

<b>Institution: University of Salford</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: C19 Business and Management Studies</b>
<b>Title of case study: Enterprise Cultural Heritage as competitive advantage for small and medium sized enterprises</b>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>This international research project, based on the work of a consortium of five European countries led by the University of Salford in the area of Enterprise Cultural Heritage (ECH), (the term describing an organisation's history and its creations that have the potential to uniquely innovate and differentiate their products and services), demonstrates the following impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing and integrating the ECH training concept in Change Management, Brand Management, Heritage Management and Intellectual Property Rights training material in five languages;</li> <li>• Developing online training material under Creative Commons Attribution License for free use and re-distribution available through social media such as SlideShare and Wikipedia, accessed c.30,000 times;</li> <li>• Generating economic and social benefits internationally and leading to a transfer project in the Leonardo da Vinci Development of Innovation scheme entitled <i>Quality &amp; Innovation in Vocational Training for Enterprise Cultural Heritage management</i>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p><b>The key researchers and positions they held at the institution at the time of the research are as follows:</b> Professor C. Kalantaridis (2007–2010), Associate Head of Salford Business School for Enterprise, led the MNEMOS project from 2009 to 2010, Dr A. Heinze, Senior Lecturer (from 2006), initially a researcher on the project, led it to Dec 2011, Carolyn Downs (2008–2012) who also ran a related project: ELIE, and Viv Caruana (2004 to 2009). <b>Context:</b> Salford Business School has, over several years, applied research to helping SMEs become more competitive by leveraging their unique capabilities and specialities. Impact followed research development across a number of strands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>1999 <u>Entrepreneurship and Regional Development</u>:</b> The research was fundamental in demonstrating the correlation between the size of an enterprise and the extent of its involvement in innovation within the SME sector, that at the micro-level innovative activity does not appear to be positively related to job creation, and that increasing the innovative propensity of SMEs will not necessarily reduce unemployment rates but will help to retain existing jobs. The research found that ECH is important for preserving tradition and hence competitive advantage, helping those employees who would otherwise have difficulties in finding alternative employment. [1]</li> <li>• <b>2004 <u>Innovation in SMEs</u>:</b> asserts that the incidence of strategic behaviour among medium and large businesses increases with the complexity of international operations and that this is not the case for small firms where strategic thinking is still emergent, underlining the need to raise awareness in SMEs of the strategic importance of ECH. [2]</li> <li>• <b>2006 <u>Local contextual factors</u>:</b> studied the growing role of local contextual factors in influencing the behaviour of key economic agents, including the entrepreneur, a key idea in ECH. The approach has stretched the boundaries of academic inquiry well beyond mainstream conceptualisations of economic agency as isolated from its setting. Drawing upon the findings of extensive research in rural Cumbria the authors argue that in this context, the conceptualisation of locality may go beyond territorial notions. This argument does not support a return to the notion of an isolated economic agent, but asserts a move forward to detailed exploration of the interface between agency and context. [3]</li> <li>• <b>2007 <u>Conversation theory</u></b> was tested in in the context of adult education and refined to develop online learning material accessible to SME company owners and other individuals wishing to maximise their personal career prospects. The development of 'conversation theory' structured training material and the selection of an open platform such as SlideShare was essential to the success of the ECH project and the consequent impact. [4,5]</li> <li>• <b>2009-2012:</b> ECH training needs analysis included both desk research as well as a survey of 77 SMEs, and informed the development of the ECH methodology, ECH management</li> </ul>

training material and online learning platform requirements. Recommendations from this research were tested and improved through three action research cycles, resulting in 15 case studies written with SMEs and 100 respondents to online surveys. Testing the ECH methodology helped the MNEMOS project to realise the wider benefits of ECH application in other sectors, organisations, and countries and languages, thus way-marking the future development of ECH. The project's aim was achieved through the successful completion of a set of integrated research objectives and outputs:

- To understand the training needs of SMEs in ECH management;
- To introduce a methodology for ECH Management in SMEs that is grounded in the real needs analysis of SMEs and informed by real practice examples;
- To develop online ECH Management training modules which integrate ECH with branding change and IPR management;
- To develop guidelines for the validation of non-formal learning on ECH management;
- To validate project results through 15 test cases with SMEs and wider stakeholders.

[6,7,8]

### 3. References to the research

#### Key outputs

1. Kalantaridis, C. (1999). Processes of innovation among manufacturing SMEs: the experience of Bedfordshire. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 11(1), 57-78. [DOI](#)
2. Kalantaridis, C. (2004). Internationalization, strategic behavior, and the small firm: a comparative investigation. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 42(3), 245-262. [DOI](#)
3. Kalantaridis, C., & Bika, Z. (2006). Local embeddedness and rural entrepreneurship: case-study evidence from Cumbria, England. *Environment and Planning A*, 38(8), 1561-1579. [DOI](#)
4. Heinze, A., Procter, C., & Scott, B. (2007). Use of Conversation Theory to underpin Blended Learning. *International Journal of Teaching and Case Studies*, 1(1 & 2), 108–120. [DOI](#)
5. Heinze, A., & Heinze, B. (2009). Blended E-Learning Skeleton of Conversation: improving formative assessment in undergraduate dissertation supervision. *British Journal of Educational Technology, Special Issue: e-Assessment: developing new dialogues for the digital age*, 40(2), 294–305 [DOI](#)
6. Aaltonen, S, de Tommaso, D, Ielpa, G, Heinze, A, Kalantaridis, C, Vasilieva, E and Zygiaris, S. (2010). Power of the past and SME competitiveness: A European study. Paper presented at the International Council for Small Business (ICSB) 2010. [URL](#)
7. Aaltonen, S, Heinze, A, Ielpa, G, Klosova, A, Papadopoulou, T, De Tommaso, D, Vasilieva, E and Zygiaris, S (2011, November 16-18). Past of the firm: The source for sustainable competitive advantage and survival? Paper presented at the RENT XXV Conference - Entrepreneurial, Business and Society, Bodo, University of Nordland, Norway. [URL](#)
8. Aaltonen, S, Avramenko, A, Heinze, A, Ielpa, G, Klosova, A, Papadopoulou, T and de Tommaso, D (2011). Enterprise cultural heritage skill gap - the study of established craft sector firms. Paper presented at the ISBE 2011 Conference - Sustainable Futures: Enterprising Landscapes and Communities. [URL](#)

#### Key grants

9. **2009-12:** "Quality and innovation in vocational training for Enterprise Cultural Heritage management": 504470-LLP-1-2009-1-UK-LEONARDO-LMP, Sponsor: Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP): Leonardo da Vinci programme of the EC, 353K euros.
10. **2011-13:** "Passport to Trade 2.0": UK/LLP-LdV/TOI-401, European Commission Lifelong Learning Programme (Leonardo da Vinci), 292k euros.

### 4. Details of the impact

Fundamental understanding of the theoretical concept of Enterprise Cultural Heritage has transformed the commercial viability of SMEs by unlocking their heritage. The concept has been transferred into Open Access training material in brand, change, heritage and IPR management, enabling thousands of businesses worldwide to transfer this knowledge into tangible benefits. Translation into Italian, Czech, Greek and Finnish facilitates its use throughout Europe:

- Enterprise Cultural Heritage (ECH) is a complex combination of a company's own history

and creations (technical contents, industrial design, organisation, marketing) that can transform information and materials into extended products and services. Effective ECH management can increase creativity in production and knowledge management skills, boosting the productivity of those SMEs with a rich history. The training material created by our project helps SMEs to identify and exploit the economic added value of their cultural heritage. ECH as a topic is entirely novel in the area of vocational training. Our work closes the gap to open accessible knowledge by making free training material that integrates examples of good ECH management available to all companies with an internet connection.

- The dissemination strategy for the training material uses extensively social media such as SlideShare, Wikipedia and LinkedIn and is demonstrating the success of this method for reaching out the audiences worldwide.
- ECH management enhances the competitiveness of SMEs. The MNEMOS project focused on mature (40+ years of trading) SMEs in craft sectors (food, textiles, ceramics and jewellery). During the project it was soon evident that other sectors can benefit as long as they have ECH.
- The international consortium from 5 countries (Czech Republic, Greece, Finland, Italy and UK), spanning the geopolitical regions of EU (South, West, Scandinavia, post-socialist areas) and industry and academia, contributed complementary specialist skills in research, training material development, validation, linkage with SMEs and Information Communication Technology (ICT) competences. A key aim has been to produce outputs relevant to SMEs so that successful engagement with beneficiaries was facilitated from an early stage (training needs analysis) and continued throughout development and into impact. This combination of competencies and perspectives has transformed a series of ECH case studies into a rich resource of commercial training materials used worldwide.
- An entirely novel area of vocational education and training (VET), ECH management, as used by large enterprises, for example, the 'new' FIAT500 and the Guinness brand, is conferring material competitive advantage in established SMEs. ECH management in SMEs transforms an intangible asset into a key competitiveness factor in both internal and external markets. SMEs that have traditionally operated without access to specialised training to promote higher performance have been given access through an open web community to innovative new training that opens pathways for new practices; over thirty thousand individuals have accessed the training material.
- Entrepreneurs have recognised and managed the strategic value of ECH by developing new skills based on the creative use of heritage knowledge and by developing and integrating complementary technical and marketing competences: *"The training material gives a great opportunity to many organisations to exploit their cultural heritage instead of "throwing it away" in the name of modernisation"* (MNEMOS SME partner).
- Learning has been made more attractive. Pro-active involvement of entrepreneurs, managers & technical staff in continued vocational training (CVT) has been strengthened by adopting a new approach to introduce ECH management in SMEs with a rich cultural tradition. Senior managers recognise its strategic value as it supports the recognition of learning outcomes for technical and managerial staff involved in non-formal training, increasing the recognition of the benefit of CVT for individual and company return.
- MNEMOS training packages have been accessed by c. 30,000 users. Training material is available for all on SlideShare, optimised for search engines and social media searches, and is constantly being discovered by new visitors. The project website, LinkedIn group and Wikipedia page continue to be maintained.
- MNEMOS has obtained affiliation to the [Natural Europe](#) project to foster training on traditional ways of farming and "environment-friendly" practices in specific agriculture sectors. The training material developed will support environmental education and has also obtained affiliation to the [ARIADNE Foundation](#) and is now expanding worldwide through a network of institutions and projects.
- *Passport to Trade 2.0*, a MNEMOS spin-off, engages business culture in the use of social media and extends our worldwide impact of innovation in SMEs. <http://businessculture.org>.

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact**

- a) Project Manager, EP Consult, s.r.o., Czech Republic *"I really had not realised the true value of enterprise culture heritage for each SME, even the very small one, to develop their business and goodwill and gain more satisfied customers. It is very useful to go through this training for those who think and really care about their company."*
- b) GM of Hotel Imperial Prague. *"This free e-learning (ECH management) [is] helpful; I will definitely recommend it to my colleagues and maybe also to my competitors."*
- c) Doc.Ing.Ph.D., owner, *"The ECH methodology and training is needed for companies in Czech Republic to understand that historical assets should be used to help companies be more competitive and find better place on foreign markets"*
- d) Tse Entre. *"The content of the training material is relevant, beneficial and concise and compact enough for the small-business manager"*.
- e) Owner: www.cyprusadvisor.com. *"It was an interesting experience...it helped me in understanding and the application of new strategies which I will apply...to make targeted steps which are related to my webpage and its content."*
- f) Managing Director, Elite Edge Marketing Consultants Ltd. *"Undertaking the Enterprise Cultural Heritage training has allowed me to identify areas in my business where I can begin to position us differently, drawing on our history and individual approach to client projects - assets that until now I hadn't embraced"*.
- g) IMC AG, Senior Research Manager. *"The content of MNEMOS is extremely interesting and relevant for our project OpenScout (www.openscout.net) where we collect open learning resources for business and management education. We are looking forward to MNEMOS uploading their learning materials to OpenScout thus enhancing our platform with unique, high-quality and practical learning materials."*
- h) A comment posted to our ECH group 28<sup>th</sup> August 2013 from a former project partner (who represented an SME from Italy: *"I have taken inspiration from the project's findings to follow 2 courses to refine my professional skills and competences about Web and Social Media Marketing, and Enterprise Management... I have brought the Innovation and Quality findings of ECH into the company I am working with... Success of the introduction of elements of ECH have been measured through the analytics provided by the social media, and from the website traffic. Three months after the new revision... traffic and engagement [is] ten times former values. New leads have been built."*
- i) Impact assessment for Italian SMEs: [ECH casestudies impact after 2yrs.pdf](#).
- j) Feedback from J Atkinson & Co, who contributed an ECH case study ([http://www.enterprise-cultural-heritage.org/images/stories/JAtkinsonCo\\_PR\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.enterprise-cultural-heritage.org/images/stories/JAtkinsonCo_PR_FINAL.pdf)), engaged with the training material <http://www.slideshare.net/MNEMOS/j-atkinsoncoechmnemoscaseuk1>, and applied the ideas in practice: *"The company celebrated 175 years in business with a growth rate of 53% in the last financial year. As part of the main innovations, J Atkinson & Co have taken over new premises, diversified into events, hosting Jazz festivals and letting out office space for other entrepreneurs in Lancaster. The business is growing because of its use of ECH management and we are happy to support future work in this area in collaboration with Salford Business School"*.
- k) E-Learning training material (allowing user certification and testing) <http://www.enterprise-cultural-heritage.org/en/e-learning.html>
- l) Creative Commons Social media based training material on SlideShare - <http://www.slideshare.net/MNEMOS/>
- m) Case studies of training material users: <http://www.slideshare.net/MNEMOS/tag/case-study>