

Chapter 20

Interview with John Fernandes, CEO of the AACSB

Shawn M. Carraher
University of Texas – Dallas, USA

Wesley Poe
University of Texas – Dallas, USA

1. Where did you grow up? Do you think that it has any impact on your life's work?

I grew up in several places. Born on Martha's Vineyard, I lived also in New Bedford, Mass, Providence, R. I., and Levittown, PA. New Bedford and Providence instigated my competitive mindset and Levittown encouraged my team commitment. Both have helped me as a manager.

2. Where did you go to school? Why there?

My formal higher education (non-executive) was at Babson College and University of Houston. I went to Babson to learn business and management as an undergrad. At UH I got an MA in Public Administration as I was chief auditor at Houston METRO and needed to better understand motivations and management in the quasi-governmental

structure. That is where I learned that service excellence was more important than profit margins. This awakening eventually led me to the not-for-profit association business.

3. What did you do after your first degree (if second degree, where was that done, what did you do after that?) How did you get into your first major area?

I went to work for Exxon right out of undergrad school as an internal auditor because I thought it was more about learning how to manage than catching things that go wrong. Ironically, that experience helped me better manage risks before they hurt you and contributed to my effectiveness as a manager. Later experience with Cameron Iron Works doing internal auditing worldwide and leading audit staff at Houston METRO and New York City Transit helped build a global mindset and managerial acumen.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-4666-5840-0.ch020

4. Have you had any particularly significant mentors in your career?

I think the most important mentor was my mother but professionally I learned a lot from former Atlanta, Houston and New York City Transit CEO Alan F. Kiepper. He really sharpened my discipline on achieving outcomes and quality. It helped that he was 6 feet 4 inches with steely eyes.

5. How has your career evolved?

Pretty well, from a chip boy in a screw products factory at 15 to a near retiring CEO of the best group of business schools anywhere.

6. Looking back, what do you feel is your biggest contribution?

In just about every leadership position I have been in, I was asked to lead a turnaround or a startup. I learned that job one is hiring and retaining great people. If you make a mistake correct it, but don't stop until you have all great people. Then they will achieve high quality outcomes. That is not to say that they will not need guidance because they will.

7. What do the next 10 years hold for you?

I will retire in 18 months; take six months off to master retirement management; then re-evaluate what I want to do. Likely, it will simply be to enjoy the rest of my life.

8. How has your view of teaching/education evolved over the years?

There is no more critical global asset to humanity than a scholar and a teacher. The multiplier effect of their impact is incomparable. Education is the foundation of success in life. Yet many have not

understood its impact. That is something we have to continue to communicate, the importance of quality education.

9. What problems or hurdles do you perceive in your area of work? How do you overcome/ combat those problems/hurdles?

The industry of management education is global but many still see it as local. Helping management education leaders bridge the gap between local knowledge and a global mindset is what I try to do, especially with our staff.

10. How has the structure of the academic profession affected your career?

The structure has strengths and fault lines. While academic institutions have done a great job, I am not convinced that tenure's benefits exceed cost. A shorter term contract arrangement would keep the industry on its toes a bit better. The impact has not affected my career.

11. What characteristics do you think are important for a good servant leader?

All leaders serve at the pleasure of someone or group. Good leaders get high quality results ethically, responsibly and leave their organizations in a strong position, so long as they are allowed to lead.

12. Is there anything in your career you would have done differently? Any regrets?

No, I made the right decisions for the organization and for me.

1 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:
www.igi-global.com/chapter/interview-with-john-fernandes-ceo-of-the-aacsb/106124

Related Content

An Honor to Train: The Professional Identity of Army Trainers

Steven W. Schmidt (2016). *Professional Development and Workplace Learning: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications* (pp. 1692-1707).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/an-honor-to-train/137272

Project Managers' Competence Identification

Heli Aramo-Immonen, Andrea Bikfalvi, Núria Manceboand Hannu Vanharanta (2011). *International Journal of Human Capital and Information Technology Professionals* (pp. 33-47).

www.irma-international.org/article/project-managers-competence-identification/51356

Continuous and Assertive Transformation to Promote Interculturality, Equity, and Social Justice Through Inclusive Leadership in Education

Silvia Daniella Pérez Muñozand Sandra Viridiana Cortés Ruiz (2025). *Multidisciplinary Organizational Training of Human Capital in the Digital Age* (pp. 187-220).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/continuous-and-assertive-transformation-to-promote-interculturality-equity-and-social-justice-through-inclusive-leadership-in-education/365928

An Organisational Culture Model for Comparative Studies and Assessment of IT Projects

Imran U. Khan, Abel Usoroand Grzegorz Majewski (2012). *International Journal of Human Capital and Information Technology Professionals* (pp. 63-83).

www.irma-international.org/article/organisational-culture-model-comparative-studies/66099

Fostering Psychological Safety for Team Effectiveness in Family Businesses: Insights From Royal Savoy Hotel

Sulaiman Olusegun Atiku, Funmilola Aderayo Soneyeand Richmond Anane-Simon (2024). *Cases on the Interplay Between Family, Society, and Entrepreneurship* (pp. 84-121).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/fostering-psychological-safety-for-team-effectiveness-in-family-businesses/334611