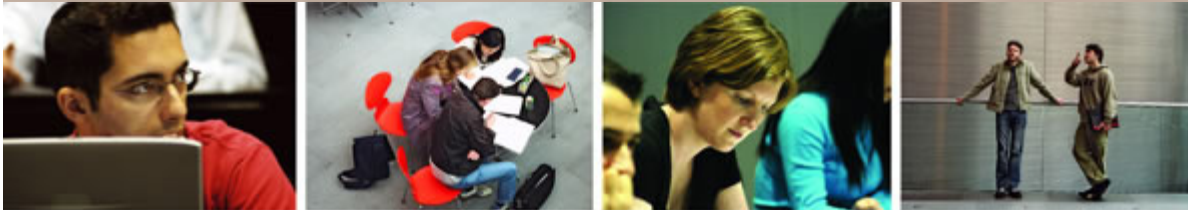


Alumni Network



The MBA Wing of the Imperial College Alumni Association of Singapore (ICAAS) invites you to:

"Breakout Strategy: Meeting the Challenges of Double-Digit Growth"
**By Dr. Thomas C. Lawton, Director of Joint Honours Programmes &
Senior Lecturer in Strategic Management,
Tanaka Business School, Imperial College London**

Thomas Lawton is Director of Joint Honours Programmes and Senior Lecturer in Strategic Management at Tanaka Business School, Imperial College London. He holds visiting professorial positions at the Tuck School of Business, Dartmouth College (USA) and Trinity College Dublin (Ireland). An Irish national, he has lived and worked in France, Italy, the US and the UK. He holds degrees from University College Cork and the London School of Economics and has a PhD in International Political Economy from the European University Institute in Florence, Italy. Dr Lawton has previously held full, part-time and visiting faculty positions at the London School of Economics, Royal Holloway, University of London, the University of Warwick, the Athens Laboratory of Business Administration, IESEG, Université Catholique de Lille and Sup. De Co, Amiens. He has been a Visiting Scholar at the University of California, Berkeley, an EU Human Capital Mobility Fellow at the University of Essex and a Research Fellow at INSEAD.



Thomas has led executive and graduate programs on corporate strategy, leadership, and international business dynamics at universities and corporations in North America, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. He has worked with a wide range of international companies and organizations in developing their present and future strategic leaders, among them the Arab Air Carriers Organization, Bombardier Transportation, IBM, the International Air Transport Association, Total and Trans4m. He has also been Academic Director of the global Executive MBA in International Financial Services Management for JP Morgan Asset Management.

Dr Lawton's research and consulting expertise focuses on strategic leadership and market breakout, the process and practice of strategy and corporate internationalisation. He is a leading authority on aviation management and the competitive dynamics of the global airline business. He is also the author or editor of five books, including *Strange Power* (2000) and *Cleared for Takeoff* (2002) and recently compiled a reference volume on *Strategic Management in Aviation* due to be published in 2007. His latest co-authored book, *Breakout Strategy: meeting the challenge of double-digit growth*, is published by McGraw-Hill, New York.

Date: 11 April 2007 (Wednesday)

Time: 1900 hours

Location: The Pod, NLB Building, 100 Victoria Street, Singapore

Lecture is free and open to all. Cost of buffet dinner, to be held in a separate area, is S\$8 pax for ICAAS members and S\$12 pax for non-members (nett).

Payment should be made by crossed cheque and payable to "ICAAS". Please register by 5 April and send your cheque payment to ICAAS, c/o National Grid Office, 21 Heng Mui Keng Terrace, Singapore 119613. For more info, please contact icaas2006@gmail.com. Please note that registration is a commitment to pay.

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Abstract

How many companies live in a world of back-and-forth market share battles, marginal improvements in business prospects followed by troubling setbacks, simply unable to get untracked? How many companies are “just there,” in the game, but not really? On no one’s list of great companies, but harbouring aspirations of breaking through to become a player, a leader, in their market places?

Remarkably, there is a path forward, toward breakout – the creation of a new strategy that catapults a company from nothing to something. Something important, and something increasingly profitable. *Breakout Strategy* – based on five years of research and hands-on work with leaders in companies in the United States, Europe, Asia, and Australia – offers a clear, actionable, set of ideas that give managers all the tools they need to move toward the sweet spots that exist in every industry. Breakout ideas are realistic and field tested – they do not require a legion of consultants but rather are within reach of every management team. The key ingredient: managers fired up for change but lacking the essential toolkit that can lead to winning positions in any industry. *Breakout Strategy* provides that toolkit.

There are four main breakout strategies, each of which is backed up by a realistic set of actionable steps managers can take to execute on the strategy:

1. Taking by Storm. Think Cisco in the early days, creating a new type of technology that blew away existing applications. Or Costco, with that quirky (and original) combination of high-end products in a discount warehouse store. Or Google, the archetypal band of Silicon Valley smart guys that made “Search” the most exciting word on Wall Street. Each of these companies started in a weak, or even nonexistent, position in their markets and took an original, sometimes revolutionary, idea and built a company around it. These are the classic entrepreneurs, misfits, and mavericks, and our research on these “taking by storm” companies identified the key features that we adapted for the world of larger breakout companies as well.

2. Expanding Horizons. These are companies that have rapidly expanded from a narrow or regional geographic base to a broad, national or international footprint. Expanding horizons is all about leveraging your position in one market to many others, taking advantage of a blossoming brand name (Starbucks), deep knowledge (CEMEX), or both (Toyota). The beauty of the “expanding horizons” strategy is that it brings growth, and profitability, to a company that executes on the essential principles of breakout. Rather than getting into a knock-out market share game that inevitably beats up profits, these breakout companies keep changing the playing field to stay one step ahead of competitors.

3. Laggard to Leader. Every industry has this – once proud, even dominant, companies that seem to sit by while new competitors change the rules of the game on them. In many ways this is the toughest type of breakout, because you are not only losing the battle, you can’t seem to find a way out of it. Well, as it turns out, there are some great companies that have risen from the depths – we call them laggards to leaders – and when you isolate their strategic turnarounds you find the breakout toolkit in action. Just think about the big-time resurrection of Harley-Davidson in the 1990s and Adidas even today, and you’ll know where we’re going with this.

4. Shifting Shape. The final type of generic breakout strategy is perhaps the most unusual of all. A company that is still going strong chooses to transform its business so that when the changes come they will be one step ahead, again. Apple’s shift from Mac as outlier to iPod as core before the traditional consumer electronic companies knew what was happening; Gallo’s move upscale in advance of a horde of low-priced wines from all over the world; Samsung’s elevation from second-tier low-cost player to world-class brand. Each of these stories highlights how shape shifters accomplish one of the toughest challenges in business – positioning yourself to take advantage of, rather than getting eaten up by, the changes coming in your marketplace.

Armed with an understanding of the major types of breakouts, managers have four potential pathways to success. The first step is assessing your own profile and aspirations to see which type of breakout is most feasible given where your company stands today. However, while each of these breakout strategies is different, what they share in common is an adherence to an essential breakout strategy toolkit. Executing on breakout requires five key steps – changing the company’s vision from “motherhood and apple pie” to stakeholder driven competitive advantage; becoming a magnet company that defines its value proposition in a much more nuanced and complete manner than in the past; delivering a business model that is closely aligned with vision and value proposition; bringing the people and systems sides of organizational life into sync to help execute the strategy; and infusing leaders with the set of competencies that our research and consulting work have identified as the real drivers of breakout.

While none of this sounds easy, and it isn’t, the truth is that there are numerous companies around the world that have made this work. Best Western did it in hotels, eBay did it in online commerce, Gucci did it in fashion, Tesco did it in supermarkets, and Fidelity did it in financial services. It takes desire, it takes discipline, and it takes know-how. *Breakout Strategy* can help managers and leaders go to a whole new level of success – to become major hits in their marketplaces – by offering best practice examples, hands-on and proven tools, and an inspirational reality-based message that breakout is absolutely possible. Because it is.