

## MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

**T**his issue of VIEW, the Atos Consulting Management Journal, is dedicated to a broad and wide-ranging term that is oft misused – innovation. We all know that innovation refers to introducing something new; an idea, a method or a device. A broader view of innovation encompasses the (management) process of innovation, the (organisational) culture for innovation, the required skills for innovation and the necessary infrastructure for innovation.

Many books and many articles have already been written about innovation. Yet the stream of ideas and insights about what innovation is and what it promises seems endless. Apparently, and despite such a wealth of information, there's a huge interest from business managers, consultants, academics and politicians to exchange opinions, viewpoints and foresights. Almost everyone implicitly or explicitly confirms that innovation is absolutely necessary for future sustainable success, at the micro level (for-profit and not-for-profit organisations), the meso level (sectors) and at the macro level (nations). Potential success at the micro level underpins the interest of managers and consultants, while the potential success at the meso and macro levels draws attention from academics and politicians.

Yet there is another reason why everybody is interested in learning about innovation: a lack of knowledge and understanding of how innovation really works. This bold argument is most handsomely articulated by authorities in the field, such as (amongst many others) Lee Fleming and Clayton Christensen, both professors at the Harvard Business School. Lee Fleming declares in *Sloan Management Review* (Fall 2007), "Many managers have little understanding of the process of innovation. Nor do they possess much insight about the most likely sources of technological and scientific breakthroughs." Clayton Christensen agrees by explaining in the *Harvard Business Review* (January 2008), "For years, we've been puzzling about why so many smart, hardworking managers in well-run companies find it impossible to innovate successfully."

So, innovation, meaning changing products, services, processes, business models and value chains, is hot, necessary, and promising. Innovation can be radical and disruptive but, in any case, it appears to be difficult and complex. Everyone knows it is important and few know how to handle it. Moreover, the way of looking at innovation depends on where you are coming from: economics, business, technology, sociology, or engineering. A CFO might say, "innovation must increase efficiency and thus shareholder value", a marketer or sales executive might stress the customer value from innovations, while the VP of R&D would emphasise the product or service value. A Western politician or policy maker

would argue that innovation should be considered as a major driver of the economy. Innovation is assumed to be critical to, or even the lifeblood of, the competitiveness of nations (hence the Lisbon agreements in Europe). In any way, innovations are intended to make individuals or organisations better off and the success of innovation grows sectors and, in the end, the whole economy.

There are several sources of innovation and several different ways to innovate. In this edition of VIEW, we will share a number of contemporary views on how to succeed. First, we will get a glimpse of a number of projects that are currently being undertaken by Atos Consulting. Francisco Pinheiro and Dominique Rerat, who are at the forefront of innovation at Atos Origin, reveal some of the insights that we gain from their work in various sectors and countries in Europe. Next, we pay attention to trends in the way innovation in networks take place. Our Dutch colleagues Ard Pieter de Man and Frank Marks describe how alliances and partnerships can be a modern catalyst for innovation. Then, we feature an interview with Will Hyams of our UK office, who has successfully introduced some technological advances in the way CCTV is used to augment a safe society. Another article elaborates on the phenomenon of open innovation, which Antonio Rodriguez from Madrid contrasts with the traditional closed approach. We also focus on manufacturing by describing lean product improvements: the process of research, development and introduction of new products. Then we look at how organisations can use innovation to balance the needs of commerce with



**Han van der Zee**  
For a full biography, please see page 29.

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the growing demand for social and green business practices. A more academic perspective comes from Professor Franc Ponti from EADA (Barcelona, Spain). He is an expert in creativity and innovation within the context of business success and is the author of two well-read books on the theme. Finally, Oscar van Leeuwen, CEO of Atos Consulting, the Netherlands, and Senior Vice President Business Development for Atos Consulting Europe, shares his managerial views on innovation in his regular VIEW column.

On behalf of our editorial board and the contributors to this edition of VIEW, I wish you an enjoyable and inspirational read!

**Han van der Zee**  
*Chairman of the editorial board of VIEW*