

PRESS RELEASE

THE WORLD MBA LEADERS WERE GATHERED ON THE ARCHAMPS TECHNOPOLE

Archamps (74), the 3rd of April 2006. On the initiative of the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD), the European Institute of Purchasing Management (EIPM) hosted the annual conference of MBA programmes' directors, of the largest worldwide business schools, between the 23^d and the 25th of March.

The EFMD is an international membership organization, recognized globally as an accreditation body of quality in management education. The European Foundation has established accreditation services for business schools and business school programmes, corporate universities and technology-enhanced learning programmes.

After Wharton, in Pennsylvania, last year, it is this year the Archamps Site in the Haute - Savoie area, which welcomed the EFMD annual conference on the theme: "Changing the way we do Business". A choice motivated by the fact that the EIPM is based on this technopole, with the only executive MBA specialized in "Purchasing and Supply Management" in the world, and accredited by AMBA (the Association of MBAs).

Eighty participants of twenty-nine different nationalities worked on the subject while exchanging and sharing their experiences at the Archamps' convention centre.

Many current themes were addressed, amongst which the value and the position of the MBA today.

Several speakers shared their views.

Eric CORNUEL, Director of the EFMD: *" competition is more and more difficult and stronger on the MBA market. If full-time MBAs are showing a decrease in the number of applicants due to the programme's length (2 years), the part-time and the executive MBAs remain, for their expertise, the preference of executive managers.*

Moreover, the financing of the training, by the company, is a convincing asset in order to keep the best people. It is a big investment for the company which depends on the economic environment, the current situation and market".

As far as he is concerned, **Bernard GRACIA**, Director of the EIPM, is still convinced that large MBA schools remain the market reference. He just adds his regret that the International MBA market is not regulated by an "official" certifying body. Consequence: *"anyone can create an MBA and put whatever he wants in it, noone will contest it!"*.

Bernard Gracia confirms the interest revival and the success of specialized MBAs. Like the EIPM MBA specialized in " Purchasing and Supply Management", *" you have to be a leader in a market niche, in order to distinguish yourself. In the light of the lack of official accreditation, the MBA is loosing its value, general MBAs are loosing credibility; only programmes offered by recognised and accredited schools are keeping their credibility as well as specialised MBAs which people look for due to their specificity and their expertise (Purchasing, Technology, Luxury, etc...)"*.

Dider Gabin, Group Vice President ST Microelectronics, Organisation & HR Development, shared his insight on the following topic: "*Why a Global High Tech Company of the first worldwide rank, may or may not hire MBAs?*".

Didier Gabin declares: "*Following my experiences in a few High-Tech companies, the need for MBAs seems to be linked to the development of externalization, as well as the increasing complexity of working on projects in an uncertain environment.*

By concentrating on transition Management and change, we will train individuals with behaviour skills which will complement the traditional skills of a leader, as they are taught in MBAs".

He adds: "*In a complete High-Tech environment, also including sophisticated production units and equipments which need high investments, the flexibility and ability logic to manage complex projects, come with a need for stability in a time of strategic vision. It is in this demanding context that future leaders will come in and also potential profiles with a double qualification: engineer + MBA*".

When asked on the subject, **Thierry GRANGE**, Director of Grenoble Management School: "*the MBA is a matured product: more and more students want to pursue an MBA, but the only problem is that there is more supply than demand!. There is a 5 to 10% increase in the number of students who are thinking of doing an MBA, each year, whereas there is an increase higher than 10% per year in the number of schools offering MBA programmes.*" MBAs that are suffering are those offering general programmes and non accredited; however specialised MBAs like the one offered by the EIPM (Purchasing and Supply Management) or those of GEM (Technology Management or Global Business) are well, as they address a specific public. Last key-element of success, the recognition and the reputation of Business Schools. Accredited and recognized schools receive more and more applications for their MBA programme, as it is a selection criteria in the choice of an MBA programme.

According to **Roland PASCAL**, General Director of the Haute-Savoie Services: "*The organization of the annual conference of MBA Directors in Archamps, shows that this auto-financed campus, characterised by the mixture of training types (management and technique) and the complementarity "research and training", can be an example for the development of new campus, "a la française". The Geneva Campus in Europe, or the European Campus in Geneva is a reality.*"

To conclude, the MBA still has a nice future. Part-time trainings and specialized executive trainings, do satisfy the increasing demand of companies, in order to better match the market's demand.

Even if the basis of the MBA is a general one, specialisations bring the competing advantage that managers and companies look for in order to find ever increasing abilities in their area of activity.

But let's be careful, this demand must not push Business Schools to create new MBAs in order to better satisfy the market!