Editorial

Christine Cross and Michelle O'Sullivan

Department of Personnel and Employment Relations, University of Limerick, Limerick, Ireland

This special edition is titled "Managing in a Changing Climate: Leading to New Realities". The field of management is one of continuing evolution and is no stranger to change. Events in the global economic and business environment have resulted in unprecedented turmoil and uncertainty for organisations, which have had to respond quickly to the new environment to recover and restore their position. Crises also bring the potential for new opportunities in, for instance, managerial innovation, new markets, new entrepreneurial ventures, technology use, and employee engagement, to name a few. This special issue facilitates a conversation about how organisations are managing the 21st century challenges in the context of a complex and interconnected global environment, as well as how managers can lead their organisations towards new advantageous realities and a sustainable future. Globalisation, migration, technological change, financialisation, political uncertainty, and the recent economic and financial crises are some of the issues that both practitioners and academia have had to respond and adapt to. As we confront accelerated levels of change at various levels, there is a need for us to engage in a responsible and sustainable manner with the challenges we face.

Research on innovation, entrepreneurship, and small business management is timely and critical, given the increasing importance of such issues in government and EU policies (Thurik and Wennekers, 2004). The EU Charter for Small Enterprises (2000: 7) acknowledged "the importance of small enterprises in fostering social and regional development" and, more recently, the European Commission's Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan argues that entrepreneurs are needed to bring Europe back to growth and jobs. Of course, the role of entrepreneurs in economic development has long been recognised (Schumpeter, 1912). As well as providing jobs, small businesses generate innovation and knowledge spillovers, thereby fostering economic growth (Memili et al., 2015). However, a key challenge for small businesses is how to grow, especially in an environment of change and competition on a global scale. Indeed, the EU's overarching policy framework for small business has prioritised assisting small business to access markets and internationalise (European Commission, 2008). A key vehicle for small businesses to avail of entrepreneurial opportunities and stimulate growth is through social media. Social media has been defined as "a group of Internet-based applications... that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content" (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010: 61). Business owners now require sophisticated marketing knowledge of social media, especially given that they have only have partial control over the information produced about their company.

This special edition contains five papers that provide insight into the practice and analysis of management. The themes addressed by the papers are especially relevant to the theme of the special issue, pointing to both discontinuities and possible solutions. Three papers delve into areas of management at the forefront of managerial change and innovation, including human resource management, technology management and innovation, entrepreneurship, and small business management. The remaining two papers focus on enhancing our practice as academics, by addressing our understanding of being critical educators and by encouraging the use of an innovative lens to engage in management research.

The Papers

Paper one, by Harney, O'Gorman, and Kidney, contributes to the literature on small business by examining high-growth small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). It explores triggers that initiate the growth process in firms and how those firms manage growth through structure, strategy, and practices. The authors undertook case studies, using interviews and archival data, of four high-growth firms in the manufacturing and services sectors in Ireland. The case studies provide rich insight into the decision-making processes of firms and detail how they

took advantage of opportunities, sometimes out of necessity to survive. These businesses responded to external changes in regulation, markets, fluctuating economic conditions, and technological advancements by for example, recruitment of critical people or product and market diversification.

The second paper by Duane and O'Reilly extends our understanding of the challenges businesses face by focussing on how organisations manage social media. The authors strongly integrate conceptual and empirical research by developing a "Stages of Growth" model for managing a Social Media Business Profile through online surveys, interviews, and case studies with companies from a wide variety of industries. Despite the growth of social media, the paper shows that organisations in Ireland have been slow to utilise social media beyond basic functions. The paper's findings lend to strong practical application as the model can assist organisations develop a strategy to integrate social media with business strategy.

The third paper by Heffernan and Hughes examines the impact of psychological contract breach on turnover intentions. The moderating effects of social networks in the workplace on turnover intentions are an integral component in understanding this impact. The authors used a survey approach with officers from the Irish Defence Forces. Their findings on the identification of social networks as a moderator of psychological contract breach and turnover makes an important contribution to the extant literature.

Breen's paper, the fourth paper in this special issue, informs management educators about the practice of critical management education. It explores how the notion of criticality is translated into the everyday practices of critical management educators by using a qualitative research approach. Two ideal types of critical practitioners emerged from the data analysis, namely, critical traditionalists and critical experientialists, depending on their focus on content and/or process. Additionally, the author identifies five factors that could be considered by those considering adopting a critical approach to their practice.

The final paper, by Hughes and McDonagh, takes an innovative methodological approach to explore how strategic information systems planning (SISP) is practised by senior managers in the public service. The focus of the paper is on demonstrating how this approach can be useful in providing a robust framework for the investigation of the area of SISP. The strategy-as-practice perspective formed a core element of both data collection and analysis. As a result, the paper illustrates how using strategy-as-practice as an integrating mechanism introduces rationality into the research process.

References

European Commission. (2008). *"Think Small First": A Small Business Act for Europe*, Brussels: Commission of the European Communities.

Kaplan, A.M. and Haenlein, M. (2010). 'Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media'. *Business Horizons,* 53: 1, 59-68.

Memili, E., Fang, H., Chrisman, J.J. and De Massis, A. (2015). 'The impact of small- and medium-sized family firms on economic growth'. *Small Business Economics,* 45: 4, 771-785.

Thurik, R. and Wennekers, S. (2004). 'Entrepreneurship, small business and economic growth'. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development,* 11: 1, 140-149.