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strategy

DECISIONS, DECISIONS

For perhaps 30 years, the art of negotiation has been underpinned in the main by the findings of a cluster of scholars in and around Harvard Business School. Roger Fisher and William Ury published their study and – in effect – handbook for negotiating called ...Getting to Yes... in 1981, and ever si...

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Operations

RETAILING – WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE STORE-WITHIN-STORE?

In the past 20 years numerous conventional department stores have adopted the format of a store-within-a-store, in effective giving selling space to brands or even other retailers to make use of the department store's footfall, in exchange for either a share of revenues or a flat fee for use of the ...

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Strategic HR

SOCIAL LEARNING IN A RECESSION?

Whether the recession is coming to an end now or heading for its "double dip", companies have already taken the hit on staff morale. Downsizing may be inevitable. When it happens, companies lose some of their knowledge and expertise – some of their capability to produce value in the future. "One imp...

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Leadership

LEADING A NON-PROFIT IS HARDER THAN IT SEEMS

Working in the non-profit sector is a way that business executives find meaning for their skills. An economic downturn, which often sees highly qualified people discarded from corporations around the world, ought to create a ready supply for non-profits looking for senior managerial talent. But it's...

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Operations

WHEN CITIZENS ARE CUSTOMERS

...Some years ago – thought only in some countries – it became fashionable for government agencies to talk about the recipients of public services as "customers". This use of language sits uncomfortably with many people, and not just with left-wing activists, wary of seeing the metaphors of markets ...

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Our themes...

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 Strategic marketing
 Human resources
 Intellectual capital
 Intangible assets
 Mergers & acquisitions

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Strategic marketing

'ALL BRANDS ARE NICHE'

...Brands are differentiators, flags of quality, indicators of premium service. Brands are how we tell the world our products ...aren't just commodities..., to be bought at the lowest possible price. "We're worth it," in the words of a famous ad campaign for a purveyor of branded goods that women we...

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Strategic HR

'A NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT IS REQUIRED'

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Political economy

'DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE NEW CHALLENGERS'

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Supply chain

CHAIN OR NETWORK? THE ROLE OF HIERARCHY IN INDUSTRY

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governance

Governance codes

OECD GIVES SPECIAL GUIDANCE TO ASIA ON RELATED PARTY DEALINGS

Related party transactions represent a special problem in corporate governance, one multiplied in circumstances where there's a controlling shareholder, a CEO with a large equity stake or links to a major shareholder, or another powerful force in the boardroom. When seeking outside capital, Asian co...

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Political economy

'IT WORKED' – BUT THE JOB'S NOT DONE

..."When we last gathered in April, we confronted the greatest challenge to the world economy in our generation. ..."Global output was contracting at pace not seen since the 1930s. Trade was plummeting. Jobs were disappearing rapidly. Our people worried that the world was on the edge of a depressi...

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Mergers and acquisitions

SWEDISH SHARE FACE EQUIVALENCE IN TAKEOVERS

The Swedish arm of the stock exchange group Nasdaq OMX is implementing a new rule to give holders of shares with lesser voting rights equivalent value in the case of a takeover bid. It's not quite the solution that globally active institutional investors have sought, but it is a step in the directio...

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Proxy voting

SEC CHAIRMAN MAKES CASE FOR SHAREHOLDER ACCESS

...The financial crisis was caused, at least in part, by lax corporate governance, according to Mary Schapiro, chairman of the US Securities and Exchange Commission. It's another reason why shareholders ought to get a greater say over who sits on boards of directors and what policies they adopt. Sch...

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Leadership

DIRECTOR-DISQUALIFICATION MAY GET HARSHER IN THE UK

One of the few sanctions available to against directors of UK corporations is for government to ban them from serving on the board of a company again. It's a punishment used ...only in extremis.... Rarely would a government of any persuasion take it upon themselves to question business judgements di...

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Audit

EU MOVES TO EASE DATA EXCHANGES IN AUDIT

The European Commission wants to make it easier for public authorities to exchange information about audits. It has drafted a plan under which member states of the European Union can exchange audit working papers with Canada, Japan and Switzerland, where the authorities have indicated a willingness ...

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Audit

AUDITORS UNDER SCRUTINY IN IOSCO CONSULTATIONS

...The International Organization of Securities Commissions has launched three consultations with the aim of creating greater transparency in the audit practices for quoted companies. In one, a task force explores whether enhancing the ...transparency of audit firms' governance..., audit quality ind...

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Proxy voting

IS SEC CONTRADICTING ITSELF ON SHAREHOLDER ACCESS?

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Proxy voting

SEC HEARS PLENTY ON SHAREHOLDER ACCESS PROPOSAL

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Banking and finance

FSB LAYS OUT GUIDELINES FOR CURBING BANKERS' PAY

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Board composition

SEC'S AGUILAR SAYS BOARDROOM DIVERSITY PAYS DIVIDENDS

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responsiveness

Credit ratings

SHOULD ISSUERS BE ALLOWED TO QUOTE RATINGS WITHOUT PERMISSION?

Credit rating agencies are moving into a regime of much tighter regulation. But what about their ratings? The Australian Securities and Investments Commission is wondering whether and how issuers of securities – the companies and organisations that issue equities and bonds – should be ...allowed to ...

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EU financial regulation

MCCREEVY WANTS 'SAFETY FIRST' IN REGULATION

What is the purpose of financial regulation? We used to think it had something to do with creating fair markets: stopping market abuse and giving participants access to sufficient information that they could make informed decision. But the financial crisis has demonstrated that it goes well beyond t...

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Corporate communication

PSST! HEARD WHAT AUSTRALIA'S GONNA DO ABOUT RUMOURS?

...One of the trickiest issues in corporate reporting – from the vantage point of issuers, news media and securities traders alike – is how we deal with the question of rumours. Sometimes rumours reflect largely accurate leaks of sensitive information, but other times they can be ...malicious attempt...

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US regulation

SEC COMMISSIONER MAKES CASE FOR HARMONISING REGULATION

There is a sense of inevitability about it. The two main financial market regulators in the US seem to be headed towards becoming one. That "sense", however, doesn't make it "inevitable". There are too many vested interests at stake. The US Securities and Exchange Commission looks after the securiti...

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Credit ratings

SEC VOTES TO INCREASE OVERSIGHT OF RATING AGENCIES

...The US Securities and Exchange Commission voted to force credit rating agencies to provide greater transparency about their processes and recommendations. The measures include disclosure of ratings histories that would allow competitors to see better how they could provide an alternative approach...

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Banking and finance

EMERGING MARKETS SHOULD HAVE GREATER VOICE IN REGULATION – IOSCO

Emerging financial markets ought to have a bigger say in on regulatory matters now that they have become more deeply interlinked in global markets and risk, according to a study published by the International Organization of Securities Commissions. The report also highlights the need to ...strengthen...

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Banking and finance

IOSCO SEEKS WAYS TO INCREASE TRANSPARENCY IN STRUCTURED FINANCE

The International Organization of Securities Commissions has ideas on how to impose greater transparency on markets for structured finance products like the collateralised debt obligations and asset-backed securities that sparked the financial crisis of the past two years. In a consultation paper, I...

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Hedge funds

UK, US CONFER ON HEDGE FUND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The US Securities and Exchange Commission and the UK Financial Services Authority are holding talks aimed at global regulation and reporting requirements for hedge funds, their advisors and other key participants in financial markets. Hector Sants, the FSA's chief executive, met SEC chairman Mary Sc...

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Banking and finance

UK'S TURNER: 'THERE'S A LOT TO BE SAID FOR BORING'

Britain's top financial regulator wants to be sure that the momentum for reform doesn't flag, now that the banking crisis appears to have eased. Banks should focus on their core business, Lord Turner, chairman of the Financial Services Authority, told an audience of bankers in his annual speech at t...

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Banking and finance

UK SAYS EU SHOULD TREAD CAREFULLY ON DERIVATIVES PLAN

The European Union needs to consider global issues in its plans to regulate the market in over-the-counter derivatives, like the credit default swaps that ...aggravated the financial crisis.... That's the view set out in a joint response by the UK Treasury Department and Financial Services Authority...

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Banking and finance

SWITZERLAND DETAILS ITS FAILINGS IN THE CRISIS

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Disclosure

COMPLIANCE WITH EU STANDARD NO. 1 LESS THAN FIRST RATE

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EU financial regulation

LESS 'RED TAPE' NEEDED IN EUROPEAN PROSPECTUSES

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Banking and finance

IMPROVING FINANCIAL REGULATION NEEDS PERSISTENCE – FSB

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Banking and finance

IOSCO RECOMMENDATIONS SEEK CHANGES TO INCENTIVE FOR CDSS

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