



Demonstrating Good Leadership Practices

Extract from: Powell, J. (publication date 2012) The University Role in the Innovative Leadership of Small to Medium Sized Enterprises – towards ‘Universities for a Modern Renaissance’ International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour & Research Special Edition

Abstract

Purpose

Society now expects the universities it funds to work with citizens and communities to enable them to flourish in sustainable ways. One particular aspect of this concerns support for small and medium sized businesses (SMEs) who, more than ever, need universities to help them cost effectively be innovative, and at the leading edge, for markets which are now global in outreach. The paper focuses on the kinds of approach and leadership that academics must put into their academic practices, in order to creatively and constructively lead local partnerships; partnerships that will be both successful and sustainable.

Design/methodology/approach

185 rigorous cases studies were undertaken of successful university outreach activity in 30 Universities across Europe. Senior staff of those universities used their collective judgment to determine the sixteen ‘best leaders’ of these projects in terms of entrepreneurial skills and wealth creating impacts. These leaders were then thematically interviewed and videoed, and their immediate staff indicated what leadership characteristics best described them. All data was content analysed. Then the best practice approaches, which actually helped SMEs, were elicited and the qualities of the sixteen leaders was revealed.

Findings

Best practice projects, from all studied, clearly showed a ‘virtuous knowledge sharing’ cycle, where holistic and co-creating inter-disciplinary team-working was the norm. Teams of academics and SME partners in these projects worked extremely closely together to co-

produce 'real world' solutions. While often 'reluctant leaders', the academics who normally drove these entrepreneurial projects to success had all of the characteristics often ascribed to leaders as described in the general leadership literature. However, in the case of these University Reach-out leaders, these entrepreneurial academics had a particular focus in striving to be 'democratically empowering'; their aspiration was to ensure innovative skills were successfully passed onto others in their teams, including their external partners, to enable powerful and collective co-creation.

Limitations and Implications

The cases studies are extensive in outlook and deeply researched. However, the study of the leaders themselves has so far been limited to sixteen. Nevertheless, the findings they reveal are clear, consistent, repeated and cross-validate each other. To buttress this early study, the author is presently undertaking a further sixty thematic interviews, with the same protocol used here, on a further complementary leaders across the globe; and so far this evidence from this fuller study confirms the findings presented here.

Practical Implications

From these findings, a practical approach has been developed, known as UPBEAT, which coaches traditional academics to become successful entrepreneurial ones. UPBEAT empowers them with appropriate leadership, management and governance skills. Also key in developing such Reach-out by universities is the leadership of senior academics in setting up appropriate managerial infrastructures in which they can more fully flourish; and the paper shows evidence of how to improve academic outreach to SMEs.

Social Implications

This paper has profound social implications, especially in our present global financial extreme, as it focuses on the kinds of leadership that academics should put into practice in order to work more creatively and effectively with local SME partnerships.. The approach has also shown how such leadership can also lead to successful social enterprises in their own right.

Originality

The working of Universities with SME is very much a Cinderella area in Higher Education research. The approach described in this paper deals with this topic in an evidential and highly innovative way. It uniquely heralds, and describes in some detail, a new kind of university which strives to co-identify problems worthy of exploration with local partners, the kind of co-

learning that engenders co-creation and co-design, and also the co-production with local SMEs that can lead them to survive and to flourish. This has recently been recognized by the PASCAL International Observatory for *place management, social capital and learning regions* which has adopted the approach in its 'Universities for a Modern Renaissance programme'.

1. Introduction and Context

Salford University is one of a growing international network of Universities with a strong focus towards their civic responsibilities, delivery and impact to local businesses, including small to medium sized enterprises, and the community, or what Powell and Dayson (2011) refer to as 'plate glass universities'. In the UK, these 'modern' Institutions have always reached out to develop externally facing and academic-enterprise 'best practices'- those having 'longstanding engagements with industry, the local political state and their immediate neighbourhood'. Salford's location at the 'heart of the industrial revolution', with a heritage as a Mechanics Institute – a mutual improvement society which was set up to help transform young artisans into entrepreneurial leaders – gave it a sound footing for such 'real world' higher education developments. Like others in the knowledge economy, these Institution may well be the key to future our nation's wealth creation and improvement in the quality of all our lives. Salford recognised the need to do this long before others and began to prepare itself to 'virtuously knowledge share' with all its partners, and also has become somewhat a beacon of best practice (Lockett, 2007).

Salford decided to build on its best characteristic from this 'externally faced thinking' by a conscious effort to innovate both in the creation of new products and services, and then moved forward, understanding the requirements of a 21st century knowledge economy, to establish its own distinctive identity as a leading enterprise university. To do this it made important changes to its entire academic and managerial organisation by establishing Academic Enterprise¹ (Æ), as the third major strand of university activity, and then redirected resources to enable the sort of institution that Burton Clark (1998) suggested was so necessary for a Modern Renaissance.

At the inception of Academic Enterprise, I was asked by the University of Salford to lead its development, firstly as its Director and then as Pro Vice Chancellor for Academic Enterprise and Regional affairs. One of the key elements in its development was the key but small staff of highly committed academic leaders who were complemented by Associate Deans and Heads of School across the whole university (Powell, 2000, 2001, 205 and 2007. These strong

¹ Academic Enterprises, often called Third Mission, Third Strand, outreach or University Reach-out elsewhere and by government and its agencies, refers to those 'developments at the University of Salford, both projects and programmes, of all academic opportunities beyond means currently employed', but to the same high intellectual values and ethos of all its other academic activities, such as Teaching and Learning or Research.

communicators and supporters enabled the dissemination of correct messages of the necessary practices of Academic Enterprise and regular feedback on the effects of change. I also set up sensitive information technology based enablers which truly enabled the sharing of best practice as well as practices to avoid, Key in this were stories about exemplary practices themselves, anecdotes that gave academic colleagues hope and incentives that helped engage more academics in the process; the detail of Salford's Academic Enterprise development is reported elsewhere in much detail (Powell, 2008, 2010 and 2011) and would indeed be worthy of exploration for those aspiring to create their own successful processes and practices.

With their essential support I believe I was able to show the kind of entrepreneurial leadership which enabled Salford to become more highly engaged with business and the community than ever before (Whatmore, 1999) and Lockett, (2007), preparing itself to cope well with the current crisis and beyond. This paper charts that progress to its current success and relates Salford's situation to other like-minded Institutions. I say success because, as David Lammy (2010), the former Minister for Higher Education, reported, *'Salford is now seen to be one of two 'intensively entrepreneurial universities in the UKthat are strong and flexible enough to enter into income-generating partnerships with others to weather the debt crisis'*. Indeed, through the leadership of its new Vice Chancellor, Martin Hall (2010), Salford now increasingly sees itself fully as an *'enterprising University which transforms individuals and communities through excellent teaching, research, innovation and engagement'*. It has taken the third stream outreach I helped developed and made it a first mission, with an appropriate vision and implementation process to guide academics, and indeed all Salford staff, are developing towards progressive civic engagements that really makes a local difference. In those developments the University's deep engagement and support for SMEs has a key role.

The broadening of the Salford perspective is based on it looking out to observe best practices elsewhere, and these developments were particularly helped by a European project Salford coordinated for the European University Association (EUA, 2006; Universities for Creative City-Regions Consortium, 2006; and Powell and Wainwright 2009). EUA put out a call for consortia of like-minded people to work closely together for this area and I was chosen to coordinate its efforts. Our studies focused on 'creative universities and their creative city regions' and it soon became clear, as the result of our findings that many more academics across the world were interested in developing the project. In particular, in this first project a consortium of seven like-minded universities shared their best practices of academic enterprise across Europe. Their findings and resulting aspirations have now become more

extended and global, emerging into the PASCAL International Observatory for *place management, social capital and learning regions new programme*, and known as 'PASCAL Universities for a Modern Renaissance (PUMR)'. Through its web site and regular conferences PASCAL created discussion space to develop the notion of 'virtuous knowledge sharing' for this area. Now all PASCAL PUMR universities fully share knowledge and best practices in developing creative and innovative relationships with their external partners for mutual benefit. The Universities of Victoria (in Canada), RMIT and Victoria (in Australia), Glasgow (Scotland), Michigan and Northern Illinois (in the USA), CEU and Pecs (in Hungary), Twente (in Holland), Aalto (in Finland) and Plymouth (in the UK) have similar aspirations to Salford, are keen to be part of this consortium, and play a full part in benchmarking their best practices with other universities in this respect. One of the key findings in the success of this development has been the leadership of University Reach-out provided by key individuals in each university and hence this paper. Furthermore it has resulted in an extended exploration of the leadership, governance and management skills these key academic entrepreneurs use by Powell and Clark (2011) funded by the Foundation for Studies in the UK and the Leadership Foundation of the UK; this now builds on the work reported here.

2. Moving towards Better Engagement

Salford has now mainstreamed its Academic Enterprise, particularly developing a leadership and management development programme (Hall, June 2010) which focuses on five key objectives, to:

- explore and agree the context for leadership in the University today;
- share and acknowledge current perspectives on leadership in the University, and begin to develop a greater sense of shared purpose and cohesive relationships;
- establish the foundation for the leadership programme based upon active participation, opting-in, and shared responsibility for the outcomes;
- introduce participants to early thinking about development opportunities;
- acknowledge and explore the different contexts in which leadership takes place

I commend such an approach to other universities, because my research, reported later and elsewhere (Powell 2008 a and b, 2009, 2010), reveals the important role academic leaders can, and must, play in taking their colleagues on journeys with external partners they may not naturally wish to take. So, in my mind, Salford's attempt to coach academics to provide such leadership is absolutely necessary, and an exemplar in its own right. For, as recent Reports from the British Government's on Innovation (2008, 2009 & 2010), the CBI's 'Stronger Together' Report (2009) and CIHE's 'Universities, Business and Knowledge Exchange' Study (2008) all reveal leadership is necessary in developing collaborative working, since the objectives of academe and industry are still often distinctly different. This is because even with all the rhetoric saying otherwise, academics mostly still tend to pursue objectives from their own discipline with their studies underpinned by research-oriented rationales, rather than by the desire to commercialise technology'; this tends to mean they rarely seek to create impact or improvement to the real world. On the other hand, what industry and the community want from academia are 'ideas and talent, rather than a cheap way of outsourcing R&D activities. Furthermore, in the past, the above mentioned reports also reveal that industry/community often saw academics talking another language, so changes are necessary to ensure more productive engagement and to develop the leaders who will make it happen. It is not a trivial task to unite two distinct ways of thinking, doing and working, but the Higher Education Funding Agencies in the UK are now stressing the importance of 'impact' of a university's work on society.

So, these are interesting times for those in universities who wish to engage more creatively and constructively with external partners. I believe a new vision is therefore needed by those universities who want to reach out creatively to so far ‘excluded communities’, such as SMEs. This, in turn, requires new academic leaders to overcome the differences between academe and business and to promote, support and coach others in academe who want to become creatively engaged with a wider group of communities, such as local small to medium sized enterprises. Over the past decade, I have attempted to develop a new conversation between universities and both business and the community, and the remainder of this paper summarises the benefits of that discourse and how academics can become useful leaders in society, helping create better environments, better, communities, better economies and better businesses.

3. The UPBEAT Approach and its Methodologies

The culmination of my period as a senior manager at the University of Salford saw my attempts to lead, and more particularly virtually share knowledge and ideas, with an even richer consortia of universities of like mind, in an attempt to gain a fuller understanding of how universities could make greater impact with business and the community. Known as UPBEAT, or the **U**niversity **P**artnership for **B**enchmarking **E**nterprise and **A**ssociated **T**echnologies, this consortia of twenty-five British and ten other European universities worked under significant funding from the Higher Education Funding Council for England, the Council for Industry and Higher Education and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council. Each university undertook five case studies of their successful university outreach. This UPBEAT evaluative approach was used to identify a range of activities and their outcomes/impacts across 4 key skill themes for academic enterprise: ***solution enabling, talent improving, intelligent partnering and new business enabling skill*** – shown diagrammatically below.

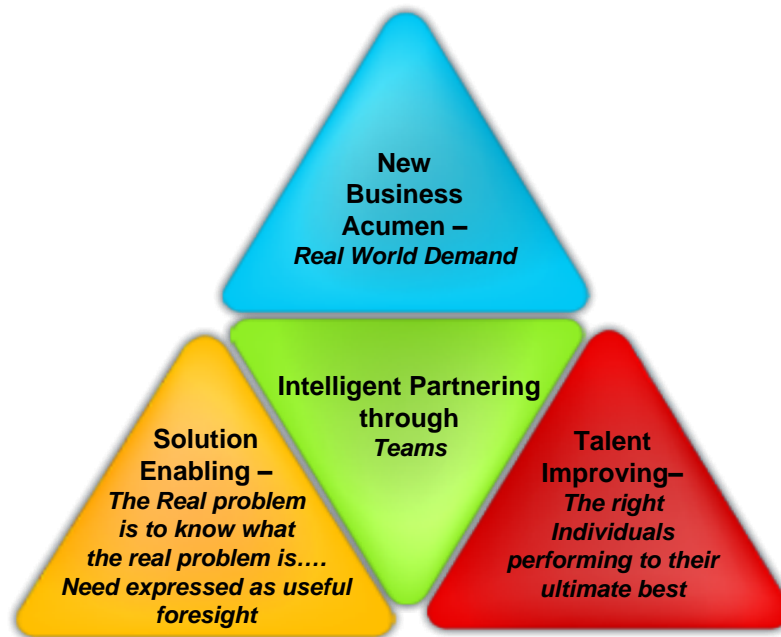


Figure 1 – The Fourfold of Enterprising Skills

3.1 Research Methodology

The detailed UPBEAT process was based on robust case studies undertaken using a simple, effective, but standard observational template – an evaluatory matrix, developed during the projects pilot phase, relating to the increasing enterprise qualities relating to a range of wealth creating impacts. In this part of the study a total of 185 project cases, deemed successful by the Universities developing them, were recorded against the evaluation template; these cases can be explored in depth on the www.upbeat.eu.com database, by accessing them under the term ‘resources. The cases were co-ordinated by a team of five social science researchers, taken on by the core UPBEAT team to work with local academics developing rigorous findings. Of interest to the main topic of this paper, the majority of projects reported here fall under the categories of Business Support and Community categories (58 projects and 42 projects respectively); all are extremely relevant to SMEs, and are as varied as ones which ‘support the introduction of new technology’ to those which ‘monitor container shipments at the Port of Liverpool’, to ‘running summer schools which introduce young people to life at University’. Other categories include creative industries/arts, health, engineering and technology and Knowledge Transfer Partnerships; the range of cases is shown over.

UPBEAT project categories

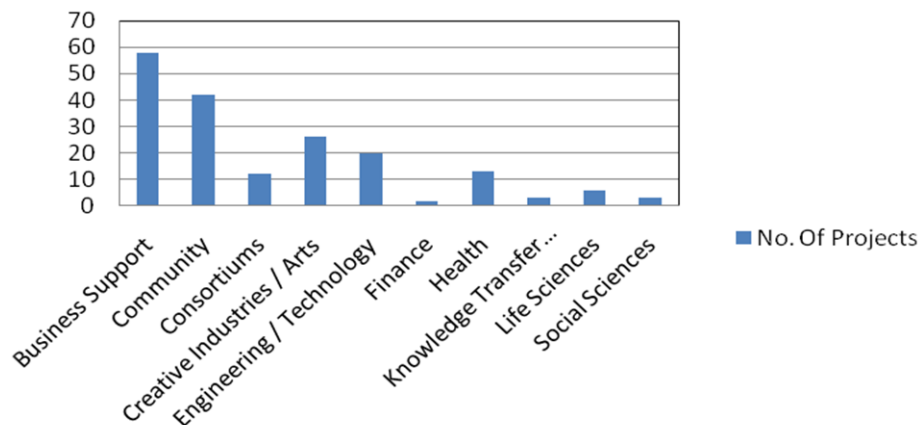


Figure 2 – UPBEAT Project Numbers

There is an element of bias in the project sample, as the cases are self-chosen by the universities undertaking them. However, the projects were selected from best the partner universities had to offer, and whilst much of the data is based on unpublished research they are probably representative of the type of engaged research academics are working in across a broad range of university involvement with business and the community.

Each project leader of the 185 cases was interviewed for one hour and asked to “tell the story” of the project they were engaged with. The project “story” was digitally recorded. UPBEAT is based on narrative theory (Powell & Khan, 2008). Narratives are common to all humans as everyone tells stories and hears stories. It is therefore “...a universal tool for knowing as well as telling, for absorbing knowledge as well as expressing it” and therefore, at face value, perhaps the simplest theory to understand. Narrative in simple terms is “...the representation of an event or series of events” (Wortham, 2001)) and, depending on viewpoint, these events have to occur one after another or have to be causally related. Once the interviews had been conducted they were written up according to a similar structure – Green, Cammilli and Elmore (2001) took a similar approach because, as they suggested it helped “...to facilitate the cross-case analyses that were to follow” - and in terms of identifying the four skills areas, the ability to easily compare features is beneficial. UPBEAT case analyses were not approached with any particular theoretical direction. In order to determine the innovation occurring firstly the transcripts are read in order to determine the overarching themes, and then these are grouped and considered with regard to the UPBEAT matrix.

To conclude the process, the research team shared the case study reports back with the interviewees. The interviewees are given the opportunity to read over the case study report and makes comments and adjustments, in order to ensure the report is a true representation of their project (Fielding and Fielding 1986 and in Silverman, 1998).

3.2 Academic Enterprise Leadership Studies

It became apparent from the successful case studies that good leadership, governance and management, by the academic entrepreneurs leading the successful cases, was critical to the success of any academic enterprise project. It was therefore decided to take a more focused study of the leadership characteristics of the sixteen academic leaders from the 185 successful projects. Senior staff of those universities undertaking those studies used their collective judgment to shortlist what they felt to be exemplary and highly engaged leaders, then the core research team used its final UPBEAT evaluation conference, with over 150 interested parties attending, to choose what they collectively believed to be the sixteen 'best leaders' in terms of team-working, awareness, entrepreneurial skills and wealth creating impacts. I then thematically interviewed and videoed recorded these leaders to explore the similarities and differences between their modes of leadership and creative team-working and in order to understand what best practices could be learned for the benefit of others in the academic community. In this study I also explored the importance of organisational culture, learning, development and context to their success, including the local educational policies and politics etc.

A pluralistic thematic was used to buttress the interviews, where both the managers and managed of these academic leaders would validate the personal leadership views given; furthermore the immediate staff of these exemplary leaders also indicated what leadership characteristics best described them. Audio and Videoed records were made of the hour long interviews undertaken against a thematic interviewing schedule; this improved validity of the findings, it enabled easy cross comparisons between leaders and also enabled me to disseminate best practices to those hungry to be more successfully enterprising themselves in a useful form; all interviews were also transcribed and again validated back against those interviewed, prior to the data being content analysed to reveal key issues; this lead to more robust findings. The leadership characteristics of the exemplary leaders, as assessed by their own line managed staff were assessed using a multi scaled Likert protocol, were elicited and mounted on 'star diagrams' for ease of understanding.

4. The Findings

Taken together, these 185 cases studies of successful university outreach activity and interviews with 16 of their most exemplary leaders, showed that all universities studied worked together extremely closely with their societal partners, ***and in much closer relationships than through traditional technology transfer.***

4.1 General Finding – Virtuous Knowledge Sharing

In aggregate, the cases suggested a common approach for successful university engagement with their partners. These universities all engendered deep, meaningful and maturing conversations with their partners which followed a ‘virtuous knowledge sharing’ cycle:

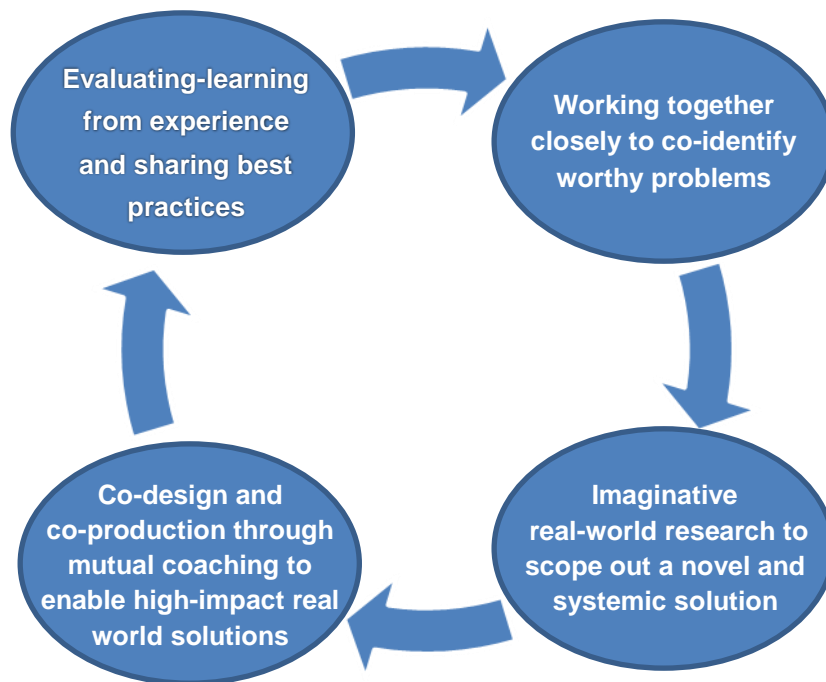


Fig. 3 Virtuous Knowledge Sharing cycle (POWELL, 2008)

Holistic and co-creating team-working seemed to work well when they followed this cycle with their external partners. But, for this cycle to work, academics and their external team partners have to collaborate to define a worthy problem – worthy of the combined effort of all partners - and find an imaginative solution through real world and practice based research. The team of academics and the wider partnership would then work together to implement any solution in the real world – mutually coaching each other to success. To achieve this, all creative team members need to step outside their specific project and think reflectively about whether all their aims and objectives have been met and more particularly how each member can help

others achieve even higher goals. The overall team leader has to engender this more involving and cross empowering organisational culture slowly at the start, help it grow in outlook and then let other team members take on their role of leading the team at different times. The demand is for the initial leader not to become **the** 'hero leader' of the team but to create condition where leadership is shared. Mutual coaching starts slowly, but as it grows the collective creativity of the team flourishes and the team also then seeks yet more collectively based innovation to challenge it.

So an approach which started as a simple attempt to chart best practices as Salford, has revealed parallel and complementary attempts to capture best practices across a further forty European universities. Then, because of virtuous knowledge sharing across a growing range of universities, each university can see even better and more innovative ways of leading its innovative developments. However, the aggregated cases reveal a surprisingly common set of detailed findings, even with respect to the actions required to improve academics co-creating with all aspects society. These findings are written up in detail elsewhere (Powell, 2009, 2010, 2011), because in this paper I mainly concentrate on the leadership of these projects. However, before moving onto a fuller discussion of this leadership, let me briefly present firstly an exemplary case relating to innovation for small and medium sized businesses, since the edition of this journal particularly relates to SMEs and University engagements. I also give one more general finding and conclusions from the cases – the evidence which led to the idea of 'Universities for a Modern Renaissance' (Powell and Wainwright, 2009). These next two sections give the necessary context to defining the leadership for Academic Enterprise of the future

4.2 - 'Bouncing Higher' – An Exemplary Narrative showing Academic Enterprise for Small Business Innovation

'Bouncing Higher' was a successful balanced learning approach by six North West Universities in the UK. It was a combination of **action learning, open learning and coaching** - which helped 130 small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in the North of England increase their Gross Value Added profitability through innovation by some 24.5%. It originated under the name 'NetworkNorthWest' at the University of Salford and ran between 2004 and 2007. It was developed to address the issues relating to poor take up of traditional business support by SMEs and because of the generally low levels of engagement of the business community with Institutes of Higher Education (HEIs). Originally funded by the North West Development Agency (NWDA), NetworkNorthWest was specifically developed to improve innovation, entrepreneurship, enterprise and wealth creation in the regional SME business community

through educational micro-networking - networking to learn from, and with, others in a similar position in other SMEs. In particular, it mainly used 'Action Learning' techniques which allowed the SME participants to set their own agenda for what they felt they needed to learn. Six or seven SME owner managers worked in an action learning set supported by one university facilitator. Each SME participant brought to monthly set meetings, problems facing them. They were then given their own time to discuss their problems, and potential actions for solution, with their colleagues. With good facilitation the SMEs gained confidence to consider their issue afresh and often came up with their own solutions, supported by their peers who acted as 'partners in adversity'. The approach was a huge success and, as its director I was able to benchmark its best practice against similar learning developments regionally, nationally and internationally.

The programme benefits by working with six delivery partner universities across the North West of England. Their support was multi-disciplinary and multifaceted (including applied research, knowledge transfer, management and professional development and provision of sector specific training for employees) and there was potential to deliver support in the form of face-to-face contact right across the region on a local basis or with on-line resources. The project, seen as exemplary by the NWDA, has since delivered support for Manchester Chamber Business Enterprises to further cohorts of SMEs across Greater Manchester and beyond. And since the completion of our pilot development, the core process has been adopted as the basis for the second level of intervention for leadership development by the Northern Leadership Academy. It also significantly improved the profitability of the SMEs who took part through the impact of innovative processes and developments enabled by the Action Learning by a Gross Value Added of 24%.

During the course of the initial project, 118 SMEs had been prepared to invest more than 30 hours contact time to the project, while the remainder had between three and 30 hours; this is a considerable commitment from business people who are frequently unwilling to give up even the most minimal time for training and education. All participants grew in confidence and every participant had a different but rewarding learning outcome; see Table 1 below for just some of the many examples of successful delivery, output and outcomes.

Area of Interest	Recorded Learning Outcomes	SME Learner Comments
Management Development	Adoption of longer term strategies focus and Longer-term goals, development of a range of skills including time management, delegation and building confidence	<i>'The learning process gave me the Confidence to try new approaches and give the leadership which enabled my company to become more innovative'</i>
Realisation	Understanding of the Customer's Perspective. that computers were not to be feared and could indeed improve business performance, the impact an effective marketing strategy on business performance, how new technologies might support business growth, the importance of reflection	<i>'I hadn't realise how much I got carried away by the day-to-day running of the company. Just standing back and creating time to reflect became a 'godsend'. I started to realise how I could become a leader for innovation in my company'.</i>
Technology	Introduction of computers into business. Use of new software packages, web sites and internet marketing. Bringing my hardware up to the leading edge.	<i>'I put up with the out-dated manufacturing tools and processes handed down from my father. I gained the confidence to work with him to make our enterprise "state of the art" and therefore profitable'.</i>
Information Transfer	Alliances formed between SMEs and between SMEs and universities with a view to future Joint ventures, community awareness and information on where to gain help and advice and how to find powerful investors. Development of knowledge on software packages and funding opportunities, opportunity costs, outsourcing, 'futurising' etc to stimulate innovation	<i>'I learned how to trust MDs of other SMEs who were prepared to share knowledge with me for mutual benefit. We even started working together on joint ventures and won several bids. This led me to think about how I could develop my own e-newspaper to spread the word to existing clients about my company's developing directions'.</i>
Tangible Outcome	New products and services, increased turnover, building alliances with former competitors and bidding for larger contracts. New alliances with companies from different backgrounds, employment of new staff to free up manager's time or to meet increased workloads, purchase of new premises, employment of SET members, introduction of IT and e-marketing	<i>'As I gained confidence of my competitors willingness to share ideas, I opened up my thoughts on more Innovative products and processes. We each worked to our strengths and highly creatively to develop a new brand of unique products. As a result my profitability increased by a factor of three last year'.</i>

Table 1 Examples of some learning Outcome reported by the evaluation team and facilitators (extended from a paper by Powell and Houghton, 2007)

For SMEs to spend such amounts of time engaged in mid-career professional learning is a key finding in its own right, since many traditional courses fail to get anywhere near this level of engagement. It is also interesting to note that several of the Action Learning Sets were so enamoured of the process that they elected to continue the meetings after the end of the project support, taking over the facilitation of the meetings themselves. One of the most interesting overall outcomes of the project was the powerful business camaraderie the approach engendered, in what were initially seen to be competitor SMEs; this togetherness, and the willingness to express it, is summarised visually in the following photograph:



Photograph 1 of the SMEs Bouncing Down Oxford Road, Manchester in support of, and to publicise, the Action Learning Process

SMEs were often enrolled through ‘word of mouth’ as early adopters convince other SMEs to become involved. By the completion of the pilot, a large cohort of professional learners who find learning about anything new notoriously difficult had not only become deeply engaged, but highly empowered. The photograph actually represents many of those who took part in our action learning programme ‘bouncing down’ King Street in Manchester in the middle of the rush hour. They did this as they had become so delighted with the process that they wanted to encourage other SMEs to come to an event to mark the end of the formal learning processes. It shows the enjoyment they all felt in taking part in this influential programme of learning and is a representation of the name that they collectively gave to their learning experiences, namely ‘**bouncing higher**’. For them, Action Learning was the educational process that enabled them to ‘bounce ideas off against each other’ and learn in a relaxed way with ‘partners in adversity’ to become more creative in their work for wealth creation. This programme epitomizes a potentially new way of working between academe and small

businesses, which developed from meaningful and maturing conversations between those who had traditionally used different languages to describe the world.

The Action Learning approach was clearly an extremely good way of getting those who are traditionally weak learners, including those who had failed in the educational system, to fully engage and grow in capability and competence. Once the confidence of the SME owner managers grew, it was quickly possible to offer them taster sessions and lead them back into more formal learning environments. Coaching overcome individual issues and problems both on technological/managerial issues as well as emotional ones. Open learning, in the form of e materials written by, and therefore for SMEs, also proved extremely useful in providing detailed content on specific problems for each SME.

This case highlights the importance of two key findings that come from all my studies to date of universities reaching out to 'excluded communities', whether they be SMEs or others. Firstly, the willingness of universities to want to engage with a wider group of participants, such as SMEs, and how a cost effective and highly interactive learning can be developed by those HEIs who want to make a real difference to communities traditionally excluded from access to university capability; the necessary micro-scale engagements to overcome the resistance from such learners can be developed using current learning technologies that really do work, if universities are willing to try. Secondly, it is the leadership of projects such as these which are so necessary in universities that are traditionally extremely conservative in helping people from such small scale, disparate, excluded and fragmented communities. In particular, the creative senior leadership of the university to engage in such programmes of work it critical to ensure success, as is the differently creative leadership required to develop learning or innovation outcomes that make a real impact on organizations like SMEs.

4.3 An Important General Finding from the Case Studies - Towards a Modern Renaissance

The above case provides a detailed example of what can be achieved when universities choose to support small to medium sized enterprises. In particular it suggests universities ought to take a more balanced and purposeful stance in their reach out to all kinds of excluded communities. Those who want to make a societal difference in this respect must be prepared to share their leading-edge, coherent and pioneering understandings of the world, gained from creative rigorous study, with the 'real world' people, and not just with fellow academics. They must do this by developing improved knowledge sharing processes that truly enrol, engage

and empower external audiences in more inclusive ways and learn new and maturing modes of conversation with those they seek to serve.

This evidence for such enhanced collaborative engagement is clear from all 185 cases studied as part of this report. This finding best summarised and reflected in the PASCAL Universities for a Modern Renaissance (PUMR) development mentioned earlier. In short, sustainable success occurs when Universities use best practices that seek to ***'co-identify real problems worthy of collective solution jointly with relevant partners, the co-creation of solutions systemically fit-for-purpose in the global knowledge economy, the co-production of solutions and their stage management into the real world, and further in ensuring the continuous improvement of all such solution to reach more people with more constructive effect'***. The case studies further reveal that a systemically innovative approach to university engagement with society is an essential requirement for future successful Academic Enterprises.

The PUMR approach has now been developed by a new PASCAL consortium of those Universities who want to work within the underlying and important principles mentioned above and conforming to the detailed evidence provided from my case studies. All PUMR Universities have agreed that they will 1) form meaningful, wealth creating, sustainable and socially inclusive partnerships between themselves as academics on the one hand and industry, business, the civil and voluntary services and the community on the other; 2) develop collaborative processes that enable the co-identification of 'real problems for solution', increasingly fit for purpose for the knowledge economy from as broad a range of stakeholders as is possible; 3) search for academic opportunities beyond means currently employed with business and community to the highest academic standards and for the mutual benefit of the university and its external partners; and 4) unlock the talents of diverse groups of citizens working together with their university partners in co-creation, co-design and co-production. A fuller description of the PUMR approach is offered on the [PASCAL web site](#) for those interested in taking part in this exciting new venture.

PASCAL is now in its consultation phase with respect to its development of the concept of Universities for a Modern Renaissance and would welcome thoughts from any interested parties and those who wish to find out the details of the detailed thinking behind PUMR should read Powell (Powell, 2010. 2011a and 2011b and Powell and Wainwright 2009). Some of the themes for PUMR development are exploring in more detail include that: as Institution they would become key actors, initiators and co-leaders of knowledge society activities, its

structures and implementations. They would be deeply engaged in the Modern Renaissance, connected closely to all activities of business and the community helping citizens and professional flourish; be strongly evidence based with natural sciences of central importance for future change; academic reason, knowledge and 'know-how' would have high visibility; they should have a 'civic duty of care' to engage with wider society on the local, national and international scale, and to do so in a manner which strongly links the social, economic, environmental, 'designerly' and artistic prowess of society; encompass diversified sources of information, which typically defy the possibility of creating common body of knowledge: explore mass customization, but remembering conflict ought to encourage all to explore richer challenges; have systemic awareness for all, i.e. everyone is coached to understand their own position in the system - the *engaged or connected university*; implement the 'triple bottom line' by developing enterprise project with caring for environmental, economic and social sustainability– *the 'ecoversity'*; **their students learn by drawing on the full range of their life-accumulated capabilities to address diverse issues of global and ethical significance**; and finally 'recognise that the development of 'creatives', the core of a modern renaissance, has to start early, as the younger you start learning to be innovative and systemic the greater return on the investment in the realization of human capability terms (Heckman et al). So, in terms of knowledge acquisition, transmission and sharing, especially with universities, it is never too early in life to start or indeed too late to start as wisdom is also a key component of PUMR.

In summary, developing richer and deeper conversations between all partners in such an Academic Enterprise process is a pre-requisite for sustainable success and learning ways and means of mutual coaching and collective leadership key practices for organisational effectiveness

4.4 Leadership is the key to successful and sustainable Academic Enterprise

Indicative findings suggest that successful academic leaders of Reach-out or Academic Enterprise have a strong people focus, are visionary with high values, and are inspirational where the creative project team's collective and collaborative co-creativity is a central focus. First and foremost in their own minds those exemplary academic leaders interviewed had a real, helping and an almost inexhaustible passion for reaching out and engaging with local communities and business, in spite of the drivers from their own university. However, it also reveals the importance of context and culture, including the local educational policies and politics for those who wish to be successful academic leaders in this arena; so if universities are on side to Academic Enterprise they can achieve so much more. The major interest of

these academics simply seems to be to help and support growth in others, particularly from the community or in small businesses, rather than working on their own career. They seek any ways and means necessary to make this possible. They rarely sought career promotion, often appearing to be rather *'reluctant leaders'* needing the nurturing of senior academic 'bosses': *indeed most* would rather not be known as the 'leader of the team', but an active player in all its co-creative developments. Yet in spite of this, all interviewed had clear leadership skills in abundance which the following section highlights in summary form.

Allowing for the above focus, the leadership characteristics chosen by creative team members to portray those who lead them are clear and interestingly reflect the key general characteristics assigned by the most quoted refereed articles of successful general leadership. In particular all in the successful Academic Enterprise teams studied seemed to be coached by academic leaders who understand the role and needs of each member in the creative teams and then being highly supportive of each individual talent in the team. The powerful vision the leader portrays is continuously reinforced and develops as the project develops. Such leaders foster creativity in all members of their team, making them clearly aware of the key talent they bring to the project and its development. They inspire this talent to give of its best and to continue to want it to creatively improve. These academic entrepreneurs are process aware and tenaciously focused toward finding an appropriate solution. The team appears to come before all and the good leader shapes its affairs socially, manages place issues well and is always there as an emotional support when required. They are 'hands-ready', neither 'hands-on' nor 'hands off'. When others should lead, they let them and they continually work to inspire leadership by others.

Our on-going research confirms other studies on the leadership of creative teams. So, for instance, Whatmore (1999) indicates they are led by leaders who are themselves creative, but also work hard at taking their team members on a new and increasingly compelling journey with improving outputs of real impact; this was also the case in the sixteen academic leaders studied here. Evidence to date also shows the Academics we studied are better at leadership than management, but they also know how to recruit the right team members to cope with their inadequacies; universities must therefore try to support such academic leaders with the right 'project managers' who can appropriately follow through on any Academic Enterprise to make sure it delivers and give a good outcome. On-going analysis of data from the interviews is revealing the similarities and differences between the modes of leadership and creative team-working engendered by exemplary leaders and providing opportunity to recognize and understand best practice in academic leadership. In spite of this, they all have leadership skills

in abundance as the star diagram shown below reveals. This is shown visually in Figure 4 below.

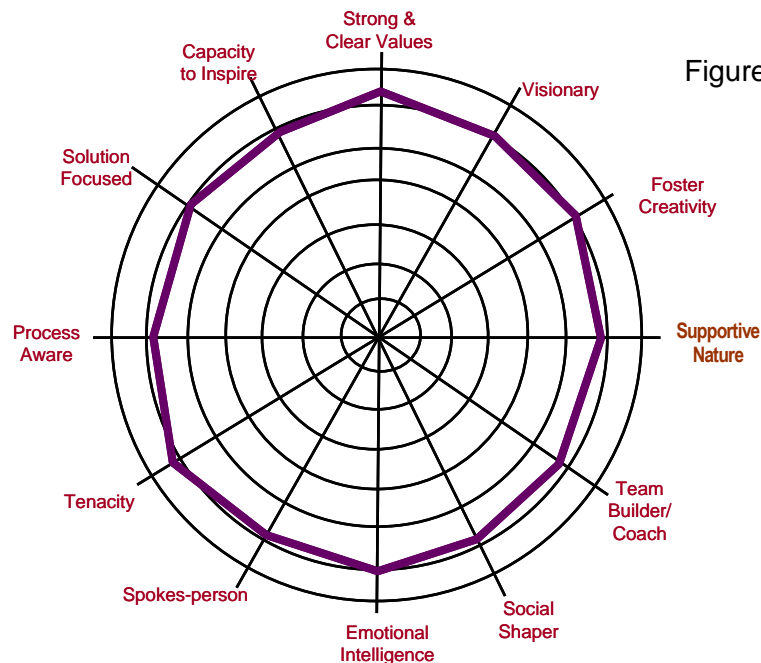


Figure 4

Figure 4 - A Star Diagram portraying the Composite Leadership Skills as attested by the Creative Higher Academic Enterprise Team who were led by the Sixteen Exemplary Leaders

Key: the origin of the figure represents zero or no skill; the outside circle represents 7 or maximum leadership characteristic on a 'Likert Scale' 0 > 7

By situating and analysing the data within the biographical, institutional and cultural contexts within which university entrepreneurial leaders' work. The study also reveals how institutional and personal experiences and contexts intersect in the developing, promotion and practice of university leadership.

Interestingly, such academic leaders also do just enough management/governance to make projects work, and reserve their creativity of the delivery of the best working implementation of their vision. I am presently characterizing such higher entrepreneurial academics - those who make a real difference through enhanced engagement with 'excluded communities' - **Empowering Democratic Leaders**. For those who want to see examples of best practice of these creative academic enterprise leaders please go to www.upbeat.eu.com, where video vignettes of sixteen British academic entrepreneurial leaders can be viewed.

by creative teams of ‘admirers hanging onto their every word’ (Puckett, 2009). They were highly energetic and tireless, leaving ‘no stone unturned’ to reach their, and the teams, desired goals. The four I observed in this study were truly charismatic and emotionally resilient, able to work with uncertainty, using disruptive approaches to drive for continuous improvement. Richard Branson of Virgin is a clear charismatic – see ‘Janice Webster’ leadership video for example at www.upbeat.eu.com. This is visually portrayed as a star diagram in Figure 5 below.

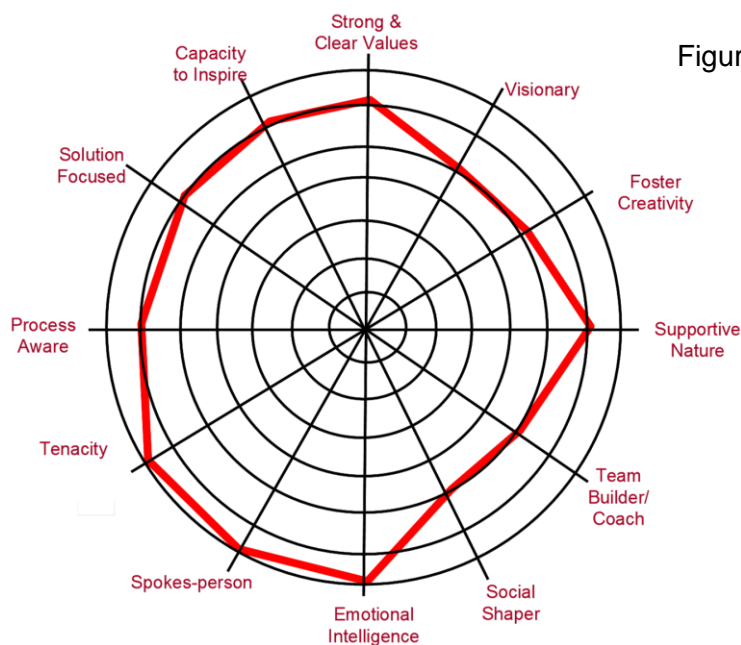


Figure 5

4.4.2 - Democratic Academic Enterprise Leaders:

There were 4 Democratic leaders: the University Academic Leader of a ‘leading enterprise and development’ programme; the senior lecturer Director of an International Health Care Project; another senior Academic Health Care Director of a major Metropolitan Wellbeing project; an Associate Dean for Enterprise in a Science Faculty. My Democratic Academic Entrepreneurial leaders were strong social shapers and team builders. They were consultative leading from behind, ‘blowing a warm breeze across their creative teams, encouraging them to sail in particular directions’. But they did consult their teams before ‘making any decision and gather people around them who complement their own strengths and cover for their weaknesses’ (Puckett, 2009). They strove to build great teams, handling necessary conflict to drive for innovative improvement, and creating well rounded coalitions of talent to ensure rich systemically relevant solutions. They ensure all the team chooses a worthy problem to address and collectively own the development of the best solution. Of the four ‘democratic

leaders' I observed, all used the word 'we, rather than 'I' when talking about their project. It goes without saying that President Obama is a quintessential democrat - see 'Angela Clow' leadership video at www.upbeat.eu.com. This is shown visually in figure 6 below.

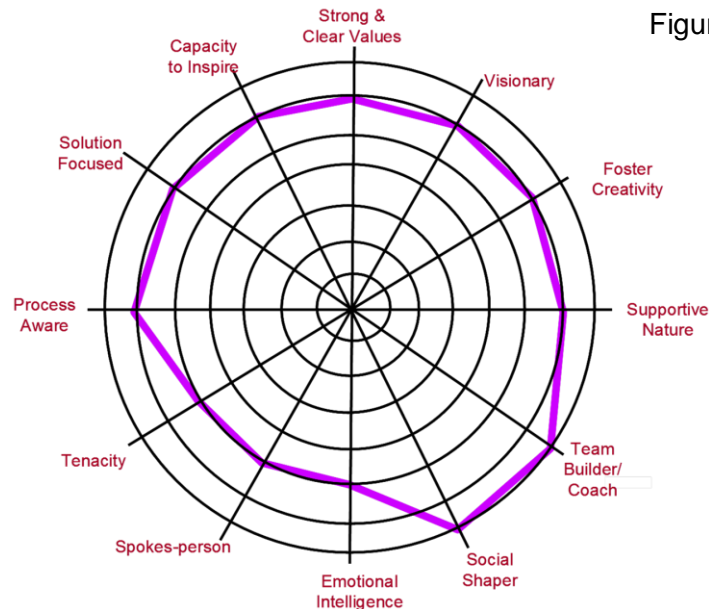


Figure 6

4.4.3 - Mentoring Academic Enterprise Leaders:

Four of the academic leaders I observed were mentoring: co founder and C-Director of a Community Finance project; Associate Dean of Enterprise for a School of Arts and Design; the Deputy Director of Academic Enterprise for her University; A Professor of Entrepreneurship and Innovation and leader of a major University Reach-out venture. Like the democrats they focus on developing their staff, and particularly in empowering them to become leaders in their own right. While they were highly supportive in nature, heavily process aware and solution focused, their egalitarian principles drive them for others to take control of their own destinies. However, as Puckett (2009) indicates they have 'strong ethics and there's no compromise on their approach and commitment. They're very clear about what they will or won't do because of the depths of their commitment to their values'. They also expect all members of their team also to have high commitment. They were much in demand just at this moment because of the dubious practices and morals which have led to the current economic crisis. Gandhi is the most well-known mentoring leader – see 'Bob Paterson' leadership video at pumr.pascalobservatory.org. This is shown visually in figure 7 below.

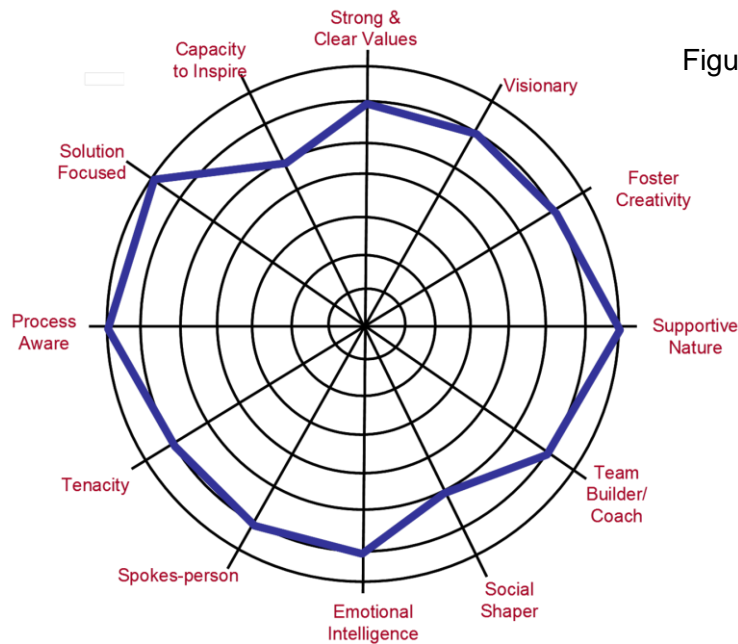


Figure 7

4.4.4 - Situated Academic Enterprise Leaders:

In my survey of excellent reach-out leader, four were situational leaders: a Dean of Sporting Partnerships; the Head of a major University Business development; the Director of University 'spin-in' programme; the Co-ordinator of a 'Young People's University' project. While they were highly visionary, with strong values, they purposefully strove to foster creativity in others. In order to do this, they had to understand the nature of their teams, their creativity, and what drove them; they also had to deeply understand the whole context in which their team was working. They have 'great diplomacy when dealing with internal and external stakeholders, and they change their style to suit whatever a situation demands' (Puckett, 2009). However, their changing nature can be disconcerting as they try to morph into different leaders to suit different occasions. Their real strength is the way they can bring together highly disparate stakeholders with radically different views. Better than anyone they can develop a discourse and resulting conversations that can create real and lasting unity, leading to rich, broad based and highly sustainable solutions - see 'Peter Rogers' leadership video at www.upbeat.eu.com. This is shown visually in figure 8 viz.

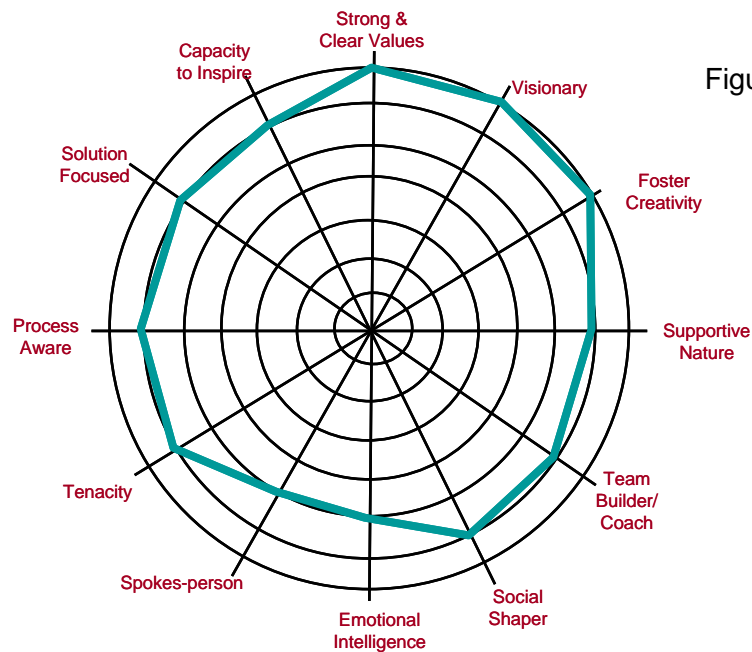


Figure 8

4.4.5 – Academic Enterprise Leadership with Passion and Commitment

In my studies to date the sixteen British leaders reported here, and now over sixty other successful Academic Enterprise leaders from around the world (Powell and Clark, 2011) reported in due course, there were no ‘autocratic leaders’ – leaders who say ‘do as I say’. They were all democratically empowering as I mentioned earlier. All had fine general leadership characteristics and most effectively and relevantly reported for this paper in Whatmore (1999). Our academic leaders all had a high passion and commitment towards reaching out and engaging with business and the community. None of them mind being challenged by the sort of situations all regularly faced and they were happy to be coached to do a better job. So for those responsible for this area in Universities the potential leaders need to be found, enrolled, engaged and empowered. However, none of the academics we interviewed would be instructed to become Academic Entrepreneurs. For, like other academics, all forms of instruction ‘flies in the face’ of their freedom to act creatively on the basis of their own values, whether they work in teams, or not. This may be why business gurus, brought in by universities try to help improve their business skills, often fail to be able to lead academic themselves or suggest better ways of so doing.

5 – Conclusions

In spite of the key focus of the Academic Enterprise developments mentioned here with their fast acting enterprise dimensions, I want to be clear that I still recognize that in order to understand the complexities, uncertainties and often ‘wickedness’ of difficult external ‘real world’ problems, academics need to develop some ‘private frames of reference’, to enable the necessary theory building, experimentation and high level discussions leading to high value change-for-improvement for a modern world. However, more than ever before, academics also need to use their deep and rigorously acquired understandings creatively for the common good – to reach out to the community, engage and empower others. So, as many as possible must learn to act more broadly than just being good researchers and scholars. In particular they need to develop new ways of effective working for business and the community, new modes of conversation to develop useful dialogues with strategic partners and improved *knowledge sharing* that truly enables academics to make a real difference in the real world with external colleagues from business, industry, the civil and voluntary services and the community.

Senior Academic University Managers need to hunt out those with passion for reaching out and engaging with business and the community. It should prize them and support them in becoming more entrepreneurial for the good of the University, its external partners and society at large. It should set up organizational structures to help them develop creatively and purposefully, and reward them when they do. My explorations of now over forty universities world-wide who want to reach out in improved ways, reveal a real interest in academics wanting to do this and to work within the principles of PASCAL Universities for a Modern Renaissance. PASCAL now offer coaching and guidance based on the major findings of this paper and related ones by Powell (2010a and b, 2011a and b, 2012); these particularly make use of the simple UPBEAT evaluation matrix (pumr.pascalobservatory.org).

Those academics with a passion for working creatively and effectively with business and the community should also attempt to become the new leaders of the creative partnership teams of the future Academic Enterprise. In turn they should attempt to virtuously knowledge share with people of like mind from external local businesses to harness their collective potential. As things develop they should work within their universities to enrol and coach other talented staff to become leaders in their own right with a focus for wealth creating innovation in the richest sense of the word ‘wealth’; the paper gives guidance of what form this should take.

My journey in developing what I call Higher Academic Enterprise, at the University of Salford, has been exciting and rewarding. It has moved beyond simple technology transfer, through knowledge transfer and knowledge exchange to 'virtuous knowledge sharing'. My own knowledge sharing with a consortium of like-minded universities and senior academics has led me to believe there are more innovative ways of universities co-creating with their external partners. In particular, it will be enterprising academic leaders of the future, in 'Universities for Modern Renaissance', who will:

Look where everyone is looking

See what no one else can see

Do what no one else can do

uniquely by

Co-identifying worthy problems

Co-designing their systemic solution

Co-producing sustainable outputs and outcomes

which are fit-for-purpose for

All in the knowledge economy

Enabling socially inclusive wealth creation

And the highest impact for real improvement

6. References

- Confederation of British Industry. (2009), 'Stronger Together: Business and Universities' in *Turbulent Times*, CBI
- Council for Industry and Higher Education. (2008), '*Universities, Business and Knowledge Exchange*', published by CIHE
- EUA, (2006), '*Creativity in Higher Education – a Socrates Project and Briefing Note*', published by EUA, <http://www.eua.be/eua/jsp/upload/> 2006
- Fielding N. and Fielding F., (1986), '*Linking Data: the articulation of qualitative methods in Social Research*', Sage, London and Beverly Hills
- Green J.L., Cammilli, G. and Elmore, P.B. (2001), 'The Case Study as a Research Methodology', as a Chapter in their *Handbook of Complementary Methods in Educational Research*, The American Education Association.
- HM Government. (2008, 2009 & 2010), '*Innovation Reports*' Department of Business, Innovation and Skills
- Hall, M. (2009), '*University of Salford Strategic Plan - 2009/10 to 2017/18*', *University of Salford*,
- Lammy, David. 2010, '*Leader*' in the Independent Newspaper 24th July
- Lockett. N. (2007), '*Extended Knowledge Transfer Study – Salford University*', published by InfoLab 21 for Lancaster University and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, , October 2007
- Powell, J.A., Harloe, M., and Goldsmith, M (2000), '*Achieving Cultural Change: Embedding Enterprise*', IMHE Conference 'Beyond the Entrepreneurial University, OECD Paris 2000
- Powell, J.A. (2001), '*The Noble Art of Academic Enterprise – The Percival Lecture*', in the Transactions of the Manchester Literary & Philosophical Society, published by Man Lit and Phil, 2001
- Powell, J.A., Druzhin, G.Khrykov, Y., Lawrence, K., Matei, L., Ozsoy,A., Reichert, S., Rzezu, T., Saerheim, I., Wainwright, C., (2006), '*Final Report to the EUA in its Socrates funded Creative Education Programme*' undertaken by the Creative Universities Consortium, EUA
- Powell, J.A., (2005), '*UPBEAT – University Partnership for Benchmarking Enterprise and Associated Technologies*', University of Salford Press
- Powell, J.A. (2007), 'Creative Universities and their Creative City Regions' in *Industry and Higher Education* October 2007 pp 323-335
- Powell, J.A. and Khan, S. (2008), '*Leadership, Management and Governance Final Report on UPBEAT*', HEFCE LGM Committee.
- Powell, J. A. (2008a). 'Elaborating Academic Enterprise for the University of Salford', in '*Higher Education Institutions and Innovation in the Knowledge Economy*', Edited by Lane, K.,

van der Sijde, P., Lahdeniemi, M., and Tarkkanen, J., ARENE Publishing ISBN 978-952-67165-0-3

Powell, J. A. and Houghton, J., (2008), 'Action Learning as a core process for SME business support', in Action Learning Research and Practice, Vol. 5 No 2, July Published by Routledge, 2008 173-184

Powell, J.A. and Wainwright, C. (2009), 'Universities for a Modern Renaissance', pages 55, published jointly by the Institute of the Arts London and the University of Salford, July 2009 ISBN 978-1-905732-77-0

Powell, J.A. (2009), 'The role of Universities in knowledge sharing and real world problem solving' in *Proceedings of the National Conference on Developing design learning and research to tackle real world problems* held by the Design Council, at the University of Northumbria, 22nd October

Powell, J (2010), 'UNIVERSITY KNOWLEDGE THROUGH KNOWLEDGE SHARING - UPBEAT: University Engagement through Virtuous Knowledge Sharing and Academic Staff Development', in *Handbook of Engaged Scholarship: Contemporary Landscapes, Future Directions. Vol. 1: Institutional Change*. Eds: Fitzgerald, H. E., Burack, C., & Seifer, S. Michigan State University Press. East Lansing, MI, USA. Pages 1-29 (2010)

Powell, J.A. and Dayson, K., (2011a), 'Engagement and the Idea of the Civic University', in *Universities and Community Engagement* edited by Paul Benneworth published by Springer-Verlag Vienna

Powell, J.A. and Clark, A., (2011b), 'Leadership for Improved Reach-out or Academic Enterprise', proposal to the Leadership Foundation in Higher Education

Powell, J.A. (2012) 'Enterprising Academics and the Knowledge Capital – towards PASCAL Universities for a Modern Renaissance (PUMR)', in *Building Prosperous Knowledge Cities: Policies, Plans and Metrics*, edited by Yigitcanlar, T., Metaxiotis, K. and Carrilli, J. published by Edward Elgar

Silverman D., (1998), 'Qualitative Research meanings of practice' in *Information Systems Journal*, Volume 8 Issue 1

Puckett, K. (2009), 'What kind of Leaders are you?' in *Leadership*, February 2009

Wortham, S.E.F., (2001), 'Narratives in Action: a strategy for Research Analysis', Teachers College Press

Whatmore, J. (1999), 'Releasing Creativity', Kogan Page

Universities for Creative City-Regions Consortium, - C⁵U – published by EUA, (2006)
<http://www.ae.salford.ac.uk/james.powell/resoources/uploads/File/Absolutely%20Final%20C5U%20REport.pdf> 2006