Why The SunTrust CEO Is An Optimist

Values-based leadership training, Marine style  p. 22

Finding profits and growth in emerging markets  p. 24
He’s a Believer

The banking sector took a beating during the Great Recession – both on the balance sheet and in the court of public opinion. So one could forgive SunTrust CEO Bill Rogers if he were a bit pessimistic.

Far from it. In an interview with State of Business, the Robinson alumnus discusses how the eighth-largest bank in the United States restored its momentum and his fundamental belief in the role of financial services in people’s lives.

In this issue we also look at emerging markets. Being on the ground in emerging markets is considered essential to business success, but myriad factors must be considered before putting a stake in the ground. Wayne Lord of the World Affairs Council of Atlanta, Tamer Cavusgil of GSU CIBER (Center for International Business Education and Research), and I discuss entering these markets, and introduce the Robinson Country Risk Index and the Middle Class Scorecard.

We also give you an insider’s look at an exciting partnership between our Center for Ethics and Corporate Responsibility and the leadership and ethics academy for Marine officers, The Basic School.

Center Director Steve Olson, Marine Captain Roberto Scribner and two of our EMBA students discuss the complexity of ethical decision making in situations that are grey, not black and white.

To many, graduate business programs begin and end with the MBA. But hundreds of business schools, Robinson included, also offer specialized master’s degrees. In recent years, demand for these programs has soared. We look at what’s behind the increasing enrollment numbers.

In our “Pulse” section, you’ll read about our students’ second consecutive victory at the CIBER Case Challenge, two undergraduates who studied abroad on prestigious Gilman scholarships, the distinguished recipients of Robinson’s 2011 Alumni Awards, and more.

Coach Bill Curry returns with his column on leadership, as does Rajeev Dhawan with his report on the economy. Dan Stotz of our executive education program addresses innovation in “The Last Word.”

We hope you enjoy this issue of State of Business and encourage you to share your comments with us at robinson.gsu.edu/stateofbusiness.

H. Fenwick Huss
Dean
Positive Returns

He started as a commercial banking intern in 1980. Thirty-two years later, SunTrust’s Bill Rogers is CEO of the eighth-biggest bank in the nation. Read why this Robinson alumnus and self-described optimist believes a return to basics will be good for assuring customers and rewarding shareholders, and how listening and exceptional client service have resulted in extraordinary customer loyalty.

The Grey Zone

What can executives learn about ethical decision making in simulated combat exercises? Steve Olson of Robinson’s Center for Ethics and Corporate Responsibility and Captain Roberto Scribner of the Marine Corps discuss a new partnership between the center and the leadership academy for Marine officers. EMBA students Michelle Bennett and David Hicks share their experiences and the lessons they brought back to the workplace.

Match Game

In emerging markets, unpredictability and risk seesaw with opportunities for growth and profit. Dean Fenwick Huss, Wayne Lord of the World Affairs Council of Atlanta and Tamer Cavusgil of GSU’s Center for International Business Education and Research (CIBER) discuss the challenges and opportunities of doing business in emerging markets, and two new tools from the Robinson College that help bring them into focus.

Mastering the Subject

Demand for specialized master’s programs has increased for four consecutive years, according to the Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC). Robinson’s assistant dean of Graduate Recruiting and Student Services, Toby McChesney, describes the factors that have contributed to the surge in enrollment in function-specific degree programs, and students and graduates discuss the benefits.
Mathiassen receives honorary doctorate from University of Copenhagen

Lars Mathiassen, Georgia Research Alliance Eminent Scholar, co-founder of the Center for Process Innovation and professor of computer information systems, has received an honorary doctorate from the University of Copenhagen.

Queen Margrethe II of Denmark, protector of the 532-year-old university, attended the annual celebration on November 18, 2011, when Mathiassen received the degree for his “comprehensive and significant research contributions on an international level.” He was one of eight scholars to receive an honorary doctorate at the ceremony, and was the only Dane among them.

Founded in 1479, the University of Copenhagen ranks among the world’s top 50 universities. It awards honorary doctorates solely based on academic achievement.

During his visit to the university, Mathiassen spoke at the opening of a new center for computing, collaboration and communication on the theory and practice of telehealth. He joined Robinson in 2002 from Aalborg University, Denmark, and has held visiting positions at Institute Theseus, France; Warwick Business School and the London School of Economics, United Kingdom; and Viktoria Institute, Sweden.

His areas of specialization include business process innovation, IT-enabled change, health informatics and management of software organizations. Mathiassen has co-authored several books, published extensively in leading academic and practitioner journals, and served as senior editor for several top journals, including *MIS Quarterly*. He is academic director of Robinson’s Executive Doctorate in Business program.

The degree was conferred upon Mathiassen in light of his “comprehensive and significant research contributions on an international level.”

Coca-Cola Foundation Funds Global Scholarship Program

Thanks to The Coca-Cola Foundation, more Robinson College students will have the opportunity to study abroad. The philanthropic arm of the Atlanta-based soft drink manufacturer has awarded $200,000 to CIBER (Center for International Business Education and Research) to fund The Coca-Cola Global Ambassador Scholarship Program, a five-year initiative to help more first-time study abroad students, minority students and those traveling to emerging markets gain a competitive edge in the global market.

The gift will go a long way toward enabling these participants, and those who are financially constrained, to develop as global citizens, according to CIBER Executive Director S. Tamer Cavusgil.

“We are delighted by The Coca-Cola Foundation’s foresight in facilitating the acquisition of global competency through meaningful international professional experiences,” Cavusgil said. “These students will also have the opportunity to examine, in a comparative context, such critical issues as sustainability, healthy lifestyles, water stewardship and recycling.”

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**Rankings Roundup: Robinson Programs Among National, International Elite**

Robinson’s graduate and undergraduate programs continue to excel in prestigious U.S. and global business school rankings, including *Bloomberg Businessweek*, the *Financial Times* and *U.S. News & World Report*.

“We are extremely pleased to be ranked among the best business schools in the nation and the world,” said Robinson College Dean H. Fenwick Huss. “Our standing in these rankings is clearly a tribute to our stellar faculty, advanced curriculum and the caliber of students who choose Robinson for their graduate and undergraduate studies.”

**Aspen Institute “Beyond Grey Pinstripes”**
This biennial ranking examines how well schools are preparing their MBA students for the environmental, social and ethical complexities of modern-day business. Robinson is No. 74 worldwide for 2011-2012, an advance of 11 spots over the college’s 2009-2010 ranking. Among U.S. programs, Robinson is No. 52. It is the only Georgia school on the list.

**Bloomberg Businessweek**
In its biennial rankings, *Bloomberg Businessweek* names Robinson’s part-time MBA as No. 1 in Georgia. Nationally, the program is No. 22 overall, and No. 8 among public universities. Robinson received an “A” for teaching quality and for curriculum quality.

**Financial Times**
Robinson’s Executive MBA is No. 24 among U.S.-based programs and No. 64 worldwide in the *Financial Times* rankings – advancing by two places in the U.S. rankings and 14 places worldwide. Limited to the top 100 programs, the rankings are based on alumni satisfaction with career development and changes in salaries, thought leadership and research productivity by faculty, student demographics and diversity, and the program’s global business curriculum.

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<td>Hospitality</td>
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U.S. News & World Report (graduate)
For the third consecutive year, Robinson is in the nation’s top 10 percent of business schools offering part-time master’s (MBA, MS) programs, according to U.S. News & World Report. The college is No. 32 among the 326 business schools surveyed. In specialty rankings, the Department of Computer Information Systems advanced one spot to be ranked as No. 9 among graduate-level CIS programs. New to the rankings: The college’s School of Accountancy is No. 27 among graduate accounting programs. The Institute of Health Administration remains No. 36 among healthcare management programs. The category is ranked in alternate years.

U.S. News & World Report (undergraduate)
Robinson’s BBA program advanced three spots among programs at public schools, to No. 31, and two spots overall, to No. 55, in the “America’s Best Colleges” edition of U.S. News & World Report. Undergraduate programs offered by three departments also are ranked. The Department of Risk Management and Insurance is ranked No. 4 in the nation; Computer Information Systems and Real Estate are No. 8 and No. 12, respectively.

TheBestSchools.org
This information portal publishes a range of higher education rankings. In its listing of the nation’s 20 best hospitality programs, Robinson’s Cecil B. Day School of Hospitality is No. 16 – the only hospitality program in Georgia to be ranked. TheBestSchools.org determines its rankings by evaluating academic quality, awards, reputation, rankings, facilities and internship opportunities.

RMI SCORES TRIFECTA
The Master of Science in Mathematical Risk Management offered by Robinson’s Department of Risk Management and Insurance has been named an Accredited University Risk Program by the Professional Risk Managers’ International Association (PRMIA), an 80,000-member organization with 65 chapters around the world. As a result, graduates of the Mathematical Risk Management program may be able to waive the first two exams in the four-exam sequence required to earn PRMIA’s Professional Risk Manager (PRM) designation.

With this designation, the RMI Department becomes the only program at a North American business school to be ranked a top 10 risk and insurance program by U.S. News & World Report, designated a Center of Actuarial Excellence by the Society of Actuaries and named an Accredited University Risk Program by PRMIA.

According to RMI Chair Richard D. Phillips, "This portfolio of accolades from the insurance, actuarial and financial risk management communities has no comparison. We are gratified by the recognition of our program’s excellence."
Kumar cracks social media code

A research team led by V. Kumar of the Center for Excellence in Brand and Customer Management has quantified what was heretofore elusive: the return on investments made in social media marketing—a finding that netted the 2011–12 Gary L. Lilien Practice Prize from INFORMS Society for Marketing Science.

Kumar and co-researchers developed a campaign and measurable social media marketing framework for Hokey Pokey, a chain of ice cream parlors located in Western India.

By relating abstract social media measures such as comments and conversations to financial metrics and demonstrating the increase in buzz and monetary gains, they determined that the campaign garnered the retailer 40 percent growth rate in sales revenue, 49 percent growth in brand awareness and 83 percent return on investment over a 16-month period.

According to Kumar and co-authors, the social media marketing strategy implemented in the Hokey Pokey study can be executed by small- to medium-size businesses with a limited marketing budget.

Also part of the team were Vikram Bhaskaran of the Center for Excellence in Brand and Customer Management, Rohan Mirchandani of the Wharton School of Business and Milap Shah, co-founder and director of Hokey Pokey.

Along with the Lilien Prize, Kumar recently received the 2012 Paul D. Converse Award. It is given every four years to honor those who have contributed significantly to the theory of marketing and toward the advancement of science in marketing.

In addition to serving as executive director of the Center for Excellence in Brand and Customer Management, Kumar is a professor of marketing, holds the Richard and Susan Lenny Distinguished Chair in Marketing and directs the department’s Ph.D. program.

RoundTable addresses logistics, operations and supply chain issues

They represent diverse industries and do business in more than 200 countries. Some are Fortune 500 companies listed on the New York Stock Exchange. Others are privately held. Despite their disparate lines of business, they face a shared set of issues that they come together to discuss at Robinson’s Global Logistics RoundTable.

Founded in January 2011 by the Department of Managerial Sciences, the Global Logistics RoundTable is an invitation-only organization for executives who oversee logistics, operations and supply chain management at their companies.


Dave Keatley is vice president and general manager of Ryerson Inc., a processor and distributor of metals with operations in the United States, Mexico, Canada, China and Brazil. Keatley says that Ryerson joined the RoundTable, among other reasons, to discuss common distribution challenges and solutions across industries.

The members look to the RoundTable faculty for guidance and creative programming that addresses relevant issues that they deal with daily, according to its director Walter L. Wallace of the Department of Managerial Sciences. “Global procurement, logistics and the development of effective and efficient supply chains is one of the more significant means of mitigating risk in today’s complex and extended world of commerce,” says Wallace. “Collectively we are able to build synergy and add value.”
Sixteen hospitality undergraduates had a once-in-a-lifetime Maymester, flying to London for a sneak peek at the city’s preparations for the 2012 Summer Olympics, and bookending the experience with a look back at the Centennial Games held in Atlanta in 1996.

Designed for students interested in careers in event management, the program provided an up-close view of what is involved in planning, executing and evaluating a mega-event.

Prior to departing for the United Kingdom, classroom sessions included visits from marketing staffers with The Coca-Cola Company and GE who discussed their companies’ Olympic partnerships. While in London, students toured new Olympic facilities, such as the Velodrome, the Hockey Centre and the Aquatic Centre, as well as storied venues including Wimbledon, the Chelsea Football Stadium and the Lord’s Cricket Grounds. The group also was briefed by London 2012 representatives on security planning and risk management, and met with staffers of Visit London, the city’s official promotional organization.

“The London Olympics were an ideal setting for our students to learn the ins and outs of event and venue management,” said Deborah Robbe, an instructor with the Cecil B. Day School of Hospitality who oversaw the program. Senior Harry Karambizi agreed with Robbe. The aspiring entertainment and special events producer said, “I knew [the Maymester program] would be a beneficial part of my growth.”

Back in Atlanta, the group met with members of the 1996 Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games to learn about the experience of serving as host city 16 years ago. “The fact that we worked closely with professionals from the 1996 Olympic Committee was absolutely amazing,” said junior Brittany Love. “I plan to retain every piece of wisdom they offered.”

Online Exclusive: See more photos at robinson.gsu.edu/stateofbusiness
Rapid ROI

Executive MBA students are frequently looking for classroom deliverables that they can apply immediately in the workplace. Robinson's EMBA program provides exactly that. “You often hear students say how valuable the program is because what they are dealing with at work on Monday is what they were discussing in class on Friday,” Dean Fenwick Huss told Delta Sky magazine.

Cubicle Diplomacy

If your colleague's detailed personal phone conversations bother you, try talking with him or her to work together on a solution. Commenting to the Wall Street Journal, Beverly Langford of the Business Communication programs advises readers to meet privately in a calm moment and take a respectful approach to improving communication. If all else fails, Langford says, consider suggesting “an office-wide noise policy.”

Inhospitable Conditions

The U.S. hotel industry is about to face a severe credit squeeze in the next six to 18 months. “A hotel owner in search of refinancing or equity borrowing will have to do extra legwork,” said Rajeev Dhawan of the Economic Forecasting Center in an interview with Asian Hospitality. “Do not take it for granted that just because your loan is good and your property is good that you will get the loan. You will have to prove to the lender that you are worth it,” Dhawan warns.

SEEING IS BELIEVING

Many potential investors are unaware of or skeptical about South Africa’s strong business environment, according to Jacobus Boers of the Institute of International Business. Boers, a native of South Africa, witnesses this mindset when he escorts Professional MBA students on business residencies in his home country. Speaking with GlobalAtlanta, Boers said that some students are unable to reconcile their perceptions with the facts until they see it for themselves. “When they get to Johannesburg, they say, ‘Wow, this is not what I expected at all!’”

Try It, You’ll Like It

Southwest Airlines has to have a couple of goals when entering the Atlanta market – primarily, retaining AirTran customers. The second goal is even more challenging. Ken Bernhardt of the Department of Marketing told NPR. “They've got to get people to try it for the first time. Most people in Atlanta have never flown Southwest … so they've got to get that initial trial.”

“The labor market is a lot less forgiving now … firms are looking to hire people who can bring value from the start.”

Galen Sevcik of the School of Accountancy in the Atlanta Business Chronicle
Many companies are dedicating more resources to internal knowledge management efforts, especially when an employee is leaving the company, according to Sub Samaddar of the Department of Managerial Sciences. “Today, many believe knowledge is the only sustainable source of competitive advantage, so you have to make productive use of that knowledge,” Samaddar told the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. “But our studies have shown the profits in most lines of insurance, including homeowners and auto insurance, are not big.”

Deborah Butler of the Department of Managerial Sciences advises employers to “manage situations rather than people” by making the environment in which people work more conducive to healthier habits. Speaking with the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Butler includes steps such as offering healthier foods in company cafeterias and providing information or classes on weight loss.

Robert Klein of the Department of Risk Management and Insurance says that’s not the case. “People have this basic perception that insurance is a rip-off, that they [insurance companies] collect these premiums, and since people may never file a claim, they think they’ve paid into something and gotten nothing back,” Klein told the Atlanta Business Chronicle. “But our studies have shown the profits in most lines of insurance, including homeowners and auto insurance, are not big.”

Vikas Agarwal of the Department of Finance in the Wall Street Journal.

As the popularity of social coupons soars, V. Kumar of the Center for Excellence in Brand and Customer Management has released research findings suggesting sites like Living Social and Groupon will not continue, as long as they keep offering such huge discounts. Kumar told CBS Atlanta, “The amount of discounts they give, it’s insane.” Although customers benefit wonderfully from getting 60, 70 and 80 percent off at restaurants, salons and car washes, Kumar says it’s the exact opposite for many merchants.

Don’t Leave Home without It
“The Amanda Knox case has prompted students to be more mindful of their actions abroad,” according to Perry Binder of the Legal Studies program. In a piece he penned for the Huffington Post, Binder advises students to keep a translated statement to police in their wallet along with the phone number of the closest U.S. Consulate General Office.

“If you get into a hedge fund in December and then need to get out in January, you’re the biggest loser on the planet.”

Vikas Agarwal of the Department of Finance in the Wall Street Journal.

Hand in the Till
Perceived pay inequity is often a common motivator of small business worker fraud. “Workplace theft happens when individual need and a moral attitude that stealing is OK or justified with opportunity and a work culture that either condones stealing or makes detection unlikely,” Lucy McClurg of the Department of Managerial Sciences told MarketWatch. “Small businesses in general, job for job, pay less than large businesses…. This is [the employee’s] way to equalize the pay issue. ‘I’ll just take a little more from my employer.'”

Vikas Agarwal of the Department of Finance in the Wall Street Journal.
Marc Irisson isn’t a “sit-on-the-sidelines” kind of financial advisor. He prefers to be more involved with his clients’ lives.

Irisson, who is French, received dual degrees in 2009 through a joint program of the Robinson College and Groupe École Supérieure de Commerce (ESC) Toulouse, France. He has an MBA in finance and management from Robinson and a master’s in management specializing in corporate finance from Groupe ESC Toulouse.

“I chose GSU because of its reputation, especially in finance,” said Irisson, who was impressed by the stimulating environment of international students mixed with local students at multinational companies.

“A Robinson MBA is well ranked in the U.S. Atlanta is known all over the world, so I was sure my diploma would be recognized wherever I end up.”

After receiving his MBA, Irisson partnered with a few colleagues from his previous firm to found Financière Monceau in September 2011.

Financière Monceau is an independent M&A boutique focusing on small to mid-cap transactions in France and abroad. It works with family-owned businesses, corporations and financial sponsors.

Irisson sees his as a different kind of firm. “My colleagues and I share the same values and the same ideas of what an M&A advisor should be,” Irisson said. “I want us to be more than just a go-between; I want to be a part of our clients’ evolution.”

by Meiling Arounnarath
Back-to-Back Victories at CIBER Case Challenge

Jeremy Dollar and Jonny Silberman always bring their “A” game. And it pays off. Both recent graduates were part of the RCB Honors Program, were fixtures on the Dean’s and President’s Lists for their high GPAs, and were victorious at the 2011 CIBER Case Challenge at the University of Connecticut in October.

Dollar, who graduated in December, was part of the four-person team that won first place. Silberman, who graduated in May, and his teammates placed second.

This is the second year Robinson students triumphed at the undergraduate competition. Olufunke (“Lateefah”) Taiwo won the challenge in 2010, and David McConico was named best presenter.

The CIBER Case Challenge’s 15 teams comprise students from different institutions. Dollar was paired with students from the American University of Cairo, Northeastern University and the University of South Carolina; Silberman’s teammates were from Singapore Management University, the University of Southern California and the University of South Carolina.

Challengers must tackle international business case studies. This year’s assignment was to resolve how American Express could expand globally while maintaining customer service.

Taking home top honors was no cakewalk. Dollar described the one-day preparation process as “really grueling...We worked about 20 hours.” According to Silberman, the biggest hurdle was that he and his team members “were coming from different perspectives.” But when they coalesced, he was awed by the “power of a team.”

Andrew Young Receives Ethics Advocate Award

Ambassador Andrew Young, founding principal and co-chairman of GoodWorks International and former mayor of Atlanta, received the 2011 Ethics Advocate Award from the Center for Ethics and Corporate Responsibility at a celebration on November 15 at the Carter Center.

The Ethics Advocate Award is presented annually to an individual who has been an effective agent of change by striving to raise ethical standards in the larger business sphere or in his or her own field of endeavor. Young, who is the ninth recipient of the award, was chosen in recognition of his lifetime of leadership in civil rights and human rights.

The selection committee cited his tireless service to human dignity and empowerment in Atlanta, across America and around the world: “With unwavering courage, Ambassador Young has attended to the most painful aspects of human brokenness, bringing them to the world’s attention in such a way that hope and action have been renewed in millions, young and old.”

Young has served as an ordained minister and as a top aide to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during the civil rights movement. He served as mayor of Atlanta for two terms and was elected for three terms as a U.S. congressman before being appointed as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. In 1991 he was inducted into the Robinson College Business Hall of Fame.
Two Robinson students, both Gilman Scholars, study abroad in South Korea

What are the odds that two Gilman Scholars, both from the Robinson College of Business, decided to study abroad at Korea University in South Korea during the 2011-2012 academic year?

Both had been selected to receive the prestigious Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, sponsored by the U.S. State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. It’s a competitive selection process that awards U.S. undergraduate students who might not otherwise participate in study abroad programs due to financial constraints, helping to defray eligible study abroad costs.

Aaron Kim
Kim, a sophomore who is majoring in finance and planning to double major in business economics, studied in South Korea during the spring 2012 semester. Kim, of South Korean descent, grew up in Missouri and Georgia. He was born in Missouri, but he and his family moved to Korea when he was 6 years old. He lived there until he was 10, returning to the United States when he was in the fourth grade.

He chose his homeland “in order to fully experience the culture in Korea” and to learn about the country’s business practices in hopes of doing business both there and in the United States in the future.

Kim said he had the greatest time of his life.

“Even though the classes were extremely difficult, I enjoyed Korea more than I expected to,” he said. “I became really attached to Korea University. Also, I met some of the greatest people ever!”

Jawahnda Kea
Kea, a senior who is pursuing a concentration in marketing and a certificate in international business, studied abroad in South Korea during the fall of 2011. She had always been interested in learning about Asian cultures, but she had never traveled outside of the South before.

After doing some research, she realized that students don’t tend to pick South Korea as their study abroad destination, so she wanted to pick a nontraditional location.

“Since I came back, I feel like I can do anything. And I learned that about myself in South Korea,” Kea explained. She said she overcame a lot of fears when she decided to take that trip.

“I never thought I would jump on a plane – something that I’ve never done – and fly 14 hours to a country I’d never been to – a country where there’s no one who looks like me,” Kea said. “You can’t let fear stop you.”

Six honored at Alumni Awards

Five alumni and one honorary alumnus were recognized at the 2011 Alumni Awards ceremony, held on November 10 at GSU’s Buckhead Center.

(l-r, top-bottom)
Philip P. Bolton, president and founder, Agio Press, Inc.
Honorary Alumnus Award
Kat Cole, president, Cinnabon, Inc.
Outstanding Young Alumna Award
MBA, 2010
Charles (Charlie) B. Crawford, Jr., Chairman, president and CEO, Private Bank of Buckhead Alumni Award for Entrepreneurship MBA, 1997
Said Mohammadioun, managing partner, TechOperators LLC Alumni Technology Leadership Award MBA, 1981
Lawton M. (Mac) Nease, III, president, Nease, Lagana, Eden & Culley, Inc. Alumni Leadership Award (Lifetime Achievement) MBA, 1968; Ph.D., 1976
adversity reveals
EVERYONE

There are plenty of aphorisms about human responses to hard times. Adversity crushes one person, makes another great, and in today’s media-driven culture, invents jobs or blogs for a host of others, our generation’s breed of self-styled critics. I would dearly love for those “experts” to be tossed into the arena, but that never happens.

What does happen when we get knocked on our collective butts is that everyone is revealed. Team members become stronger and rise to the occasion, or shrink, giving in to circumstance ... there is no middle ground. People expected to help become hostile or disappear, and some we hardly knew become powerful allies. The ones who produce or remain loyal become real teammates, inspirations for life.

Theodore Roosevelt got it right when he famously encouraged us to “dare greatly,” to learn that critics do not count. The people who are actually in the arena certainly do count, and it is to them the leader owes his or her allegiance.

A genuine leader is a consistent, powerful, positive presence. The leader is responsible for performance and for the attitude of the group. During the inevitable moments of disappointment or defeat, it is the leader’s privilege to encourage and to model a positive attitude. Eventually, those who follow respond to the example if it is consistent and sincere.

ATTITUDE TECHNIQUE

Attitude is easy to talk about and difficult to build. A proven method has been developed by Dr. Homer Rice, former Georgia Tech and North Carolina director of athletics.

It is called the Attitude Technique (AT), and he required each of his coaches and student-athletes to learn it.

A seven-step process, the AT is as follows:

1. Make a commitment. Until the leader is fully invested, nothing good happens.
2. Set a target date. The best of intentions go unfulfilled when there is no pressure of time for completion.
3. Assemble the ingredients. The team must be recruited, trained and equipped.
4. Give. Superior, often sacrificial effort must be expended to motivate the team and to produce desired results.
5. Visualize. The human imagination is very powerful and must be utilized to envision the completed task.
6. Believe. Faith in the merits of the project and trust in one another inspire and inform the group effort.
7. Expect. The absolute confidence that results will eventually come must emanate from the top. The leader constantly reminds one and all, “We will do this!”

At one time or another, we all fall victim to self pity, the barbs of criticism and sheer fatigue. Our every weakness is exposed, especially to our close associates. As we persevere, fighting back again and again, as we plan our own attitudes, we can set the pace that reveals our best, and that makes all the difference!
Despite the worst economic collapse since the Great Depression, Suntrust CEO Bill Rogers believes that “capitalism will see us through.”

positive returns

by Rhonda Mullen

These days, banks are in recovery mode, digging out from a deep and widespread financial crisis that brought a plunge in consumer confidence and shattered long-held beliefs about government and financial systems alike. Now that the situation seems to be slowly but finally abating, banks are faced with repairing their reputations and good standing with the public.

But a recent conversation with Rogers shows that this collective negativity has failed to color how he thinks about his job. In short, he loves what he does. He first entered the profession as a commercial banking intern in 1980 with the plan to continue for only two years until he got a “real job.” But now, 32 years later, as head of the eighth-biggest bank in the country, Rogers remains energized – passionate even – about the positive impact that financial institutions can have for individuals and communities.
“I have a fundamental belief in the role that financial services can play in our lives,” he says, “in how banks can make a difference in the community. We can help put people in a house, send them or their kids to school, as well as open a small business.”

Even in times like these, Rogers thinks of himself as an optimist. “Bankers have to be optimists,” Rogers says. “Otherwise, we’d never make a loan.”

**SUNNY SIDE UP**

Given SunTrust’s recent finish to 2011, Rogers’ optimism may be warranted. In his earnings conference call, Rogers summed it up: **Our earnings per share were up meaningfully in 2011 from the previous year. Low-cost deposits continued to increase, and loan growth showed a notable pickup during both the third and fourth quarters. In fact, performing loans rose by a solid 4 percent.**

Despite regulatory and environmental headwinds on the fee side of the business, all the core businesses demonstrated good trends. And SunTrust increased its market share in eight of the 10 largest MSAs.

“Things have gotten better,” Rogers says. “From my lens, while deposit growth and loan growth are marginally better, loan growth is well below where it should be when the economy is running well. Still, I feel the economy is on path to recovery. I wouldn’t have said that with as much confidence nine months ago.” (In fact, when Rogers participated in a World Affairs Council of Atlanta event sponsored by the Robinson College of Business last October, he went on record as saying that consumer confidence had to go up because it couldn’t sink any lower.)

Rogers bases his economic assessments on a multitude of sources, from the five newspapers he reads daily to the 1,000 telephone surveys with customers that SunTrust takes every day. He travels throughout the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic regions that SunTrust serves, sitting down with managers and employees on the front lines as well as customers from large and small businesses. He reviews the continual feedback received by SunTrust employees who are in SunTrust’s social network sites or those who review all social network references.

What is he hearing from those clients? “Our research has shown us that long-held beliefs got upset in this crisis,” Rogers says.

Small business owners, for example, are facing uncertainty over how regulation, taxation and health care reform will affect their ability to make a profit. “We can help take some of that uncertainty away by lending,” Rogers says, “but for now, the demand is off.”

In all the service areas offered by SunTrust and its subsidiaries, Rogers believes a return to the basics will be good for both assuring customers and rewarding shareholders. “We have to remember why we’re here,” he says. “That’s the client. You can see that in the series of ads that we just ran. They ask, ‘How may we help you?’ Not, ‘What can we sell you?’” The bank’s Twitter page carries the same message: “We are here to listen, learn, and help.”

Although Rogers was skeptical at first as to the quantity and quality of the information that SunTrust would be able to get from its daily phone surveys, he’s now a believer. “Clients want to tell us what is happening, both good and bad,” he says. “They want to be a part of the solution.”

Listening to those clients is paying off for the SunTrust franchise. In short time, it has become an industry leader for “most loyal customers” due to exceptional client service, according to Forrester.

**RECOVERY MODE**

Whereas SunTrust’s momentum began with a focus on service and loyalty, it got a boost from other strategic moves the institution took as the banking environment began to improve. For starters, it reduced its risk profile. “Previous recessions concentrated on one particular problem,” says Rogers, “but in this current crisis, we saw two or three things go down – not just one.”

To compensate, SunTrust reduced higher-risk loans, increased guaranteed loans and grew the nonresidential real estate portfolio. Overall SunTrust experienced healthy loan growth in 2011.

SunTrust also took advantage of the displacement of investment bankers on Wall Street and attracted them to Peachtree Street to grow its capital markets business. Rogers saw a clear path and rationale for hiring as clients and prospects were increasingly looking for alternatives to the large Wall Street investment banks. “We brought a lot of people into the company,” he says. “If every dark cloud has a silver lining, that was ours.” As a result, corporate and investment banking had a record year at SunTrust in 2011, earning $355 million. As external validation, SunTrust captured multiple Greenwich Associates Excellence Awards for distinguished performance in serving commercial and small business clients.

The biggest challenge for SunTrust – like all banks whether at the local, regional or national level – continues to be mortgages. They are the number one issue at SunTrust, Rogers says. “A regional bank serves the region, and although we were hit hard on mortgages here, we consider them to be a core financial product. If you are in it, the stakes are high and you need to make a significant investment.”
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“Our earnings per share were up meaningfully in 2011 from the previous year. Low-cost deposits continued to increase, and loan growth showed a notable pickup during both the third and fourth quarters.”
Bill Rogers

CHILDHOOD: Born in Durham, N.C.; his father was in the tobacco business, and that took the family to Mexico for a few years.

EDUCATION: BS in business administration, University of North Carolina, 1980. MBA, Robinson College of Business, Georgia State University, 1986.

CAREER: SunTrust Banks, Inc.: Chairman and CEO; previously president and COO as well as corporate executive vice president with corporate oversight for commercial real estate, corporate and investment banking, mortgage, treasury and payments solutions, and wealth and investment management; began as commercial bank trainee in 1980.

FAMILY: Married with four children, ranging in age from 19 to 28, “all pursuing careers in anything but banking,” he says.

HOBBIES: “I play golf poorly,” Rogers says. “Most of my hobbies involve my family, going to their academic or sports events.”

SERVICE: Boards of the Boys & Girls Clubs, Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, Atlanta Committee for Progress and The Lovett School, Board of Advisors, J. Mack Robinson College of Business.

RECENT READS: Great by Choice by Jim Collins and Morten T. Hansen, In the Garden of Beasts by Erik Larson, Killing Lincoln by Bill O’Reilly and Martin Dugard, Golf in the Kingdom by Michael Murphy, The Art of Fielding by Chad Harbach (of particular interest because his son is a baseball player) and several books on managing technology. Rogers reads popular titles as part of his role as a board member of a book company.

WORDS TO LIVE BY: “Every day, every interaction, you’re building a reputation. Every interaction matters.”

“We have to give back and make the community better.... People might rate banks and bankers lower on the trust side today, but it’s important for our clients to see a SunTrust teammate lined up side by side with them to help the community.”
Legacy mortgage issues – most related to originations that occurred in or prior to 2008 – masked some of SunTrust’s performance in 2011, with the mortgage business line losing $700 million. But even in this area, Rogers can see room for optimism. He points to investments in improved technology. SunTrust’s strategy now is to originate well and service loans at a higher standard than the rest of the industry. So far, it seems to be working. Mortgage origination volume is heavy, and new loans are relationship driven, significantly improving risk management.

**LEADING DURING SUCH TIMES**

During his career, Rogers has touched most everything on the retail and wholesale sides of what SunTrust offers, as well as serving in a spate of management positions that landed him with the organization’s top job in June 2011. That experience has helped him steer the company into recovery mode.

So did stretching to go back to school for an MBA at the Robinson College while he held down an early job at SunTrust. His position required him to travel one week out of every month. He and his wife also were raising the first two of four children. It was hard, he admits.

While “Georgia State didn’t offer a course on the financial crisis of 2008,” Rogers quips, “I did encounter practical professors who generally came from business themselves. I felt like they were giving the students live ammunition. We’d get the information in class, and we’d be using and applying it in our jobs the very next day,” he says. “It was good preparation for teaching you to deal with organizational change.”

A belief in communities also came to bear in Rogers’ approach to keep the SunTrust franchise moving forward during these financial hard times. “Stronger communities make stronger banks,” he says. “We can’t just take. We have to give back and make the community better.” Setting the example from the top, Rogers serves on the board of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta and the Boys & Girls Clubs, among other service organizations.

“IT is part of our DNA to volunteer, and it has never been more important than now,” he says. “People might rate banks and bankers lower on the trust side today, but it’s important for our clients to see a SunTrust teammate lined up side by side with them to help the community.”

He gives his team license to lead. “I tell them, don’t be afraid to lead because they are in positions of leadership, no matter the job. The worst thing we can do right now is go into our shells. I encourage them to put on their SunTrust pins and get out there.”

While capitalism is not perfect, Rogers believes it is the best system we have. “The belief that you can start from wherever you are and achieve great things is powerful,” he says. “Capitalism will see us through.” A little of Rogers’ optimism will help, too.

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**SunTrust**

**HISTORY:** Commercial Traveler’s Savings Bank received its charter in 1891 and became Trust Company of Georgia in 1893. Trust Co. merged with SunBanks in 1985 to create SunTrust Banks, Inc., which merged with Richmond-based Crestar in 1998.

**SIZE:** Eighth-largest U.S. bank by deposits.

**LOCATE:** Based in Atlanta with 1,658 retail branches and 2,889 ATMs, primarily in Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia and Washington, D.C.

**SERVICES:** Deposit, credit, trust and investment services to retail, business and institutional clients.

**SUBSIDIARIES:** Mortgage banking, insurance, brokerage, investment management, equipment leasing and capital markets services.

**RECENT RECOGNITION:** Industry leader for “most loyal customers” (Forrester); 12 Greenwich Associates Excellence Awards in 2011 – nine for Small Business Banking; including National Small Business Overall Satisfaction, as well as three in Middle Market Banking; two 2011 TNS Choice Awards for Outstanding Performance in Consumer Banking; No. 2 customer experience, second only to credit unions (Forrester); highest level of satisfaction with communication efforts (Gallup); Two Monarch Innovation Awards for Outstanding Business Solutions.
Ethical decision making in the fog of war

The three explosions were earthshaking. The woman’s screams that followed, piercing. A young girl had been hit with shrapnel while playing by a water treatment facility – another casualty of tribal warfare in the Republic of Centralia. The girl’s mother was pleading for help as a 13-person Marine squad arrived to secure the facility.

The squad wanted to render aid but felt hamstrung by several factors. First, their mission was to secure the facility and to observe but not engage with the local population, period. Second, an agitated man – determined to be the girl’s father and head of the rebel faction – had shown up and demanded that they leave. Finally, the cultural mores of Centralia forbade them from touching any female. Doing so would render her impure, defile her family and doom her to an honor killing.

Paralyzed, the squad secured the facility while the girl bled to death in the cold January air. Fortunately, the girl is unscathed and the conflict-riddled Republic of Centralia is fictitious. The adrenaline-inducing incident – complete with pyrotechnics and stage blood – was a “safe but real” combat simulation at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia. And the squad was not Marines but Atlanta business leaders and Executive MBA students participating in a unique partnership between Robinson’s Center for Ethics and Corporate Responsibility and the leadership and ethics academy for Marine officers, The Basic School.

Known as the “MBA of Leadership,” The Basic School is the first stop for every newly commissioned Marine officer. Over a period of 26 weeks, in classroom settings and field missions, the officers acquire the values-based leadership skills they will need to command a platoon of Marines. “The training that these officers receive is nothing short of astonishing,” said Steve Olson, director of the Center for Ethics and Corporate Responsibility, “and the leadership lessons for business leaders are clear.”

“Everything here is grey,” according to Captain Roberto Scribner, protocol officer of The Basic School. “The concept of combat ethics is extremely important and extremely complex.” Scribner, who has served four combat tours in Iraq, added that “a single decision can be both right and wrong at the same time, in different ways.”

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Clear, but not black and white. “Everything here is grey,” according to Captain Roberto Scribner, protocol officer of The Basic School. “The concept of combat ethics is extremely important and extremely complex.” Scribner, who has served four combat tours in Iraq, added that “a single decision can be both right and wrong at the same time, in different ways.”

Throughout their time at The Basic School, the newly commissioned officers grapple with ethically grey, real world situations that Marines have encountered in the field – sometimes as recently as the week before – to teach them to think and act ethically in the fog of war. Which leads back to the water treatment facility, where the group from Robinson did not help the dying girl. This was the first of the three missions that the group faced that day.

“It was a really tough situation,” recalled EMBA student David Hicks, an executive director of engineering at Cox Communications, who was in charge of the squad for this mission. “On the one hand, it would be negligent to not help this young girl, but then, our orders were to not touch females and to not engage with the population if

That was an Aha! moment for me....I just need to very effectively communicate what needs to be done by when and hold people accountable.
at all possible. And at the same time the dad’s telling us to leave.” Looking back on it, Hicks said he had suffered a “helmet fire” – Marine lingo for seizing up under the pressures of leading.

Scribner’s assessment was that the Robinson squad “failed absolutely miserably” by taking a completely rules-based approach in a scenario with a broad ethical component. “They basically ignored the problem and allowed her to die without thinking through any of the relatively straightforward workarounds,” he said, such as giving their first-aid materials to the father or the mother.

Olson concurs. “They were completely OBE – overcome by events.” Compounding the situation, Olson said, was that, in the fog of war, the squad lost track of the girl’s father, the leader of the rebel forces. As it turned out, their actions so alienated the man that he battled them for the rest of the day.

“It wasn’t shocking that they made poor decisions,” said Scribner, who noted that, in most instances, lieutenants in training also perform at a poor to mediocre level on their first field missions. “That’s the point of this type of training. You learn by failing. And failing is OK; we are a school.”

The Marine captain gave the Robinson squad high marks in a critical area. “The thing they did extremely well, which is the most important thing, is that they were able to self-analyze” during debriefs that occurred immediately following each mission. What matters, according to Scribner, is not whether one succeeds or fails in addressing the ethical dilemmas of Basic School missions, but whether one understands why they failed or succeeded and can apply that learning moving forward. EMBA student Michelle Bennett returned from Centralia with insights applicable to her work as a key account manager at Anheuser-Busch InBev. Like Hicks, Bennett led a team on a mission that turned out to be frustrating and ethically complex, culminating in the death of a teammate. Bennett remembers an eye-opening exchange with Captain Scribner during the post-mission debrief.

**MB:** “As a leader, I felt like they should’ve followed my orders.”

**CRS:** “When did you give those orders?”

**MB:** “When I was tourniquetting the guy’s leg.”

**CRS:** “Why were you tourniquetting the guy’s leg?”

**MB:** “Ah! I shouldn’t have been in it; I should have been directing it.”

“That was an Aha! moment for me, because I do that in my life,” acknowledged Bennett, who said the insight was her key takeaway for work. “I don’t need to go in and do everything myself. I just need to very effectively communicate what needs to be done by when and hold people accountable.”

David Hicks returned to Atlanta wanting to take a page from Basic School philosophy. “The whole construct of The Basic School and how they teach these young lieutenants is to fail in a controlled environment. I’m challenging my team, and even the entire Cox organization, to look at how we can introduce controlled environments where it’s OK to take risks and OK to fail because it is such a powerful learning tool.”

**Values-Based Leadership: Lessons from the United States Marine Corps** is offered four times yearly. The next program is scheduled for October 7-9. The program is limited to 13 participants, early registration recommended. For more information, please visit robinson.gsu.edu/quantico.
MATCH GAME

Which emerging markets offer the best match with the least risk? by Rhonda Mullen
Near the end of 1991, Dean Fenwick Huss found himself on a plane bound for Moscow. He and a colleague from the Robinson College of Business had an opportunity to work there on a United Nations project related to financial reporting. That’s when he opened the morning newspaper and saw the headline: “Soviet Union Bankrupt.” Although his timing seemed inauspicious, it turns out that Huss and the Robinson College were in the right place at the right time.

True, the Soviet Union was disintegrating, but an era of modernization was taking hold. The Robinson College had an advantage by establishing a presence there before the collapse. Over the next few years, in times often dominated by chaos, the business bridges that the school had built grew along with the republics of the former Soviet Union.

That’s the way emerging markets work. Unpredictability and risk seesaw with opportunities for growth and profit at an often staggering pace.

Emerging markets share characteristics such as market liberalization, rapid industrialization, urbanization, spread of technology and a growing middle class. But that is where the commonalities stop. These countries are more diverse than they are similar, says S. Tamer Cavusgil, Fuller E. Callaway Professorial Chair and director of the Center for Business Education and Research (CIBER).

“We’re not even sure what to call them,” says Wayne Lord, president of the World Affairs Council of Atlanta. Lord, who teaches a course on emerging markets for the Executive Doctorate in Business program, adds, “Emerging, transitioning, developing: I’m not sure any of those adjectives is apt. After all, how can you say that China, the second-biggest economy in the world, is emerging?”

But no matter the difficulty in naming them or the complexity of sorting out the most promising among them, these economies are essential to business success. “Today these markets are where the growth and profits are,” Lord says.

A MATCH MADE IN CULTURE
Not only the BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) but also parts of Eastern Europe, Latin America and Indonesia are at various stages of liberalizing their markets and giving their citizens the entrepreneurial edge to spur growth. “They’ve all taken the prescription, and now we have 25 or 30 emerging markets,” says Cavusgil. “It makes for a very crowded marketplace.” Which isn’t necessarily bad. “So much creative competition can make you better,” he says.

For Lord, a critical question for surveying this crowded field is, what do we know about what we don’t know, and how are we going to find out?

Lord began his own exploration of emerging markets before the term became popular. More than 30 years in global business has helped him put the challenges in context. “Most of the errors occur in the political, social and cultural areas,” he says.

Cultural distance is more subtle and harder to identify. It can’t be judged simply by a hug or handshake but extends to the management styles and the cultural norms in which business is transacted. “The bigger the cultural distance,” Lord says, “the more your transaction costs can be.”

That’s one reason why Huss believes that Robinson faculty and students have to be on the ground in other countries to be prepared. “You have to feel it, smell it, hear it. You have to experience it in person,” he says.

Some countries such as Brazil, China and Turkey have surged ahead in building the middle class, whereas others have fallen short of expectations.
MATCH POINTS
Even with in-country experience, understanding the full picture of one emerging market – much less 25 – is enormously complex. It presumes the ability to process the entire environment in which a country is developing and often raises more questions than provides answers. For example, how does work abroad change the business model from home? What’s the right mix of nationals and expats in leadership? How does a Western company identify the right partner?

“Lord says. “No one discipline can possibly master them.”

Two new tools developed by Robinson faculty are helping companies make decisions about emerging markets. The Robinson Country Risk Index measures the risks and challenges of doing business in 125 developed and emerging economies. The Middle Class Scorecard focuses on the market potential in 25 emerging markets. Together they cover a gamut of opportunities and challenges.

WE HAVE A MORE INTERNATIONAL LANDSCAPE OF FIRMS AND MORE CONSOLIDATION IN INDUSTRIES...SO MUCH CREATIVE COMPETITION CAN MAKE YOU BETTER.

S. Tamer Cavusgil, executive director, CIBER

Led by political scientist Chris Brown, vice president of research and analysis of Atlanta’s World Affairs Council, a group of researchers has analyzed and parsed some 275 variables gathered from publicly available data. The result, more than three years in the making, is the Robinson Country Risk Index, which sorts data into four buckets – government, economics, operations and society, or GEOS. Each country is scored between 1 and 1,000. “Whereas 400 is a good batting average in baseball,” Lord explains, “that score wouldn’t be so good on the index in evaluating women’s equality, for example.” The researchers recently submitted a paper on the index to the International Business Review.

A second tool, the Middle Class Scorecard, measures the degree to which each emerging market has created a sizable group of consumers with disposable income. Access to disposable income signals the ability to purchase discretionary items such as household appliances, cars and electronics. Developed through CIBER, the Middle Class Scorecard gives a clear snapshot of business opportunities by drawing on both income and expenditure measures. The research also includes a bubble chart depicting the process with which emerging markets have built middle-class households, and it tracks the range between upper- and lower-middle-class segments.

“We see building the middle class as the most important metric of an emerging market,” says CIBER’s Cavusgil. Some countries such as Brazil, China and Turkey have surged ahead in building the middle class, whereas others such as Hungary and South Africa have fallen short of expectations. The research also shows that the once-touted economies of the BRICs have slowed, with opportunities now moving to what is called the Next Tier (South Korea, Mexico, Poland, Indonesia and Turkey).

Cavusgil places Poland, Turkey, Brazil, South Korea and Taiwan in his current top five emerging markets for business. “These countries have shown remarkable economic dynamism, export prowess, and social and political responsibilities,” he says. Why? They share an excellent work ethic, an abundant and well-qualified talent pool, availability of natural resources and a favorable environment for business.

A MATCH MADE IN CHINA?
From a consumption standpoint, the sheer numbers in China can’t be ignored. It is projected to become the world’s third-largest consumer market by 2025. And from a production standpoint, China’s economy has soared ahead with its low labor costs.

But doing business in China has its challenges for Westerners. The Chinese “take a relational approach to business where business partners develop trust over time,” says Cavusgil, “whereas our orientation in the West is to get the deal done quickly.”

Because of uncertainties on several fronts in China, today’s emerging market formula usually includes “China plus one.” China’s market advantage in manufacturing will be unsustainable as its middle class grows and demands higher wages. Already companies wanting to capitalize on low labor costs are moving manufacturing to Vietnam, Laos or Cambodia.

Cavusgil believes that the choice of a partner is more important in international business than the choice of a country. By partner, he refers to the supplier, customer, distributor or franchisee with which the Western business will work. “The best advice is to conduct due diligence before selecting a partner,” he says. “How committed and qualified are they?”

That doesn’t mean location is unimportant, because some countries are already crowded while others are ripe for new entrants. What it does mean is that companies that follow a customized approach stand the best chance for success. As examples in a forthcoming research paper, Cavusgil points to H&M’s and KFC’s success in international markets by maintaining a consistent brand and

A MATCH MADE IN CHINA?
introducing new value-added services or menu items to appeal to local consumers – as well as Walmart’s introduction of bodegas into its stores in Mexico.

Finally, the great leveler and enabler of all markets is technology, he says. In a study by IBM in 2010, CEOs identified “getting closer to customers” as the most pressing task, and the way to that will take the form of social networking. Cavusgil points to The Coca-Cola Company’s “Expedition 206” campaign in which it sent three 20-somethings off for a year to visit as many as possible of the 206 countries where its product is sold and to blog and tweet about their travels, complete with photos uploaded to Flickr. Similarly, the Procter & Gamble campaign for Old Spice, “Smell Like a Man, Man,” brought more than 105 million views on YouTube and increased the brand’s followers on Twitter by 2,700 percent.

Other scoring points include a close read of international and local business articles, a connection with people in emerging markets and other international venues, and development of university, for starters. Together they make a better global match.

ON THE GROUND

Dean Fenwick Huss regularly tells students that they should be prepared to work not only in the state of Georgia but also the Republic of Georgia. Under his leadership, international studies have placed high among the priorities at the Robinson College.

The school has collaborated with the BRICs for decades. It offers a Global Partners MBA that is taught on four continents. It entered South Africa in the late 1990s to help rebuild universities there after apartheid. The program it began as a business school in Tbilisi has now grown to become Caucasus University. In Egypt, it has partnerships with the Universities of Alexandria and Cairo to share technical expertise, faculty and training. In Korea, Robinson has a dual degree program in real estate with Konkuk University and a computer information systems initiative with Chungnam National University.

Faculty in the Institute of International Business and other departments focus on parts of the emerging world. For example, Cavusgil is a native of Turkey and is an expert on Turkey, China and Brazil. “Among all of us, we cover the world,” he says.

Undergraduates can take a Maymester course, Global Business Journalism, examining the media and communications industry in multiple country settings – most recently in the United States and Turkey. The Executive MBA culminates in a 14-day business residency in two emerging markets. In January, its class traveled to Vietnam and China, where they compared two emerging markets in one-party Communist countries.

Robinson also brings the world to business professionals through the World Affairs Council of Atlanta. A forum for dialogue, a source of expertise, and an engine for research on global affairs and issues, the council seeks to raise both awareness and the sophistication of discourse about international business in Atlanta, says its president, Wayne Lord.
Winifred “Wini” Akande was one such student. Akande received her BBA in accounting from Robinson in spring 2010 and entered the college’s Master of Taxation program that fall. She graduated one year later and joined Ernst & Young. Akande chose to continue her studies without a break in order to garner the hours required for the certified public accountant (CPA) exam. “Most companies won’t even make an offer unless you’re CPA eligible,” she says. “So getting my master’s immediately after finishing undergraduate work was driven by the marketplace.”

Specialized master’s programs tend to attract a younger student profile than MBA programs, which typically require applicants to have several years of full-time work experience. By contrast, many specialized master’s programs do not.

Each year the Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC) publishes its Applications Trend Survey, a data-rich look at the demand for graduate business programs throughout the United States and around the globe. Among the key findings in the 2011 report: the volume of applications to most specialized master’s programs has increased again, for the fourth consecutive year.

The result is consistent with what Toby McChesney’s team has witnessed. “Our specialized master’s programs have exploded,” says McChesney, who is Robinson’s assistant dean of graduate recruiting and student services. “They’re drawing record numbers of applicants and students.”

So what’s behind the uptick? Why have these function-specific degrees surged in appeal? McChesney and GMAC attribute the increase to several factors.

**Changing workplace requirements**

In its 2011 Application Trends Survey, GMAC posits that greater education requirements for employees have contributed to growth of the category: “In the past, a bachelor’s degree was sufficient education for employment, but increased job competition and stricter industry requirements have encouraged applicants to return to school.”

McChesney can attest to the accuracy of GMAC’s assessment. “We’re hearing from employers that whenever they look through resumes, they tend to toss aside the ones without an MBA or master’s degree.” As a result, says McChesney, “This is pushing college graduates to come back for an advanced degree more quickly than they would have in the past, or to enter a master’s program immediately following graduation.”

Winifred “Wini” Akande was one such student. Akande received her BBA in accounting from Robinson in spring 2010 and entered the college’s Master of Taxation program that fall. She graduated one year later and joined Ernst & Young. Akande chose to continue her studies without a break in order to garner the hours required for the certified public accountant (CPA) exam. “Most companies won’t even make an offer unless you’re CPA eligible,” she says. “So getting my master’s immediately after finishing undergraduate work was driven by the marketplace.”

Specialized master’s programs tend to attract a younger student profile than MBA programs, which typically require applicants to have several years of full-time work experience. By contrast, many specialized master’s programs do not.
Rising interest in functional expertise

Students who opt for a subject-focused master’s do so to obtain more in-depth knowledge about a discipline than they would in an MBA program.

Where the MBA is broad in scope, a specialized master’s focuses on a single discipline. “We’re seeing increased interest in getting a function-specific degree. A lot of employers want that,” says McChesney. “An MBA graduate will have five or so courses in his or her major. Graduates of one of our specialized master’s programs will have taken between 10-12 courses, so that’s a deeper dive into the subject area.”

A deeper dive is exactly what Jon Bridges of Chick-fil-A was looking for when he enrolled in Robinson’s Fast-Track Master of Science (MS) in Marketing. Bridges chose the program because he had recently switched functions, moving from IT into marketing as the restaurant chain’s vice president of customer experience. “This was the perfect program for me,” said Bridges. “I expect to benefit from every topic for the rest of my career.”

Of course, some students choose to earn a specialized master’s then return for an MBA later, or vice versa. “It’s not an either-or situation,” says McChesney.

Advent of one-year programs

The rise in specialized master’s enrollment at Robinson can be attributed in part to the college’s introduction of one-year programs beginning in 2010. Robinson now has eight such programs, with plans for more. Previously, the college’s extensive specialized master’s portfolio was composed solely of flexible-format programs, which typically take several years to complete.

“Students were telling us that they wanted one-year specialized master’s, and we’ve seen it borne out in the numbers,” says McChesney. “Enrollment in some programs increased significantly after we converted them from flexible to one-year format.”

Osie Gaines, III will graduate in July 2012 from the Executive MS in Managing Information Technology program. The busy father of two small children says that he chose the one-year program because of his hectic schedule. According to Gaines, who is director of business development at Med Technology, “I need flexibility to manage my studies around my kids’ schedules and periodic business travel to the U.K., Canada and throughout the U.S.”

The appeal of a one-year specialized master’s is not limited solely to its compressed time frame. The programs are structured as cohorts, with students proceeding in lockstep format from day one through completion. The importance of the group is so central to the learning experience that applicants are evaluated on, among other factors, their ability to contribute to the cohort.

“Beyond the education I received, the largest and most immediate benefit I gained is the expansion of my professional network through my cohort,” says Matt Harrell, a 2011 graduate of the Fast-Track MS in Finance program who is a senior auditor with Habif, Arogeti & Wynne. “I know that if I run into a professional problem I have numerous people to contact to discuss ideas.”

For more information about Robinson’s specialized master’s programs please visit robinson.gsu.edu/specialized.

A RANGE OF CHOICES

Robinson offers one of the largest selections of specialized master’s programs in the United States.

One-Year Programs

Executive MS-Managing Information Technology
Fast-Track Master of International Business
Fast-Track Master of Professional Accountancy
Fast-Track MS-Finance
Fast-Track MS-Information Systems
Fast-Track MS-Marketing
Fast-Track MS-Wealth Management

Flexible Format Programs

Master of Actuarial Science
Master of Health Administration/MBA
Master of Professional Accountancy
MS-Business Economics
MS-Health Administration
MS-Information Systems
Audit and Control
MS-Managerial Sciences
MS-Mathematical Risk Management
MS-Real Estate
MS-Risk Management and Insurance

Online Exclusive

Learn more about Robinson’s specialized master’s programs from students and graduates at robinson.gsu.edu/stateofbusiness.
Economic Rattling Means Humdrum Growth for Remainder of Year

Rajeev Reports

Consumers unleashed a spending spree that pushed vehicle sales to post-recession highs during the last several months, but this pace can’t be sustained because of existing and expected weak personal income and job growth.

Real GDP growth is decelerating and will drop further as payback for winter shopping that came at the expense of personal savings. Due to these factors, along with sluggish job creation and the vulnerability of the U.S. economy to global downturns, including in Europe and China, there is definitely a rattle under the hood. The economic vehicle will lurch at times due to a faulty investment channel that doesn’t allow the engine to produce a steady RPM at full throttle.

But don’t worry. The economy is not going to stall. Instead, it will expand at a slower pace. After real GDP grew 3 percent in the last quarter of 2011, it slowed to 2.2 percent in the opening quarter of the year. Expect to see GDP growth leveling off to 1.5 percent in the second quarter.

Looking ahead, the job creation rate will be about 120,000 jobs per month for the remainder of the year. Most worrisome is the hiring slowdown in manufacturing, which is a surprise in light of an auto sector on speed. The decline indicates that a slowdown in the world economy – with outright recession in Europe – is now beginning to bite this sector.

As the European crisis worsened, exports have fallen sharply from the double-digit growth of last year. More uncertainties surround crisis-stricken Greece and whether the country and its broken finances will remain a part of the eurozone. An exit could sound economic alarm bells that will be heard around the world. Another wild card is the slowdown in China that is hurting suppliers. If China’s housing “bubble” bursts similar to the U.S., any hard landing will lead to reduced financing of U.S. budget deficits. While these factors won’t derail the U.S. economy, they will continue to hurt manufacturing and employment going forward.

Georgia’s Growth Up against Global Headwinds

Global headwinds – elevated oil prices, ongoing recession in Europe and a slowdown in China that will hamper growth in other emerging economies – will impact demand for Georgia exports; the state’s biggest employer, Delta; and growth in the general hospitality sector. Add in the existing distress of a very weak housing market and a cautious corporate sector, and it makes for pressures that produce an iffy job market and income growth by historical standards in 2012.

Decent job growth – which will pick up the pace with 65,000 jobs in calendar year 2013 – is the key to unlocking the housing malaise.

Then, there’s the state of the global economy whose impact hits home, especially the Atlanta area’s largest employer, Delta. The airline is cutting staff locally due to continued stress of high oil prices and lower demand for international routes.

But don’t worry. The economy is not going to stall. Instead, it will expand at a slower pace.

Delta’s answer to this is buying an old oil refinery in Philadelphia. Only time will tell if this is brilliant or folly. Either way, it means that Delta will not be adding jobs, at least in metro Atlanta.

The impact of Delta, high gas prices, the global slowdown and a skittish corporate sector will affect hospitality, and growth in that sector will remain moderate in 2012.

Rajeev Dhawan is director of the Economic Forecasting Center. Dhawan provides economic forecasts for the nation, the region and Atlanta at quarterly conferences. Learn more about the Economic Forecasting Center at robinson.gsu.edu/efc.
A recent IBM-sponsored survey of 1,541 CEOs reported that creativity is now the most important leadership quality. The research clearly indicated that leaders who stand out “practice and encourage experimentation and innovation throughout their organizations. Creative leaders expect to make deeper business model changes to realize their strategies. To succeed, they take more calculated risks, find new ideas, and keep innovating in how they lead and communicate.”

**Innovation Defined**
According to Marshall McLuhan, the world-renowned University of Toronto professor and innovation guru, true innovation is any activity that results in making the organization better or new. It must produce value and it always has four characteristics.

1. **It enhances something.** Google enhanced the search engine and made it simpler.
2. **It destroys something or makes it obsolete.** Think about how Charles Schwab made full-service brokerages obsolete, or how Apple redefined how we purchase and listen to music.
3. **It returns us to something that we once prized or felt that we have lost.** An example would be Barnes & Noble bookstores, which allows us to feel like students again – we read books, drink coffee and sit in leather chairs.
4. **It reverses into its opposite over time.** Remember when we thought email would be a great time-saver? Now we try to get around e-mail because it is consuming more and more of our lives.

**Innovation Principles**
According to Jeff DeGraff, author of *Leading Innovation* and founder of the Atlanta Innovarium, most definitions of innovation involve technology and words like “big” and “fast.” But that’s often not the case. Some of the most potent types of innovation are social, incremental and slow.

Regardless of the type and speed, innovation has to provide tangible outcomes and typically involves four key principles.

1. **Set high-quality targets.** Set a goal that stretches you but is achievable and clear – you don’t want to boil the ocean. When it comes to innovation, this is where most people fail.
2. **Enlist deep and diverse domain expertise.** The people who think the same way you do aren’t really that valuable when you are trying to create something better or new. Constructive criticism is essential. Also, innovation requires real knowledge and competence – amateur hour doesn’t cut it.
3. **Take multiple shots on goal.** The classic mistake in innovation literature is the idea of going big or going home. Innovation is more like what venture capitalists do. They invest small at the beginning as they try to accelerate the failure cycle.
4. **Make adjustments and keep moving forward.** People hate to look at things that didn’t work because it feels like failure. You have to do the after-action review. Learn from your mistakes. What works, and what doesn’t. You’ll get smarter quickly.

To help organizations master the art and science of business innovation, the Robinson College of Business has partnered with the University of Michigan’s Ross School of Business, where Jeff DeGraff is a clinical professor of innovation, to design a new Certified Professional Innovator (CPI) program. This executive education program helps an organization develop an elite group of innovation leaders who will be experts at generating new ideas, advancing collaboration on critical projects and capturing the value of innovation.

DeGraff has teamed with Robinson’s Steve Olson to develop the CPI curriculum. Full program details are available at robinson.gsu.edu/execed or by calling me at (404) 413-7407.
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