

# Short Stories

## *In Executive Education*

The Business School's Executive Education provides a variety of customized opportunities for experienced managers to develop the skills they need, when they need them

*By Andrea Bowers and Ed Kromer*



During a career in public transportation, Don Munro found himself harboring entrepreneurial notions. Yeon Hoe Moon was tabbed by his South Korean company as senior management material, only his background was in law. Michele Pfeffer needed her managerial chops to keep pace with the rapid expansion of the seafood packaging business she had run since graduating from college with a degree in the humanities.

Every manager who attends one of the Business School's Executive Education programs brings a different back story, circumstance and specific intended result. But the motivation is always the same: They want to take their career to a new level. But they don't want or need an MBA.

"I always say, 'If a person studies business in the forest but they don't get a degree, do they still learn something?'" says Mary Larson, associate director of Executive Education. "Of course, they do."

Executive Education offers more than just "something." The hundreds of managers who enroll each year learn precisely what they need, with minimal disruptions to their work schedule. And they can implement this knowledge immediately. Busy managers and organizations choose from a broad menu of offerings, including The Management Program, Executive Seminars and Custom Programs.

All provide customized, current and, above all, *practical* learning, delivered by the best of the Business School's faculty that teaches the nation's 18th ranked MBA and 22nd ranked EMBA programs, according to *US News & World Report*.

"Participants in Executive Education take away knowledge that they can put to use Monday morning," says Jean Choy, executive director, Strategic Partnerships and Executive Education. "They attain perspective and skills they can put to use for the rest of their careers."

Here are a few brief stories from these career-changing programs.

## THE HIGH-TECH BUS DRIVER

*Don Munro*

Don Munro, founder and CEO of Coastal Environmental Systems, speaks like a true entrepreneur. "First you get the right people on the bus, then decide what to do," he says, paraphrasing noted management author Jim Collins. "Ideas are easy; it's getting the right people together that makes a successful company."

The company bus is a fitting metaphor for a man who enrolled in The Management Program in 1977, while he was creating forward-thinking ideas for Metro Transit, including Seattle's Ride Free Zone and downtown Bus Tunnel.

The Management Program is the closest relation to a traditional master's degree curriculum offered by Executive Education. It's a part-time, nine-month overview of the full range of management topics—finance, accounting, economics, marketing, international business, operations, ethics, leadership and strategy. The region's premier management certificate program has been educating mid- to senior-level managers since 1970, staying current in real-world applications by tapping into participants' experience in a diverse range of industries and functions.

Munro took away new understanding of strategic planning, financial management and marketing, and developed greater self-assurance in his management abilities. "I think completing The Management Program helped give me the confidence to found Coastal Environmental," he explains. "Studying in the program, I realized I was as smart as all the other people...people with quite a bit of work experience."

In 1981, Munro and a scientist friend founded Coastal Environmental Systems with \$1,000. Today, the company creates and installs professional-grade environmental monitoring systems around the world, including an air traffic control weather station at the South Pole, and one at Cape Canaveral to land the Space Shuttle, along with mobile weather stations and other environmental monitoring technology. Its clients include NASA, NATO, the National Weather Service, all branches of the US military, the Swedish Air Force and hundreds of fire departments here and abroad.

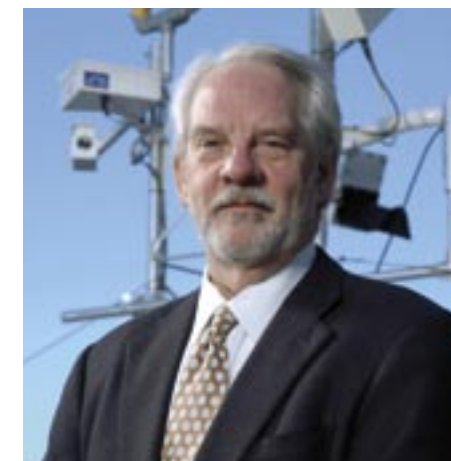
Coastal Environmental is now one of the world's leading companies in its market—with revenues of nearly \$20 million last year.

While his founding partner left the company in 1991 to pursue scientific research, Munro continues to drive Coastal Environmental to success. In 2004, he won the first Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year "Realizing

Business Potential" award for the Northwest region and was one of three finalists for the national award.

He may not have invented the technology. But Munro's entrepreneurial vision, sharpened years ago in The Management Program, has driven his metaphorical company bus right to the symphony hall.

"I'm the Minister of Ideology," he says. "I make sure we know where we are going and why we are going there. I'm orchestrating everyone to play together. To be successful, each individual has to feel that they're playing Bach...not playing the violin or the flute." ❧



## A TALE *of* TWO SISTERS

*Michele Pfeffer & Renee McDonald*

**M**ichele Pfeffer began work at Peterson Pack Systems when she was 13 and was running it at 21, putting her humanities degree to a severe test. Now two decades at the helm, Pfeffer leads a \$10 million company that sells high-tech packaging to commercial fishermen around the world who need to protect their processed seafood from freezer burn and dehydration as they deliver it to market.

Pfeffer wanted to take this family business to new places. But as it expanded, she found that her DIY managerial toolbox was missing a few critical tools.

"I knew that my business education was limited," she says. "With three kids at home and a company to run, I didn't have a lot of time for an MBA degree. But I really wanted the company to take off."

Truth be told, an MBA was more than Pfeffer needed anyway: "I wanted practical information that I could use immediately to expand my company."

Pfeffer and sister Renee McDonald, Peterson Pack System's account director, adopted an alternate strategy of honing their managerial skills in installments, through the Business School's Executive Education.

Both began by enrolling in Executive Seminars. These brief, focused, practical workshops address topics of special interest to a broad range of senior managers and executives. Negotiation Skills develops usable skills to analyze and

structure negotiations. Leadership That Shapes The Future emphasizes practice over theory as it hones the critical leading, planning and influencing skills necessary to create and sustain exceptional organizational success. Finance & Accounting for Non-Financial Executives (FANE) offers the key principles needed to interpret and analyze financial data to make better business decisions.

Both sisters began with the Negotiation Skills seminar and McDonald took the FANE workshop. The results: better dealings with employees and notably diplomatic negotiations with customers and partners. Plus an ability to deal more knowledgeably with auditors.

And a thirst for more. Pfeffer went on to complete The Management Program in 2004, which gave her the broad-based management training to take Peterson Pack Systems to the next level. "The Chairman of the board of our parent company is ecstatic," she reports. "I spent most of my life working to benefit my own company, but this education helped me broaden the scope of what we can do together."

Now Peterson Pack has begun construction on a local production facility (its products are currently made in Denmark). And, having nearly saturated its market for seafood packaging, Pfeffer plans to venture into new industries that require the deep freeze—meat, poultry, vegetables, fruit. "It makes me want to take more classes," she says



### UPCOMING EXECUTIVE SEMINARS

- NOVEMBER 2 – 4, 2005: FINANCE & ACCOUNTING FOR NON-FINANCIAL EXECUTIVES  
Eastside Executive Center, Kirkland
- NOVEMBER 8 – 10, 2005: ACCREDITED INVESTMENT FIDUCIARY  
Bank of America Executive Education Center, UW Campus
- MARCH 20 – 22, 2006: LEADERSHIP THAT SHAPES THE FUTURE  
Bank of America Executive Education Center, UW Campus

To register, or for more information, call 206-543-8560 or visit [www.uwexp.org](http://www.uwexp.org).

## LEARNING TO GO GLOBAL

*SK Corporation, South Korea*

**Y**eon Hoe Moon, or "David," as he's known in these parts, is a human relations team leader with a background in law. Roy Kyoung Cheol, a marketing manager with a degree in chemistry, goes by "Kevin."

There's a reason why they have adopted typical American names. Moon, Cheol and 16 other experienced managers and team leaders from SK Corporation, one of South Korea's largest diversified conglomerates, came to the UW Business School last spring for an intensive, four-month management education that was customized for their company.

"All of the managers at SK want to be selected for this program," says Cheol. "It is a great honor and a great opportunity."

This is because they are being groomed to become global leaders in the ambitious organization. And global leadership means operating comfortably in the de facto language of global business.

"At SK, we are very focused on entering international markets," says Chang Hyun Im, assistant manager of SK Academy, which has sent SK managers to the UW for the past five years. "Wherever they go in the organizations, they will have to be global leaders."

Their stay in Seattle was an immersion in full-bodied MBA topics that include global marketing, global strategy, finance and accounting, international business, supply chain strategy, corporate entrepreneurship, negotiations, ethics and leadership. And also English, which dominated the first month of the program.

SK's program is one of many Custom Programs that deliver tailor-made courses to organizations who wish to educate groups of executives and address key strategic business needs. Executive Education takes the word "custom" seriously. Programs range from an afternoon leadership seminar that works through a company-specific case to a year-long management immersion program that runs like an industry focused MBA curriculum.

Companies at home and abroad have entrusted the Business School with their Custom Programs for more than

50 years. The roster of domestic clients includes Microsoft, Nordstrom, PACCAR, Weyerhaeuser, Starbucks and Boeing, which has sent managers to the venerable AIMS partnership program since 1962. International clients include Japan's Daiwa Securities Co., Inc., and Fujiwara Co., The Bank of China, Taiwan's National Chengchi University, R.O.C., Korea's LG Corporation and POSCO, the Electricity Governing Authority of Thailand, and Russia's Valtex International Corporation.

For foreign clients, like SK, the program also brokers a total residential experience. Weekly excursions took the most recent class of SK executives to a Seattle Mariners game, Mount Rainier, Chateau Ste. Michelle Winery, even an SK golf tournament with Business School faculty at the Washington National Golf Club.

But the focus was on their classroom work, which was considerable. By the fourth month they were tired and a little homesick, but also riding a precipitous learning curve, a heady experience. The SK students closed the course with team presentations, delivered in excel-

lent English, on entrepreneurial projects that incorporated the new theories and techniques they had learned from the Business School's premier faculty. One team planned an expansion of SK's asphalt and construction businesses into China to take advantage of its rapidly developing infrastructure. Another synthesized best practices of several telecom giants toward globalizing SK's own extensive telecom business. Another created new means of motivating SK employees through "formalized" use of informal recognition.

These were real takeaways for students and company alike. "This program has been a very good chance for us to understand the knowledge, and what skills we need to develop in the future," Moon says.

"It's just the beginning for them," Im adds. "They will continue to develop from this experience."

