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- Pride and fear during major organisational change

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- A psychological lens on the acquisition process

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- Why are so many Dutch companies relocating abroad?

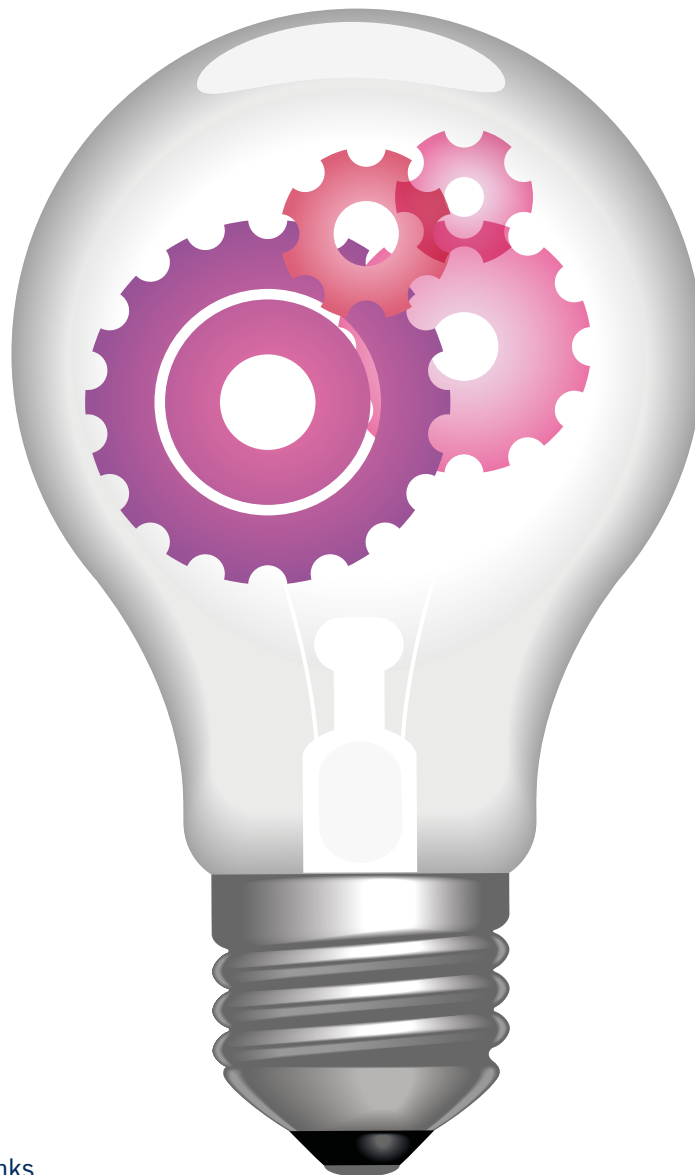
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Decades of research have shown that much of our mental processing occurs at the subconscious level, including the decisions we make as consumers. These subconscious processes explain why we so often fail to accurately predict our own future choices. Often what we think we want has little or no bearing on the choices we actually make. Now a new study provides the first evidence that brain measures can provide significant added value to models for predicting consumer choice.

► Why are so many Dutch companies relocating abroad?

By Marc G. Baaij

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For much of the 20th century, most western multinationals had two somewhat separate identities: a vast multicultural, multi-country enterprise that stretched around the world, and a home office that tended to be very homogenous and even somewhat cosy, like the capital city of a sprawling empire.

► Pride and fear during major organisational change

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Organisational behaviour experts have known for a long time that when employees identify closely with their company, the company functions better. People quit less often, they work harder, and they tend to be more supportive of their employer. And in a volatile time, such as during a merger, corporate success may depend on nurturing employees' pride and alleviating their fears.

► The value of big data to big ports

By Rob Zuidwijk

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The Port of Rotterdam is sitting on a goldmine of data. But is this gold being effectively mined? The "internet of things" is fundamentally changing global supply chains. The effective use of information will have a positive impact on everything from operational efficiencies to credit terms and cash flow.

► A psychological lens on the acquisition process

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The application of psychological theories to understand the world of business can be a fascinating exercise. Some might argue that an artificial legal entity and its administrative processes cannot be examined in the same way as humans and their behaviour can be. However, empirical observations through the lenses of psychological theory suggest findings can be revelatory and provide rich insights for smart strategic thinking.

► Cloud computing: pushing the right managerial buttons

By Saeed Khanagha

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Despite the obvious organisational advantages offered by cloud computing, not all firms have adopted and adapted to the rapid changes that this new form of remote data storage represents. Recent research and practice have focused on the issue from the perspective of firms as a whole, whilst overlooking the potential contribution of individual managerial practice and behaviour towards addressing the situation.

Introduction



The competitive advantage within

While a management scholar first coined the term 'human capital' in the 1960s, in some respects it's only in recent years that the symbiosis between workforce skill sets and economic growth has been fully appreciated. Witness the recently published second edition of the World Economic Forum's *Human Capital Report*, which looks to foster "... the opportunities for collaboration that fully leveraging the human capital potential residing in people's skills and capacities can bring."

In understanding that human capital is an acknowledged means of building competitive advantage for organisations and nations, it's disappointing to find that the Netherlands has dropped from 4th to 8th place in the WEF rankings of 124 countries. The report finds that in spite of the quality of the Dutch education system the skill sets of the recently graduated are in some respects relatively limited. At the same time, the potential offered by workers over the age of 55 years is not being leveraged with the result that older people face high levels of unemployment.

As a country we would do well to learn from our distinguished European neighbours, Finland (1st place in the report) and Denmark (2nd place) in particular, and put more impetus into creating training and lifelong learning opportunities for the nation's workforce. Instead of it being an overused cliché, it's time that employers and policy makers understood the reality that in this competitive world people genuinely are our greatest asset.

As a premier international business school and research institution, RSM understands the value that lifelong learning and the professional development of people brings to organisations. It's by keeping up with the new and reinterpreting afresh what's already known that keeps the smartest organisations ahead of the rest.

Reflecting this need for continuous learning, articles in this issue of *RSM Discovery* magazine explore: the importance of people during times of organisational upheaval; how organisations can manage ICT projects successfully; why neuromarketing techniques can predict consumer choices; the logic behind moving company HQs; using psychological theory to understand mergers and acquisitions, and how mining big data offers world-beating possibilities for Rotterdam's port.

I am certain that you will find the knowledge and expert insights offered in these articles to be of great value, and it is my hope that they will be useful to you in enriching your own human capital as well as that of your organisation.

Henk W. Volberda

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