance management, teams and team Performance, change management

Examples of Questions:
How can I get others to embrace a needed change?

What is the best way to break free of old habits and patterns?

Does behavioral coaching always work? If not, what options are left when behavioral coaching is unlikely to succeed?

What are the best ways to provide positive recognition to those on my team?

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Dr. Marshall Goldsmith has twice been ranked by Thinkers50 as the World’s Most Influential Leadership Thinker. He is the author, co-author or editor of 37 books, which have been translated into 32 languages. He is the author of the bestselling business books Triggers, MOJO and What Got You Here Won’t Get You There (a Wall Street Journal #1 business book). His latest book, co-authored with Sally Helgesen is How Women Rise. Other books include; Succession: Are You Ready? (WSJ bestseller) and The Leader of the Future (BusinessWeek bestseller).

Dr. Goldsmith’s professional acknowledgments include: World’s #1 Leadership Thinker designation by Harvard Business Review and Best Practices Institute; World’s #1 Executive Coach by Global Gurus, INC and Fast Company magazines; Lifetime Achievement Award for Excellence in Teaching by The Institute for Management Studies; 50 great leaders in America by BusinessWeek; Top Ten Executive Educators by Wall Street Journal; Most Credible Executive Advisors in the New Era of Business by Economist (UK); Fellow of the Academy (America’s top HR award) by National Academy of Human Resources; Global Leader in HR Thinking by World HRD Congress (India).

Dr. Goldsmith served on the Board of the Peter Drucker Foundation for ten years. He has been a volunteer teacher for US Army Generals, Navy Admirals, Girl Scout executives, as well as International and American Red Cross leaders. Dr. Goldsmith’s Ph.D. is from UCLA’s Anderson School of Management, where he was the Distinguished Alumnus of the Year. He teaches executive education at Dartmouth’s Tuck School of Business.
Prof. Vijay Govindarajan is widely regarded as one of the world’s leading experts on strategy and innovation. He is the Coxe Distinguished Professor at the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth College. The Coxe Distinguished Professorship is a new Dartmouth-wide faculty chair.

He was the first Professor in Residence and Chief Innovation Consultant at General Electric. He worked with GE’s CEO Jeff Immelt to write “How GE is Disrupting Itself,” the Harvard Business Review (HBR) article that pioneered the concept of reverse innovation — any innovation that is adopted first in the developing world. HBR picked reverse innovation as one of the Great Moments in Management in the Last Century. In the latest Thinkers 50 Rankings, Prof. Govindarajan was ranked as the #1 Indian Management Thinker.

He has received the Blueck Best Research Paper Award from the Academy of Management for his research on coordination and control mechanisms within multinational organizations. More than forty articles by Prof. Govindarajan have appeared as book chapters and in journals such as Academy of Management Journal, Decision Sciences, Journal of Business Strategy, and the Sloan Management Review. He coauthored the eighth edition of the widely used text Management Control Systems, and the book Strategic Cost Management.

Prof. Govindarajan has served as a consultant to various organizations. He has also served on the editorial boards of Academy of Management Executive, Accounting Review, and the Journal of Management Accounting Research.

**Areas of Expertise:**
Core competencies, strategic intent, industry analysis, strategy formulation, developing global strategy, implementing strategy, strategic cost management

**Examples of Questions:**
What methodologies can our company/division use to identify our core competencies?
What process can our company/division use to develop our strategic intent?
How can we leverage our core competencies to develop new business opportunities?
How can our firm develop a transnational strategy that can simultaneously maximize global scale efficiency, local responsiveness, and worldwide innovation?
How can we design structures, systems, and processes to implement our strategies?
How can our firm conduct cost analysis such as value chain analysis, activity-based costing, and quality costing that can help us develop superior strategies?

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If contacting faculty through email please make sure to mention you are contacting them from the IMS Sounding Board.
Areas of Expertise:
Game changing strategy, disruptive competition, beyond legacy ideas of leadership and transformation

Examples of Questions:
How can we create genuine competitive advantage as our market changes and grows more complex?

In a disruptive world, what is the best way to develop competitive insight and foresight, rather than hindsight?

How should business strategy adapt to competitive changes related to digitization and new technologies?

How can we access complex opportunities and manage complex risks which often cross internal boundaries in our organization?

What is the advantage of a ‘new game’ approach to business strategy vs. relying on more familiar models of incremental planning?

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Dr. Kaihan Krippendorff is a strategist, innovator, keynote speaker, consultant, and author of four business books including his most recent Outthink the Competition. His fifth book The Employee Innovator: Driving Innovation from Within is to be published at the end of 2018. A former consultant with McKinsey & Company, Kaihan is the founder of growth strategy consulting firm, Outthinker.

Outthinker specializes in serving firms who recognize the need to move away from traditional linear models to embrace agile, digital strategies for the accelerating world. His clients include ABC TV, AIG, BNY Mellon, Citibank, Pershing, TIAA, Realogy, Microsoft, VM Ware, and Johnson & Johnson. The Outthinker Process®, a unique growth strategy and innovation process developed by Kaihan, has been delivered by Outthinker to over 10,000 executives, entrepreneurs, and leaders around the world.

Kaihan’s strategy and innovation expertise, along with his proven track record of accelerating growth and making change happen, has made him one of the most sought-after keynote speakers and consultants in the world. He is a regular lecturer for Wharton Executive Education as well as a guest faculty member for a number of business school in the US and abroad.

Kaihan has been featured in key business media outlets, including BusinessWeek, Harvard Business Review, Forbes, Time, Fox Business, Fast Company, PBS, and Bloomberg Radio.

Areas of Expertise:
Strategy, competition, organizational growth, strategic thinking, innovation, intrapreneurship, corporate entrepreneurship, corporate venturing

Examples of Questions:
What opportunities should we consider to grow our business/ company?
How do we more effectively compete against a specific competitor or in a specific market?
How can we encourage more innovative and entrepreneurial behavior among our people?
What are the most important sources of competitive advantage we should leverage and build?
How do we learn to approach our challenges more strategically?

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Kathleen McGahran, President of Pelham Associates, holds a Ph.D. in accounting and finance, a C.P.A., and a JD from Fordham University’s School of Law and is licensed to practice in New York and New Jersey. An Adjunct Professor of Business Administration at the Tuck School, she provides the finance and accounting training for the Tuck-WBENC Executive Program, and for programs for minority and women owned businesses. She teaches in the Executive MBA program at the Stern School of Business, New York University, and has taught at the graduate schools of business at Columbia University, University of Michigan, Stanford University, and INSEAD in France. In addition to teaching, Kathleen has written and published several articles and cases on the use of accounting information. She co-authored a textbook entitled Accounting: A Management Approach, with Gordon Shillinglaw.

Dr. McGahran has designed and implemented financial analyst training programs for Lazard Freres & Co., Ernst & Young, Bear Stearns, SunTrust Banks, Deutsche Bank, Goldman Sachs, C.E. Unterberg, Towbin, Bankers Trust, Dean Witter Reynolds, First Boston, J.P. Morgan, and Merrill Lynch. She has designed and implemented Executive Education Programs for Columbia University, the Institute for Management Studies, the Stern School of Business, General Electric Company, and others. She serves on the Boards of SCOR, Reinsurance Company of New York (P&C) and SCOR Global Life Reinsurance U.S. (both companies are wholly owned subsidiaries of SCOR, Paris, France.) Dr. McGahran is the Audit Committee Chair for Scor U.S.

**Areas of Expertise:**
Finance, metrics, organizational planning, role of finance in decision-making

**Examples of Questions:**
- What drives stock market reaction to operational information?
- How do we value our company? What are the metrics the stock market analysts are looking at?
- What are the measures that will drive performance and align it with our strategy?
- What is the impact of the uncertain economic environment on achieving financial results?
- What does the economic environment do to the planning process? How can the planning process adapt to changes in environment? (e.g., changes in demand for key products or segments of the business as a result of the business cycle.)
- In the budget process: How can the results be analyzed to provide flexibility in the budget? Why did the budgeted results differ? What is the benefit of evaluating the planned performance versus the actual results? (i.e., Why is feedback desirable?)
- In the Resource/Capital Allocation decision: Who should get the money? What drives investment decisions? (Expected Cash Flows, Risk, Cost of Capital, Return on projects, Return to capital - shareholders.)

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Kathy Pearson, Ph.D., is a strategist, systems thinking expert, and authority in decision making. She is President and Founder of Enterprise Learning Solutions, a firm focused on executive development and learning across industries. She is an Adjunct Senior Fellow at the Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics and has served as an adjunct Associate Professor in the Operations and Information Management Department at The Wharton School, both at the University of Pennsylvania. In this academic capacity, Dr. Pearson taught operations management courses in the MBA program and Executive Masters of Technology Management programs as well as Probability and Statistics, Simulation Modeling, and other courses for the department and the University.

An award-winning educator, Dr. Pearson is heavily involved in Executive Education at The Wharton School, Duke CE, and the Institute for Management Studies, teaching on a variety of topics such as Complex Decision Making, Strategic Agility, The Enterprise Mindset, Stakeholder Management, Operational Excellence, and Strategic Execution.

In addition to her executive development work, Kathy’s industrial and consulting experience includes consulting to senior leadership teams in the areas of strategic formulation, complex decision making under uncertainty, and strategic execution.

Dr. Pearson received her B.S. degree in theoretical mathematics from Auburn University, her M.S. degree in Decision Sciences from Georgia State University, and her Ph.D. in industrial engineering (concentration in statistics) from Northwestern University.

**Areas of Expertise:**
Systems thinking, business strategy, decision making, scenario planning

**Examples of Questions:**
How can scenario planning help my organization manage uncertainty?
What can we do to improve group decision making?
What can we do to build a vigilant organization that is well-hedged against external sources of risk?
How can we mitigate the effects of cognitive biases in our decision making?
What is the best approach to decision making when the available data is incomplete or ambiguous?

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Dr. Alan G. Robinson

Dr. Alan Robinson is one of the foremost experts in the world on managing ideas, creativity, innovation and lean. He is the co-author of ten books, which have won national and international awards, including the bestsellers *Ideas Are Free* (named Reader’s Choice by Fast Company) and *Corporate Creativity* (a finalist in the Financial Times/Booz Allen & Hamilton Global Best Business Book Awards). According to the Society of Manufacturing Engineers, *Modern Approaches*, his book with Shigeo Shingo, one of the co-developers of the Toyota Production System, “remains a must-read for anyone interested in lean.”

Dr. Robinson has advised more than 300 companies in 25 countries on how to improve their performance. Some of his more well-known clients include: The Federal Reserve Bank, Interbrew, GE, Allianz, IKEA, Mass Mutual, UBS, Volkswagen, CSX, Standard and Poors, Aon Hewitt, The Washington Post, The Fashion Institute of Technology, Medtronic, Toyota, Schneider Electric, Bose, USP, Brookhaven National Laboratory, the Applied Physics Laboratory, NBTY, and Liberty Mutual.

Currently a professor at the Isenberg School of Management at the University of Massachusetts, Dr. Robinson has also taught at St. Petersburg Technical University in Russia, the Athens Laboratory of Business Administration in Greece, the Jagiellonian University in Poland, the University of Porto in Portugal, the Hanoi Business School, Monica Herrera in San Salvador, and Tianjin University in China.

Areas of Expertise:
Creativity, innovation, idea systems, lean and high-performance organizations

Examples of Questions:
I feel my organization is not very innovative. How do I go about changing this?

I know my front-line employees have lots of ideas on how we can save money, generate revenue, and improve efficiency and customer service. What do best-practice companies do to tap these ideas?

I am not sure my managers and supervisors are currently capable of leading our transformation into a more innovative organization. What kind of initiative do I need to put in place to change this? What do effective processes for encouraging, processing and implementing ideas look like?

I would like to create an innovation center to encourage and incubate my organization’s next big ideas. What should this look like and how should it work?

My organization has been working with lean for many years, but the effort has stalled, and the initiative hasn’t gone very deep. What do we need do to change this?

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Prof. Maurice Saias is professor of Strategy at the Institute d’Administration des Entreprises, Aix-en-Provence, France, where he previously served as Dean. He is actively involved in executive education programs on three continents, having designed and delivered programs for Barclays Bank, Johnson & Johnson, Kodak, Allied-Signal, Phillips N.V., Bertelsmann, Hewlett-Packard, Mercedes-Benz, and IBM among others. Described by The Financial Times as one of the 10 leading strategy gurus in Europe, Prof. Saias is a provocative, challenging, and entertaining educator.

Prof. Saias has held teaching appointments at University of California, Los Angeles, the University of Texas and is a faculty member of the Executive Education Department at Northwestern University in the United States and at INSEAD in Europe. He also teaches Strategy at the College des Ingénieurs in France.

Prof. Saias received his master’s degree from INSEAD and did his doctoral work at University of California, Los Angeles, Graduate School of Management.

Areas of Expertise:
Strategic planning, globalization, competition, innovation, alignment

Examples of Questions:
Given our current circumstances, what kind of outsourcing strategy do we need?

What can we do to make our reward system fit our strategy?

What can we do to reliably identify our core competencies?

In today’s business environment, what is the best way to think about and develop growth and innovation strategies?

How can our organization continue to be efficient and innovative while pursuing a global strategy?

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Dr. Fons Trompenaars is globally recognized for his work as consultant, author and speaker on the subject of culture and business. As founder and director of Trompenaars Hampden-Turner, an intercultural management firm, he has spent over 25 years helping Fortune 500 leaders and professionals manage and solve their business and cultural dilemmas to increase global effectiveness and performance, particularly in the areas of globalization, mergers and acquisition, HR and leadership development.

Currently, Dr. Trompenaars is a professor of Cross Cultural Management at the Vrije University in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, where he was once himself a student of Economics. After this first period of study, his interests and research led him to the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, where he received his Ph.D. with a dissertation on differences in conceptions of organizational structure in various cultures.

He has since authored/coauthored 10 books, including the best seller *Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Cultural Diversity in Business*, published by Nicholas Brealey (1993). This book has been translated into 11 languages (including Chinese, Japanese, Turkish and Russian) and the Dutch translation of this book was awarded “Book of the Year” by the Order of Experts and Consultants on Organization (OOA). Listed since 2001 as one of the world's most influential management thinkers, he has also been awarded the International Professional Practice Area Research Award by the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD).

**Areas of Expertise:**
Creating adaptive organizations, strategic planning, systems thinking, participative management

**Examples of Questions:**
We are in the process of acquiring a company in Continental Europe. How should we guide the process of integrating the corporate cultures?

We are internationalizing rapidly. What are your thoughts on how to reconcile our strong corporate culture with local cultural environments?

For some time we have been trying to deal with major corporate dilemmas, such as centralization versus decentralization, and individual versus team bonus schemes. They seem to be influenced by culture. How can we reconcile these differences rather than compromise them?

We want to streamline our processes in many parts of the world by introducing one set of decision rules. How can we most effectively realize this change without raising unnecessary resistance? How will different cultures influence the reactions to these changes?

We want to provide more clarity about what core values our organization stands for and how they can support the vision we share. How can we make these core values culturally sensitive?

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Dr. Albert Vicere

Al Vicere is the Executive Education Professor of Strategic Leadership for The Smeal College of Business Administration at The Pennsylvania State University. At Penn State, he served for eleven years as the Smeal College’s Associate Dean for Executive Education, leading that unit to international prominence. He was the founding director of Penn State’s Institute for the Study of Organizational Effectiveness and has earned a number of MBA ‘Excellence in Teaching’ awards for his courses on strategic leadership.

In addition to his current duties at Penn State, he is President of Vicere Associates, Inc., a consulting firm whose global clients include 3M, Abbott Laboratories, Allstate Insurance, the American Red Cross, Anheuser-Busch, ARAMARK, AT&T. BASF AG, Bristol-Myers Squibb, British Airways, Daimler-Benz, LM Ericsson, Excelon, First Data Corporation, Hewlett Packard, IBM, Kraft Foods, The Limited, McDonald’s, Merck, Motorola, National Australia Group, Samsung, Saudi Aramco, Solvay Pharmaceuticals, Sun Life of Canada, and Utilicorp.

Dr. Vicere was profiled as a “next wave guru” in leadership development in the journal Business Horizons. In addition, he is a recipient of the Institute for Management Studies’ Distinguished Faculty Award and has been honored with two Literati Club Awards for Achievement in writing and scholarship. He is the author of several books, including Leadership by Design, published by Harvard Business School Press. He also has published more than eighty articles and professional papers in leading journals.

Areas of Expertise:
Strategy development and implementation, top team development, leadership development, organizational transformation and change

Examples of Questions:
How can we get everyone on board as we move forward with a new strategy and business model?
Do we have the right strategy, structure, culture to sustain performance in the future?
How can we create a leadership development initiative that gets results and contributes to organizational performance?
How do we compare with other organizations around the world in terms of our efforts to position the company for success in the networked economy?
How can we evolve our organization’s culture to keep pace with the constantly changing demands of our competitive environment?
How can we recreate a sense of purpose and commitment across the organization and what role should incumbent leaders play in the process?

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