



Business Education:

the role of emotional intelligence and adaptability to change

Leah Carter reports exclusively from AMBA's Social in Russia, in association with IBS-Moscow Business School RANEP.

As AMBA embarks on its 50th Anniversary year, 'The Year of the MBA', we kicked off by hosting a social in Moscow in association with IBS-Moscow Business School RANEP, following the high-profile Gaidar Forum.

Speakers included Vladimir Mau, Rector of RANEP; Sergey Myasoedov, Vice-Rector and Director IBS-Moscow Business School, RANEP and President of Russian Association of Business

Education; Konstantin Krotov, First Deputy Director, Higher School of Management, St. Petersburg State University; Boris Shcherbakov, General Manager, Dell Russia; and Laurie Bristow, British Ambassador to The Russian Federation.

In his opening words to the audience, the Rector of the Russian Academy of National Economy and Public Administration under the President of Russia greeted the participants and guests, and admitted the great importance of AMBA accreditation for the managerial education in Russia.

Laurie Bristow, himself an MBA

graduate from The Open University, explained that he was one of the first five government officials to complete an MBA.

'I did it for career options,' he explained. 'We need to think about how we equip ourselves for our careers. You need options and lifelong learning; building skills, updating skills and making yourself fit for the working world that's always changing. Change, creativity and a fast-moving world mean that governments need to move and lead change. The biggest task for leaders in bureaucracies is to be open about creativity.'

He also discussed the relationship between government and business, adding: 'In the UK, this relationship is close and I use what I what I learned on the MBA every single day. Everything I do benefits from having an MBA.'

In his address to MBA students and graduates, Professor Krotov said: 'The world is changing rapidly and we often don't understand why – because there is no time. The world is moving faster than we can act.'

In terms of the MBA, he added: 'Students no longer want universal concepts; they want exact specific examples and tools which they can

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Clockwise from above: Sir Paul Judge and Laurie Bristow; Laurie Bristow; Andrew Main Wilson

use. AMBA has a great role to play; not just accreditation, but looking at standards and best business practices.'

Boris Shcherbakov, General Manager at Dell Russia, spoke of 'cross-fertilisation' in business and education, in terms of driving the quality of MBAs.

'We want managers... to talk the same language and share common values and goals, across cultures,' he said. 'Otherwise, we won't be successful in big business. This is all part of continuous learning process.'

But he warned: 'The MBA is just a part of this learning process,

which starts at kindergarten. Business Schools need to focus not just on learning what to do but how, but on leading with integrity and moral standards. I would recommend focusing on emotional intelligence because this helps people talk to each other. People do business with people and there is a need for empathy. For this reason, foundational values, integrity and honest business needs to be taught at school.'

IBS-Moscow RANEPA Executive MBA graduate Maxim Kuznetsov, Vice President, Sector Market Leader, Philips Consumer Lifestyle, Russia and CIS, said: 'Before my course I had 15 years' experience working with multi-nationals. But during the MBA programme, I enjoyed lots of sharing with

classmates and the programme pushed me out of my comfort zone. It's about teaching people to be led, and this is vital.

He agreed with Shcherbakov on the topic of empathy, adding: 'Emotional intelligence and soft skills are difficult to measure, but they are what makes directors and leaders different.'

Closing the discussions, Sir Paul Judge, President of AMBA, added: 'Some people are cynical about MBAs, but education is changing.'

'Today's students are unlikely to stay in the same job for all of their lives and we need more skills to solve unknown problems. Many students will have jobs that don't exist yet.'

He added that distance learning is becoming more prevalent but

said that a huge part of business education is people.

'Business Schools have to match what students are doing,' he said. 'Over the decades, business education has changed. In the beginning it was technical and functional because students needed to learn to speak the business language. But in the 1980s it moved on to focus on the human interaction, such as team work. It then moved on further to address more difficult issues like stakeholder awareness and global trends.'

In summing up, he concluded: 'Most of your life you are learning from the world. Blending learning is the answer – learn the basic facts from the computer but go to the classroom to discuss them.'

'An effective leader needs to use both sides of the brain. Education stresses the left-handed-side of the brain as it's easier to measure. But we must encourage both: IQ and EQ. Leaders need analytical ability but also the empathy to deal with people.'

'Everything I do benefits from having an MBA'

Laurie Bristow