

# FOCUS

A magazine for ABE members

October 2017-March 2018 | Issue 59

## Good operations management

Developing corporate strategy

Project management skills

Exam tips and  
command words

ABE news

Alumni profiles and  
Top Paper Award winners

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# Focus

Linda Wilkin – Managing Editor

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## In this issue



Welcome! The time since our previous issue has flown by, and – as always – there's lots going on at ABE.

This issue contains a wealth of features that will benefit business professionals at all levels. Our new CEO, Rob May, has spent his initial months at ABE developing a corporate strategy and has shared his approach to this exclusively with *Focus* readers.

We have also been building a new back-office system, which has been a mammoth and challenging task that is still ongoing. Sarah Mayhew has been in charge of the venture since its inception and offers some great insights for anyone seeking to manage projects.

The updated RQF portfolio has been launched and, with this, one of our objectives has been to ensure every unit is supported by an outstanding and comprehensive study guide. Our regular contributor, Rajesh Raheja, was responsible for writing the study manual for the Level 5 unit Operations Management – as well as the tutor resources – and this has led him to produce a really interesting and insightful article on the subject.

Aside from this, there are the usual study and career tips. We conclude with my favourite part of the magazine: a celebration of the achievements of our Top Paper Award winners. I hope you enjoy the read.

**Linda Wilkin**  
Managing Editor

# RQF Progress

ABE is proud to announce its first RQF partnerships with the following universities

These university agreements are for the updated RQF Diplomas; for our QCF qualification holders there are also many great top-up opportunities, so do visit [www.abeuk.com/what-next/find-university](http://www.abeuk.com/what-next/find-university) for the full list.



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### University of Greenwich

Located on a UNESCO World Heritage site in central London, the University of Greenwich offers students a chance to study at a UK university ranked in the top 70 for the country. The university is well suited to international interest, with a student body comprising 35% international students.



### London Metropolitan University

Another university option in the heart of London, the London Met is the highest-ranked university in the UK founded after



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the year 2000, with more than 50% of the student body coming from overseas.



### University of Staffordshire

Found in the West Midlands, Staffordshire is currently ranked in the top 70 best universities in the UK, with more than 15,000 students enrolled. The university was shortlisted for the Most Improved Student Experience award in 2017.



### British University Vietnam

Our first university partnership in Vietnam has been established with the British University Vietnam (BUV), thanks to its link with Staffordshire. BUV degrees are accredited by the University of Staffordshire and give Vietnamese learners the option to obtain a British degree in Hanoi. The university has a 100% international faculty, and is the only institution in Vietnam accredited to award British degrees.



### Cyprus Institute of Marketing

The Cyprus Institute of Marketing offers a variety of degree options via distance learning, all at competitive prices. ABE students from Level 4 to Level 6 are eligible to begin degrees with the institute.



### Sylva University (Zambia)

Sylva is an existing ABE centre, which has recently started offering its own degrees. It will now allow ABE students to move from a Level 5 or 6 Diploma to a Bachelors degree.



# Education Opportunities



## Pentecostal Life University (Malawi)

A private, Christian university located in the city of Lilongwe, Pentecostal Life offers students in the region a local option for continuing their studies and gaining a university degree after completing an ABE Diploma.



## Avance International University (Uganda)

This Uganda-based university allows

ABE students at Levels 4 and 5 to progress to Bachelors degrees in Business Administration or Information Technology.



## Interactive

Interactive is a distance-learning institution offering degrees from a variety of British universities online, including the University of Wolverhampton and Arden University.



## De Montfort University

De Montfort is based in the city of Leicester and is ranked 70th among UK

universities. In business, the Leicester Business School is ranked in the top 10 of the country. De Montfort is prepared to offer discounts to ABE students on their normal tuition fees.



## Pan African Institute for Development, West Africa (Cameroon)

PAID-WA is part of the expanding network of Pan African Institute for Development International (I'PAID), a highly respected African institution. Currently, the agreement covers its Cameroon campus, but we hope to expand it further in the coming months.

## Join the Elite

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- **MBA (12 months) with ABE Level 7 Diploma in Business Management**

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# ABE guide to command words and meanings

Whether you are taking exams or doing assignments, to do your best you need to know the type of answer the examiner is looking for. Command words in a question or assignment brief will tell you what is expected, so it's vital that you are really familiar with the key command words and what they mean in terms of the answer you should provide

Command Word	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7 (postgraduate)
<b>Analyse</b> Examine a topic together with thoughts and judgements about it	Can analyse a range of materials and a selected number of sources with minimum guidance using given models, principles and definitions  Can compare alternative models and techniques using appropriate rationale and criteria	Can analyse a variety of materials from different sources and draw conclusions independently, using given models, principles and definitions  Can compare and analyse alternative models and techniques using appropriate rationale and criteria	Can analyse new and/or abstract data and schools of thought, and can consider alternative solutions and outcomes independently, using a range of appropriate models, principles and definitions  Can compare and analyse alternative models and schools of thought using appropriate rationale and criteria	Can analyse complex, incomplete or contradictory areas of knowledge and diverging schools of thought using appropriate models, principles and definitions  Can analyse a range of models and schools of thought independently, demonstrating critical awareness and originality of thought
<b>Appraise</b> Evaluate, judge or assess	Can provide a detailed account of the subject area, including key theories and models  Can demonstrate an understanding of the wider social and environmental implications of different contexts	Can provide an analytical account of the subject area with reference to relevant theories and models, showing insight and awareness  Can demonstrate awareness and insight into the social and environmental implications of different contexts	Can provide a comprehensive and detailed critique of the subject area, demonstrating an in-depth understanding and awareness  Can incorporate a critical ethical dimension when analysing lines of argument	Can evidence a depth of understanding and a substantial body of knowledge, working with ideas and models that are at the forefront of the discipline  Can demonstrate awareness of – and ability to articulate – the implications of conflicting ethical dilemmas
<b>Argue</b> Provide reasoned arguments for or against, and arrive at an appropriate conclusion	Can produce reasoned arguments in response to a given brief, using terminology correctly	Can develop rationalised arguments to given scenarios using appropriate terminology, concepts and principles	Can engage in an effective debate in a professional manner, evidencing a comprehensive understanding and application of key principles	Can critically analyse complex, incomplete or contradictory areas of knowledge of a strategic nature, and communicate the outcome effectively
<b>Assess</b> Evaluate or judge the importance of something, referring to appropriate schools of thought	Can constructively consider and effectively assess a wide range of information for specified tasks	Can consider a range of data and/or information, and assess their relevance for specific tasks	Can synthesise and assess new and/or abstract information and data in the context of wide-ranging problems, using a variety of techniques	Can assess a wide range of theoretical principles/ methodologies applicable to the discipline and their own work, and apply these within a senior management context

## Exams: how to do your best on the day

You've worked hard, revised thoroughly – now all you have to do is sit the exam. To help you get the grade you deserve, follow these simple steps to exam success:

**1** Read each question thoroughly to make sure you understand exactly what is expected of you. Underline all the


command words in the question (see table above).

**2** Ask yourself 'What does the examiner want me to do?' You can then give the kind of answer they are looking for.

**3** Plan how you are going to answer the question and tick off each item when you have done it. Make sure your answer covers all the command words in the question.

**4** Take a note of the time allowed for each question and plan your answers accordingly.

**5** Keep your answers concise. You won't get extra marks for giving information that is not required, and it wastes your valuable time.

Finally, keep calm – and, remember, the exam is only there to help you prove what you have learned. We wish you every success. Good luck. 



Command Word	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7 (postgraduate)
<b>Compare (and contrast)</b> Look for similarities and differences leading to an informed conclusion	Can constructively consider and effectively analyse the similarities and differences between two or more contexts	Can analyse and summarise the similarities and differences between two or more contexts	Can synthesise and analyse the similarities and differences between two or more contexts	Can synthesise and analyse the similarities and differences between two or more contexts, in a manner that is innovative and original
<b>Define</b> Write the precise meaning of a word or phrase. Quote a source if possible	Can define key words reflective of a body of knowledge at level 4	Can define key words reflective of a body of knowledge at level 5	Can define key words reflective of a body of knowledge at level 6	Can define key words reflective of a body of knowledge at level 7 Can show that the distinctions contained or implied in the definition are necessary or desirable
<b>Describe</b> Give a detailed account of	Can constructively consider and clearly describe a range of ideas and information towards a given purpose	Can analyse and clearly describe a range of ideas and information for a given purpose	Can synthesise and analyse new and/or abstract ideas and information, and present a clear description and account of the findings	Can critically analyse complex, incomplete or contradictory ideas and information, and can present the findings clearly and effectively
<b>Demonstrate</b> Explain, using examples	Can clearly explain a range of ideas, using illustrative examples to underpin concepts used	Can clearly explain a range of ideas, concepts and theories, and support them with relevant examples	Can explain a broad range of ideas persuasively and with originality, using a wide variety of illustrative examples to underpin findings and exemplify points	Can explain and utilise theories and concepts from the forefront of the discipline/practice, demonstrating a mature and analytical understanding and awareness of principles and practice at a strategic level
<b>Discuss</b> Investigate or examine by argument and debate, giving reasons for and against	Can produce well-structured, coherent and detailed arguments in response to a given context, using terminology fluently	Can produce coherent arguments to support ideas or solve specific problems, using appropriate vocational terminology	Can produce detailed and coherent arguments in response to well-defined and abstract problems, using relevant vocational language	Can synthesise information with critical awareness, in a manner that is innovative and original, using language that is appropriate at a senior level
<b>Evaluate</b> Make an appraisal of the value (or not) of something, its validity, reliability, applicability	Can select appropriate techniques to evaluate the relevance and significance of the information and data collected	Can select from a range of techniques and justify their relevance and significance, especially in relation to information and data, to make recommendations and draw meaningful conclusions	Can select from a range of techniques to critically evaluate complex, contradictory information to support conclusions and recommendations and, in the process, review its reliability, validity and applicability	Can critically evaluate complex, unpredictable and contentious information, often in a specialist context, and arrive at informed conclusions and argue alternative approaches
<b>Explain</b> Make plain, interpret and account for, enlighten, give reasons for	Can present valid and relevant information evidencing knowledge, understanding and application of key principles relevant to a defined context	Can present valid and appropriate evidence, which demonstrates in-depth knowledge, understanding and application of key principles relevant to an applied context	Can present complex information evidencing comprehensive knowledge, understanding and application of key principles relevant to an applied context	Can present complex, incomplete or contradictory areas of knowledge of a strategic nature and communicate the information effectively
<b>Illustrate</b> Give examples to make clear and explicit, to demonstrate	Can apply a wide variety of illustrative examples to underpin concepts used	Can apply a wide variety of illustrative examples to underpin concepts, findings and recommendations	Can apply a wide variety of illustrative examples to underpin findings supported by references to wider reading, to exemplify points	Can apply relevant contemporary issues, demonstrating a mature and analytical understanding and awareness of strategic issues that are at the forefront of the discipline
<b>Justify</b> Support recommendations, explanations or arguments, with valid reasons for and against	Can support lines of argument with relevant information from a range of sources	Can justify arguments with relevant information from a range of sources	Can effectively communicate well structured and coherent arguments relevant to appropriate contexts	Can articulate complex arguments with critical awareness in a manner which is innovative and original
<b>Outline</b> Give main features or general principles, ignoring minor details	Can selectively identify valid and relevant information from a range of sources relevant to level 4	Can selectively identify valid and relevant information from a range of sources relevant to level 5	Can selectively identify valid and relevant information from a range of sources relevant to level 6	Can selectively identify valid and relevant information from a range of sources relevant to level 7
<b>Recommend</b> Put forward proposals, supported with a clear rationale	Can produce valid conclusions and proposals based on abstract data and information, appropriate to context	Can produce reliable and valid conclusions and proposals based on abstract data and information, appropriate to context	Can produce reliable and valid conclusions and proposals based on abstract or incomplete data and information, which is appropriate to context	Can produce reliable, valid and incisive conclusions and proposals based on complex, incomplete or contradictory data or information, which is appropriate to context
<b>State</b> Present in a clear brief form	Can present new and /or abstract data and information in a clear and concise manner, appropriate to a given context	Can present new and /or abstract data, information and situations in a clear and concise manner, appropriate to context	Can present new and/or abstract data, information and situations, in a clear and concise manner, appropriate to context	Can present complex, incomplete or contradictory data or information in a clear and concise manner, appropriate to context
<b>Summarise</b> Give a concise account of the key points, omit details and examples	Can summarise information and collate in a logical manner	Can summarise and collate information and data in a logical manner	Can summarise abstract information, data and contradictory information in a logical and concise manner	Can summarise complex, contradictory or contentious information in a logical and concise manner

# New leaders must go to work on the business, as well as in it

**Writes Rob May, CEO at ABE**



Taking on a business leadership role is an exciting challenge. One of the most thrilling executive experiences is seeing a business idea take off. Whether your objective is start-up, growth, recovery, or mergers and acquisitions, you'll need a compelling plan to reach your goals. Here are my 10 tips for creating and delivering a successful corporate strategy

## Hit the road!

It's vital to tune into the big picture as early as possible. In my first few weeks as CEO at ABE, I spent little time in the office. I visited customers, end users, regulators, suppliers and stakeholders to understand their needs and motivations. Most new leaders approach an assignment with strong ideas in place, but it's important to road-test your ideas as soon as possible. Find out what customers really like about your company, what keeps them awake at night, and what they'd like to change – more generally – about how they operate. This will go a long way to helping you create a compelling value proposition.

## Challenge the 'dominant logic'

Businesses often get stuck in a certain way of doing things, and settle for the status quo. When you're fresh in a role, this is a perfect time to be hyper-curious and ask probing questions. Your aim should be perfecting every fundamental of the business – and this usually involves making changes, and perhaps even uncomfortable or unpopular moves.

When Dan Birnbaum took over as CEO at Soda Stream, a company that boasted more than 95 per cent share of the declining 'home carbonation market', he shocked the company out of its comfort zone by announcing that its target market was, instead, the entire fizzy-drinks market, and that its competitors were

now Pepsi and Coca-Cola. It now had less than 0.5 per cent share of its target market! Soda Stream would have to rebuild its market from the bottom and think very differently about how to do this. Such changes can seem daunting. Shortly after joining ABE, I invited a member of the British Paralympic ski team – who had overcome severe life-changing injuries – to talk to all ABE staff, sharing his personal insights about challenging preconceptions and pushing through barriers. New leaders should challenge the business to think differently if it wants to evolve.

## Be a time traveller

Business leaders need to be able to see further into the future than most. In your new role, you'll need to shuttle effortlessly between the present and various possible futures. I typically spend between 30 and 50 per cent of my time thinking about the long term, scanning my networks and tapping into diverse sources of information. I believe the next big change in the industry will probably come from outside, rather than within. This helps in sensing changes and opportunities that are upstream – but, beware; too much future-gazing can be dangerous if you lose sight of the challenges in the here and now. Your staff need to know that your head is in the game today, but that you have a vision of how the market will play out. Spend too much time on the nuts and bolts holding today's business together, however, and

you will end up walking backwards into the future. Find your balance, don't lose sight of the small things today, but make sure they crescendo towards the big impact you want to deliver.

## Control the controllables

Many plans fail because they dwell too much on the aspirational, or count on things that are hard to predict or beyond your control. Think carefully about what levers are available to you in the business cockpit. These are aspects of the business that you can change directly or influence, such as costs, or where the business focuses its resources – and start by influencing how you optimise those.

## Create a burning imperative

You will need to galvanise the business around a shared goal or common enemy. This is the mission that unites everyone in the short term to reach the long-term goal. It's useful to find a message that acts as a shared internal shorthand – which clarifies the challenge and acts as a touchstone for decision-making. Fuji wanted to grow its share of the camera film market, so staffers used to rally around the burning imperative of '*Kill Kodak!*' as they sought to direct all of their efforts into undermining that one major competitor. Every small decision about manufacturing, logistics, and sales was washed with the question '*is this better, cheaper, faster or smarter than*



*the competitor?’* Knowing what to focus on day to day is just as important as knowing where you want to end up.

### Act with speed and conviction

Often, change programmes fail because they get dragged out too long, or leaders wait to have near 100 per cent certainty that it’s the right course of action. Once you’ve plotted your course, don’t waste time – go full-steam ahead. A wrong decision is usually better than no decision at all, which can paralyse an organisation, creating more problems. Do not invest too much energy on being liked or protecting teams from painful decisions – and back your own instincts.

### Make your motive crystal clear

Once you’ve completed your analysis and decided on your strategy, communication is vital. Everyone should have access to the business’s strategic plan, and understand the role they will play in delivering it. Just as importantly, staff should understand the rationale and motivations underpinning your plan. *Why* do you want to move into a new market? *Why* are you changing your product line-up? *Why* are you focusing on costs? Understanding the reason behind a plan will make it much easier for people to ‘live it’.

## Knowing what to focus on day to day is just as important as knowing where you want to end up

### Be obsessed with outcomes

One of my favourite quotes from Winston Churchill is: “No matter how beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results”. He was talking about the tendency for many people to see planning as an end in itself. For your plan to succeed, you’ll need an unrelenting focus on delivering business results. It’s critical to have good data dashboards, clear lines of accountability for people to own targets, and regular quantitative reporting. Establish key performance indicators early on and line up regular business reviews for tracking performance.


### Step back and let staff deliver

Now that you have a clear plan – which is based on things that your business can control and that has been communicated effectively – you must now stand back and let your teams deliver. It’s my view

that authority should usually be placed at the lowest level possible. This means trusting staff to act decisively and giving them the support they need to be successful.

### Get ready to improvise

By now, your powers of analysis and forecasting will be pretty sharp. But there’s a phrase used in the military: “No plan survives contact with the enemy”. This means, no matter how robust your planning, there will always be significant challenges to overcome. Reaching your stated objective is always the mission, but be prepared to think creatively about how you get there based on real-time feedback from the market. If you need to change your approach, don’t delay!

Remember that leading a business, a division or a team is a difficult and complex challenge, especially with so much disruption in the modern marketplace – which is why so many big companies or bright ideas fail. ABE qualifications don’t just give you essential business skills; they also help you to develop critical business instincts, ensuring that you are fully prepared to rise to the challenge and enjoy a successful career in leadership. 



## ABE ALUMNI PROFILE:

# Zin Zin Khaing

## Trade & Business Services Officer at British Chamber of Commerce, and Business Development Officer, MHR

Zin Zin is managing two jobs and came to visit ABE just after she had gained her Masters degree, with a full scholarship, from the University of Huddersfield in the UK.

In 2010, ABE was recommended to Zin Zin by a relative. She was interested in business, but did not know which specialism to choose – marketing, HR or general business. She chose to study at Myanmar Human Resources (MHR) because it had a sound reputation and could offer her flexibility. She joined MHR after high school and did Levels 4, 5, and 6. After Level 6, she applied to study Business Management at

the University of Huddersfield. She had done her research and found that studying in the UK gave her the best option, because – thanks to her ABE qualifications – she only needed to complete one year to get her undergraduate degree.

Graduating with a first class honours degree in Business Management, Zin Zin was offered a full scholarship for her Masters degree. Again, she considered all her options. She could have gone for a wide range of top universities in the UK but the full scholarship was, of course, an enticing offer, so she accepted it.


During her studies in the UK, MHR had helped Zin Zin gain real-world skills, working in different organisations. She found that work plus studying kept her very busy, but she is an extremely positive and determined person, so took on the challenge and has just graduated with her Masters degree.

“ABE is very intensive,” Zin Zin says. “There are lots of theories mixed with practical experience. Students get a good grounding in business management at all levels and they cover a lot of subjects. This helps because, later, you can concentrate your studies on a subject that really interests you.”

Zin Zin is now working as an ABE tutor and fills up her time in the evenings helping staff in large organisations improve their business practice and process. Her day job is for the British Chamber of Commerce in Yangon, Myanmar. This is a really exciting and varied role.

Talking about ABE's updated programmes, Zin Zin said: “It's really good that ABE has a new syllabus and it's very exciting for Myanmar. The course content has been updated to make it really interesting and refreshing. ABE has also introduced assignments and this is a new way for students in Myanmar to learn and to be assessed. It is exciting because, in the past, students thought that undertaking research was for other people to do. But now they have to think independently and produce their own reports. They are also introduced to concepts such as employability right at the start of their course.”

“Now we have access to concepts such as entrepreneurship early on in our studies. This means students are better equipped as they mature. For lecturers, the updated content means they have access to better materials and there will be more interaction in class. MHR is starting the new courses now and we are all very excited.”

Zin Zin recommends ABE because it is low risk: “It gives students an overview and, if they like it, they can go on to university or a good job. It's really flexible and relevant.” 

**“Students get a good grounding in business management at all levels and they cover a lot of subjects”**





Zin Zin Khaing



# A guide to project management

Project management is an important element of ABE's RQF syllabus. **Sarah Mayhew** is a professional project manager who had the unenviable task of overseeing the transfer of more than 40 years of ABE data to a new system. She shares some of her expertise here

In June 2015 ABE began a project to implement a new back office system that would improve processes and futureproof the organisation in the fast-paced and ever-changing world that is education.

A year later, a project then began to

implement a new online portal for ABE learners and centres to complement the new back office system and improve user experience.

Managing any project presents challenges, and how you, as a

project manager, respond to those challenges can make all the difference. Understanding a missed deadline or a critical change doesn't have to mean project failure. It is how you respond to risks and issues that can make a difference.





## What is the difference between a risk and an issue?

Risks and issues are often referred to jointly, and although they are different, in the long term, they can have the same impact on your project.

Risks are known or unknown events that may take place during the project and can affect project budgets, scope and schedule. Risks can vary greatly and not all risks are bad, but a common theme in projects is fear of risk.

Issues are immediate problems which must be addressed. They often include extra tasks and resources being required. They can also have an impact on budget, scope and schedule.

## How do I manage risks and issues?

Risks are normally identified, analysed to measure the impact and then a mitigation plan is formulated. For example, a risk might be urgent, but the impact relatively low and therefore the mitigation might

be minimal to implement and track. On the other hand, you might have a risk that is a long way off, but if the impact is high, then the mitigation plan must be well formulated, implemented as early as possible and tracked closely to ensure its effectiveness.

Issues are usually managed by tracking the progress of the tasks required to overcome them. Adding a small sub-section to your project plan can be a fantastic way of keeping track of issues individually, depending on your project management tool.

## There are multiple project management methodologies, each with their own version of how to deal with missed deadlines

Risks can become issues. For example: a risk could be that a member of your project team could leave, get sick, or not be around for any number of reasons. The mitigation of that risk is to ensure shared responsibility and knowledge throughout the project, so your project is not reliant solely on individuals. However, if a person is absent, that would become an issue, as this needs to be dealt with immediately.

## What is scope creep?

Scope creep is when the requirements of the project change or expand in number.

## How do I manage scope creep?

Scope creep can be virtually unavoidable, unless you are working on a small, confined project that is not directly affected by other areas of the business. When scope creep begins to occur, you can manage it by prioritising your requirements and de-scoping less important ones.

## Continues over





Otherwise, you must accept that the project will need to adapt to these requirements in both time and budget. Sometimes, it may require a blend of both approaches, depending on the scale of the changes.

### What to do when deadlines get missed?

There are multiple project management methodologies, each with their own version of how to deal with missed deadlines. Missed deadlines occur for several reasons, most commonly: unexpected difficulty in the tasks, estimates being wrong, scope creep and resourcing.

Often, the simplest approach is to move the whole project along for however long your delay is, but experience has taught me that when a task takes longer than expected, the impact can be double the time you have gone over. This is due to all the unforeseen consequences of a delay, such as other resources not being available for your new timetable as something else might have been reliant on

that task finishing at a certain time in order to progress.

Another option can be to think about using the same method that is used for scope creep, namely de-scope requirements for the next schedule of work and seeing if you are able to look at phasing in requirements later.

When this happens, it can present a real challenge as a project manager. Stakeholders will always want projects to run on time, to budget, and with everything that was originally asked for.

### How do I de-scope requirements?

There are a couple of well-used processes for prioritising your requirements. Agile methodologies are known for using “MOSCOW” must-have requirements, should-have requirements, could-have requirements and won’t-have requirements. Another way of describing them are business critical, nice-to-haves and blue sky.

Principally they all mean or work the same way: must-have and business critical are the requirements that you cannot be without to launch. For example, at ABE, our portal pages couldn’t launch without a login page, this is business critical or a must-have requirement. Nice-to-have or should-have requirements are those that will improve user experience, and are reasonably achievable. These requirements should always be aimed for where possible. Could-have or blue-sky requirements are those that would be great to have, but not necessarily immediately, and not having them won’t impact on the user experience. Won’t-have requirements are pre-agreed, out-of-scope requirements for the project.

### There are a couple of well-used processes for prioritising your requirements



When de-scoping, blue-sky/could-have requirements should be the first to be removed, as they won't directly impact the user experience. These can be pushed out into future phases of the project. If your project becomes seriously under pressure, you can de-scope the should-have requirements, but when this happens, it can be helpful to think about phasing in these requirements much sooner, and only de-scoping those that will not have any serious negative impact.

### How to prevent project failure and ensure success?

The first question that must be asked is, how do you or your organisation define project failure? Another question is: what can you control within your project? As a project manager, success is traditionally determined by delivering a project on time, within budget and with all requirements fulfilled. However, this does not consider the second question: What can you control? As a project manager, you will estimate on timescales, but you are reliant on

other project team members or third-party suppliers to meet the deadline, or tell you in good time that they won't meet the deadline and why. Without that information, you won't know what else could be affected by the same problem, or by the delay. Sometimes, requirements will not be prioritised, and you will be expected to find a way to get everything in or you will be given a project deadline without consideration of the project objectives.


Often, project managers are given responsibility without authority, meaning that they are likely to be blamed for delays, even though they have no authority to manage the project team. It is important that your project governance ensures delegated authority is provided and respected. As a project manager, having a good project governance structure to support you will be key to your success.

Project failure and success should be agreed prior to the project start. How

you and your organisation look at it will determine how you set up the project, and often the attitude that you, the team and the organisation have when working through risks and issues.

### My key tips for project management

- Ensure you have prioritised requirements before the project starts
- Have a clear definition of what would mean project success or failure
- Understand risks and issues
- Manage scope creep with a good change control process
- Don't panic when deadlines get missed
- Be open and work with your team and project governance to minimise risk of failure

A good pre-project process can also have an impact. Make sure you know what the purpose of the project is, why it will benefit the organisation, how will it be achieved, who will be making it happen and when it is needed. That way, success awaits you. 

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# Operations excellence is strategy realised

ABE examiner and regular *Focus* contributor **Rajesh Raheja** has an MBA, 28 years' business experience and has written study texts, including the study guide *Operations Management* in our updated portfolio. Here, he describes the importance of operations management in realising an organisation's competitive strategy





Qantas, the Australian airline, serves more than five million in-flight meals annually to its economy class, and half as many in its premium class. H&M, the global fashion retailer, sells millions of items of clothing from more than 4,300 retail stores in 64 countries. FedEx, the logistics company, delivers more than four million packages and documents in 200 countries every day. These, and millions of smaller firms across the world, make money by physically ‘creating’ or ‘doing’ specific things to meet the requirements of their customers. This is called operations.

The last couple of articles (see *Focus*, October 2016-March 2017) discussed the importance of strategic analysis (Porter’s five forces), and generic competitive strategies chosen by organisations to achieve their corporate objectives. However, an organisation’s intended strategies – whether cost leadership and/or differentiation – are not realised by magic. When organisations grow in sales or gain market share, it implies that they are meeting the requirements of their customers through superior operations.

## Operations is a core business function

Operations is one of the three core functions. The other two are marketing and finance. No organisation can exist without operations of some kind.

Operations is to the organisation what breathing is to humans. When operations cease, the organisation stops functioning. When a business excels in planning,

designing and managing its ordinary operations, it achieves strategic success. Efficiency and effectiveness are the bedrock of superior operations.

## Operations management

Three pillars of operations are procurement, transformation and distribution.

Procurement means purchasing raw material, finished goods and other support services. Transformation implies conversion of raw material into finished products (saleable goods and/or services). Distribution signifies getting the products to the end-consumers.

The focus areas of the operations function are:

- **What** (the kind and quantity of resources)
- **When** (the timing of purchase and/or production)
- **Where** (the location of production, storage and distribution)
- **Who** (the specific people responsible for specific activities and processes in the operations)
- **How** (the design of products, kind of method)

Take the example of the highly competitive airline industry. The digital age has empowered customers who have a wide choice of airlines and fares. In such a marketplace, it is not easy to cultivate customer loyalty and display sustained growth unless it delivers unique benefits without incurring excessive costs. It is therefore imperative for the organisation

to establish unambiguous operations performance objectives and achieve them.

## Quality, speed and dependability

To differentiate itself from its rivals, an airline can offer superior service. This is possible if quality is a key operations performance objective. The quality of in-flight food is an integral part of such superior service. However, this is not straightforward. Preparing food is not an airline’s core function. Therefore, the airline must select an external catering firm, and establish quality standards for the food it supplies. Demand forecasting is difficult. The supplier must be able to produce fresh food, and create the right number of meals in under six hours. The lead-time for distributing the meals to the aircraft is less than one hour. For this reason, speed and dependability in physical distribution are equally important operations performance objectives. Since delivery of food to the end-consumer involves personal interaction between the passenger and the cabin crew, soft dimensions such as courtesy, communication and friendliness are as important as the quality of food. This whole set of physical activities and processes – when performed well – create a high-quality customer experience. The significance of operations cannot be under-estimated because it creates customer loyalty, and as a result, a steady stream of revenue emerges.

Resolving ‘what’, ‘when’, ‘where’, ‘who’ and ‘how’ questions help in planning and design of operations in terms of location, capacity and facilities. As mentioned earlier, throughput time is also a critical factor. These are some of the reasons why the in-flight catering firms locate their operations near the airports. Location is a strategic decision in this industry. It helps the catering firm to meet the requirements of its customer (the airline), and the airline to satisfy its customers (the passengers). When end-consumers perceive the benefits positively, it helps the airline differentiate itself from its rivals.

However, planning, designing and managing operations are not without trade-offs. For instance, if quality cannot be achieved at a cost, that becomes a barrier to offering a competitive price. Also, location creates a ‘quantitative limit’ on the organisation’s capacity. For example, a single catering facility can produce only

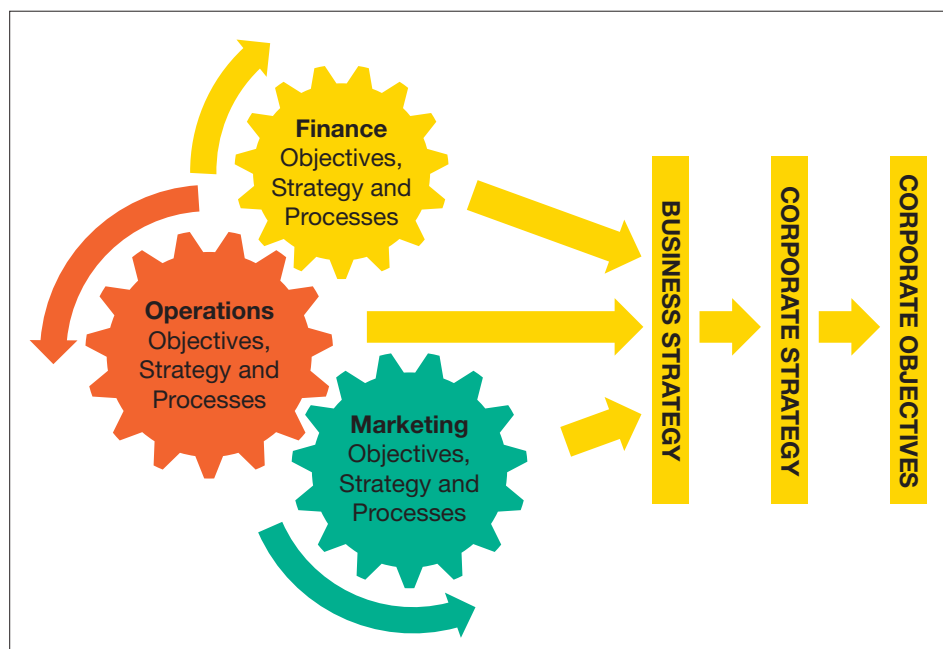


Figure 1: The operations function and corporate objective

Continues over

a certain number of meals. Similarly, a barber shop can only accommodate a certain number of employees, and carry out only a certain number of haircuts in one hour. The capacity of operations can only be increased by increasing facilities, which requires further investment.

### The importance of cost efficiency

Cost efficiency is an important operations performance objective because lower costs make a positive contribution to the firm's operating profit. Cost efficiency can also help an organisation undercut its competitors.

Reducing waste in operations lowers cost. However, this must be done consistently, and may require a culture of continuous improvement in the organisation. Managers at IKEA understand this. The Swedish company is a pioneer in flatpack furniture, and a market leader in its industry. IKEA not only sells competitively

priced furniture and home products, but also sells food in its in-store cafeteria to 600 million retail customers worldwide.

The food operation generates sales of more than US\$2bn. To reduce costs arising from waste, IKEA recently launched an initiative called 'Food is Precious'. By adopting the strategy of employee participation borne out of a sense of ownership and pride in reducing waste, IKEA has managed to save more than US\$1m in the past few months. The organisation has set a target of reducing this cost by 50 per cent by the year 2020.

There is a direct link between cost and quality. The firm that offers fit-for-purpose, high-quality products at a competitive price experiences an increase in sales and market share. However, when quality standards are not met, the organisation incurs 'cost of poor quality' (COPQ). When COPQ exceeds a threshold, the organisation may fail.

Takata is a good example of this failure. The 80-year-old Japanese company was the global market leader in automobile airbags, a safety product that requires highest standards of fit-for-purpose quality. However, over many years, Takata consistently failed to meet the expected quality. This led to the production of poor-quality airbags that caused serious accidents for motorists. The company was forced to pay US\$1bn in a lawsuit settlement, and many of its key executives faced criminal charges. Takata recently filed for bankruptcy and ceased operations.

The car giant Honda – also one of Takata's key customers – has been forced to pay US\$605m compensation to its customers who bought cars fitted with Takata airbags. The economic damage experienced by Honda underscores the importance of selecting good suppliers, and setting their operations performance objectives so that standards are

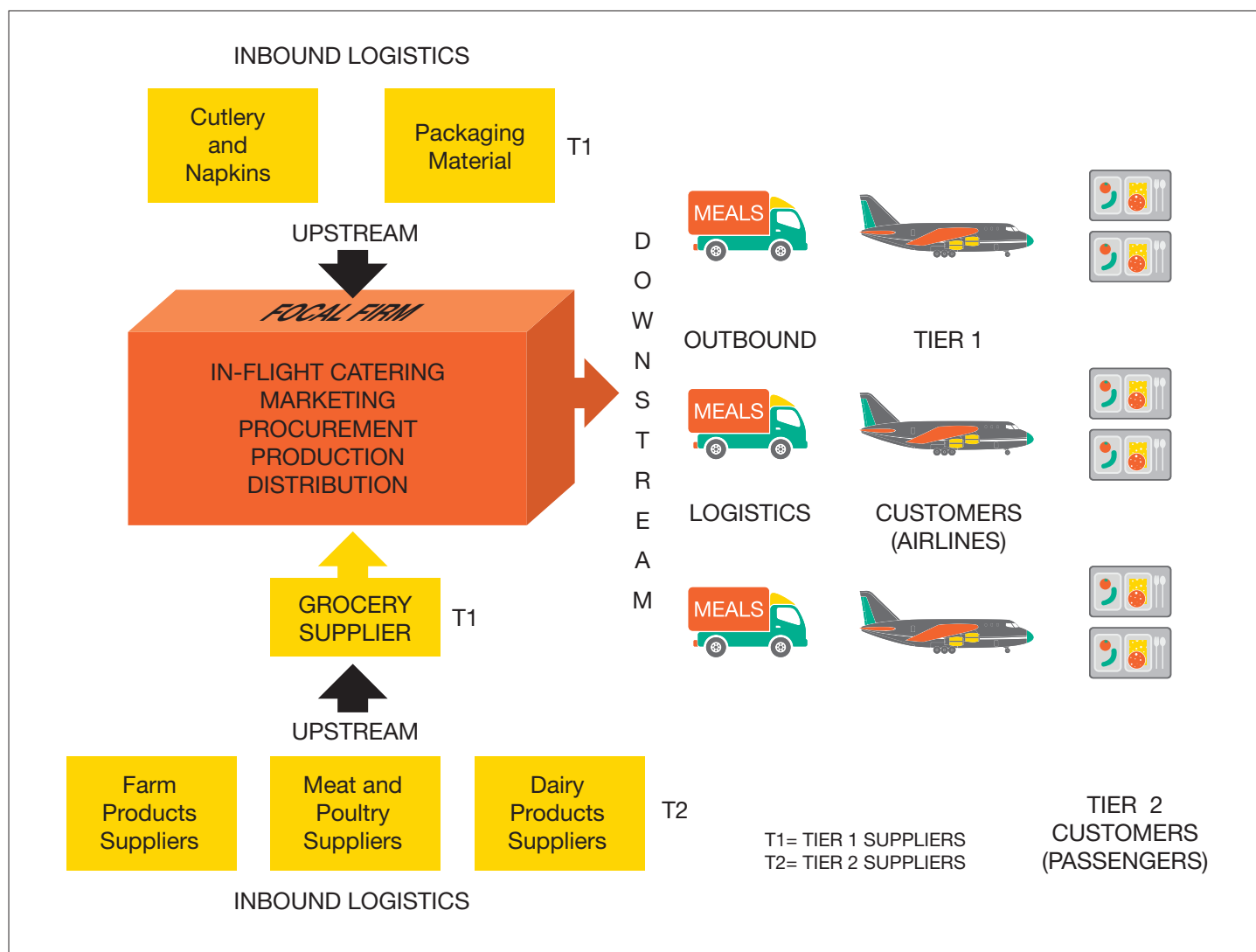


Figure 2: Supply chain of an in-flight catering firm – a simple illustration

maintained and risk of economic and/or reputational loss is reduced.

## Competitive advantage through supply chain management

In today's fast-paced business environment, competition mounts quickly as rival brands enter the markets. Products may have a short lifecycle and margins dwindle if wage and energy costs are increasing. In response to these threats, many organisations exploit the opportunities that arise from globalisation and information and communication technology (ICT), and then make the strategic decision to 'buy' finished products instead of manufacturing themselves. In these set-ups, operations strategy is focused on careful identification, assessment and selection of suppliers. Since instant information-sharing is now a 'norm', and geography is no longer a limitation to the movement of materials and information, sourcing from distant suppliers is becoming much more efficient.


Swedish firm Hennes & Mauritz AB (H&M) is just one example of an organisation that competes by building an efficient and effective supply chain. Clothing is designed by a team of 150 in-house designers, but then these designs are transformed into wearable items of clothing in factories, operated by external suppliers based

in low-wage countries that have large skilled workforces and raw materials such as cotton. Therefore, H&M manages an intricate chain of suppliers at multiple tiers. Procurement – whether from raw cotton suppliers, producers of fabric, manufacturers of clothes or providers of third party logistics (3PL) – are of strategic importance in its operations.

The constant aim of supply chain management is to source material, finished goods and services of the right quality, from the right supplier in the right quantity, at the right price and time. The aim is a seamless, well-functioning pipeline to ensure that products reach outlets at the lowest possible cost, and are fit for consumption, so that end-customers are satisfied.

## Conclusion

An organisation, whether it is a start-up or an established business, requires a sound competitive strategy devised from deft analysis. However, an organisation can only realise its intended strategy if it excels in its operations. It is imperative for it to have unambiguous operations performance objectives that are aligned with its chosen competitive strategy. Cost efficiency, speed, dependability and quality are some of the most important, but these objectives are achieved through an acceptable level of trade-off. Globalisation and ICT have created

a landscape in which many firms have the choice of 'doing' or 'buying' aspects of their operations. For many large Western organisations, divestment from in-house production operations is becoming a 'norm' and competitive advantage is created by superior capabilities in product design and supply chain management. 

You can study Operations Management in depth with our updated Level 5 Business Management qualification.

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## Glossary

**Competitive strategy** is an actionable plan devised by a firm to gain competitive advantage.

**Competitive advantage** is an organisation's edge over its rivals. According to Michael Porter, two key sources of competitive advantage are low costs and superior benefits.

**Cost leadership** intends to achieve competitive advantage for a firm through superior cost efficiencies with relation to competitors. This strategy, when realised, allows the firm to achieve price leadership in the market.

**Cost of poor quality** are preventive, evaluative or remedial costs that are incurred because of defects and shortfalls in products during pre-production, production and post-production stages.

**Differentiation** intends to achieve

competitive advantage for a firm through superior product/service. This strategy, when realised, allows the firm to gain high margins by the customer's willingness to pay a premium price.

**Industry** is a collection of firms that serve the marketplace with similar products or service.

**Intended strategy** is an actionable plan that is created by a firm's deliberate analysis of its external environment, internal resources and stakeholder preferences.

**Operations** is the system that includes activities and processes to source inputs from a chain of suppliers, transform inputs into outputs, and deliver the output to the market in a manner that satisfies a customer's requirements.

**Operations strategy** is the configuration of operations resources and capabilities adopted by the firm to

make a direct and positive contribution to corporate objectives and business strategy. Operations managers take into consideration other functional strategies and business strategy when devising operations strategy.

**Quality** is the collection of product attributes that satisfy either explicit or latent requirements of customers.

**Realised strategy** is the firm's ability to bring its intended strategy to fruition.

**Supply chain** is the seamless flow of material from the last tier of supplier into the transformation system and onto the final tier of customers as the result of the integrating activities and processes carried out by the firm that lie at the centre of the chain.

**Trade-off** is creating an outcome by balancing multiple factors that are equally important but cannot be achieved at the same time.



## ABE ALUMNI PROFILE:

# Olushola Salami

CEO/Managing Partner, A Square Consulting

Olushola has his own business and a career he loves in Nigeria.  
He tells how it all started with his ABE course in London

I am from Epe, in Nigeria, and am happily married with two children.

I have worked in various business organisations and industries including retailing, hospitality and consultancy. However, I am now CEO/managing partner of my own business.

A Square Consulting is a training, development and consultancy organisation. We provide services to business people, private organisations, government and non-governmental organisations.

Our aim is to build a quality and efficient

workforce across Nigeria and the international business environment. We offer strategic business management, development and a wide range of complementary services to clients.

We strive to transform and develop human resources in public and private

Abuja, Nigeria:  
Traffic in the  
downtown area  
of Nigeria's  
capital city



organisations and pride ourselves on giving excellent service delivery towards building a workforce capable of effectively developing/managing projects in all sectors of the economy.

My role covers recruitment, facilitation, lecturing, programme management, operations and overseeing the general daily activities of the organisation.

I would never have imagined this career trajectory because my undergraduate degree was a BSc in Geography (Social Sciences), from the University of Ibadan in Nigeria.

However, my ABE journey started at Greenwich London College in the United Kingdom, where I completed an Advanced Diploma course in ABE Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Management (2007) and an Advanced Diploma in Human Resources

Management (2008) before going to the London School of Commerce for my Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration and Management (2009) and finally, the University of Wales (now Cardiff Metropolitan University), where I completed my MBA in 2010. From this point, the love and passion for business developed and this led me to a business management and consultancy services career, the path I now enjoy so much.

Studying ABE courses greatly helped my career progression as it gave me opportunities to explore the dynamism in the changing global business environment. It has definitely contributed to my life experience as I now use most of the things I learned in the classroom on a daily basis.

My advice to new ABE learners is that they should take all the stages of their studies seriously because you never know

where you will find yourself in the future careerwise.

Also, my ABE courses/certificates paved the way for me to become a member of the Chartered Management Institute in the UK and have created lots of opportunities for me in Nigeria and the West African sub-region. I now belong to many professional organisations widely recognised on the continent. 



Olushola Salami

**The love and passion for business developed and this led me to a business management and consultancy services career**





# Get set for interview

In the last issue of *Focus*, we shared some tips about how to make the most of your CV or résumé. **Linda Wilkin** shares her tips for the next stage – the interview

You're ambitious. You're ABE qualified. But, in a competitive job market, how do you stand out from the crowd and turn that all-important interview into a job offer?

As someone whose career spans more than 30 years, I have had a fair bit of experience as both interviewee and interviewer. When you are accepted for an interview, my first piece of advice is to remember the Benjamin Franklin quote: "By failing to prepare, you are preparing

to fail". He probably wasn't thinking about job interviews at the time, but no saying could be more apt.

## Before your interview

- Re-read the job description and research the company.
- Think about the questions you are likely to be asked. Prepare your answers in a way that highlights your skills and
- personality, and then apply these to the role. Most employers like to see that you are ambitious, but don't give the impression that you'll leave if you're not promoted in the first month. Talk about taking ownership of the role and making a difference in the department.
- Get a friend to give you a mock interview, or practise in front of a mirror. Make sure your answers aren't just



about you, but about how you can apply your skills to the job.

- There's lots of advice about good answers to typical interview questions on the internet, so have a look at these but use your own thoughts as well.

## On the day

- Turn up on time. Being late gives a poor impression to the interviewer, you'll feel flustered and the whole interview gets off to a bad start. Allow an extra half an hour or so and, if you're there early, it gives you some extra time to think about what you want to say.
- Dress appropriately. Be smart and tidy with clean shoes, hair and nails. Every detail helps to create the right impression.
- Make sure you have the name of the person you need to ask for when you get there. This sounds obvious, but it's a surprisingly easy mistake to make.

**Prepare your answers in a way that highlights your skills and personality, and then apply these to the role**

## The interviewer

This is the unknown element of any interview. Here's a lowdown on the types you might encounter and how best to handle them:

### Friendly

Luckily, most people want to put you at your ease and recognise this is the best way to get to know a candidate. Most interviewers you meet should, hopefully, be friendly.

**Tip:** There is a risk that you can get side-tracked by pleasantries and lose focus. If you find you are talking about things unrelated to work, steer the conversation back to the role and your suitability for it.

### Unenthusiastic

This type has no interest in creating a connection with you. They just want to get through the interview and fill the vacancy. Expect less casual talk and more focus on business.

**Tip:** Don't waste time trying to get this type of interviewer to like you. Be pleasant but simply convey your work ethic and your professionalism. Build their respect by making your answers as clear and concise as possible. However, be careful not to let their attitude stop you from showing enthusiasm for the role, or rush you into finishing without providing a full account of your skills.

## Intimidating

Sometimes, an employer will want to see how you react under pressure, which gives rise to this type of interviewer. They may try to put you off by telling you that you've got your facts wrong or by grilling you for details you don't have to hand.

**Tip:** Be honest about what you don't know, and be very clear and detailed with the answers that you do know. Above all, keep calm and don't let them scare you into giving rushed, un-thought-out answers.

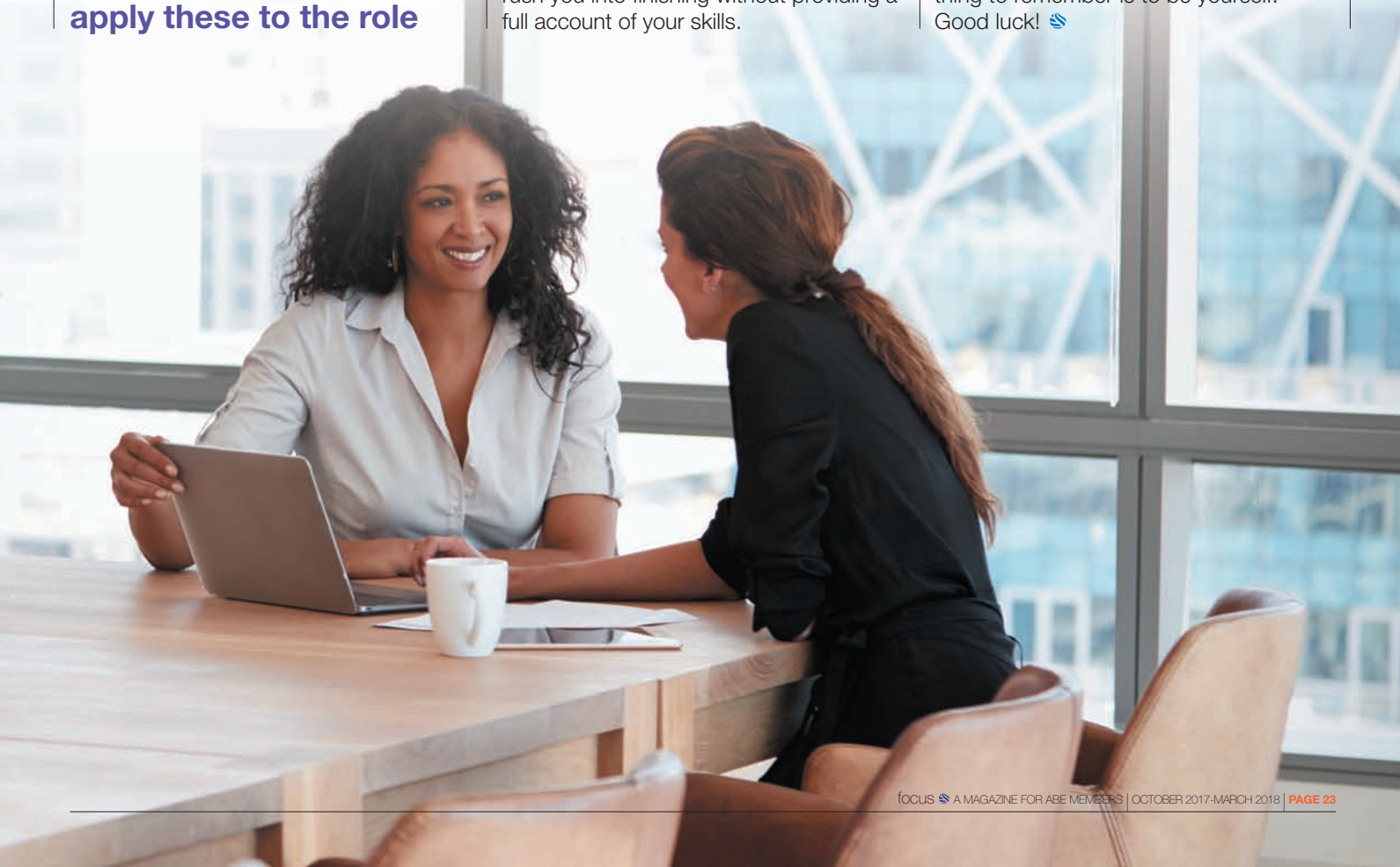
## Inexperienced know-nothings

Though unusual, this type of interviewer can frustrate you by asking naive questions or demonstrating a lack of understanding of the role.

**Tip:** The trick with these types is to make sure you cover all relevant areas, even if they are not asked about, but without sounding condescending. You need to be patient and may have to answer irrelevant questions.

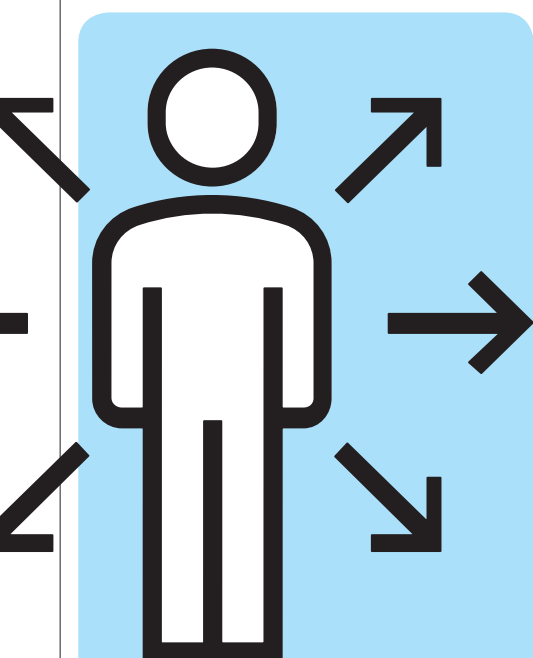
## Finally

Try not to view a job interview as an ordeal. Instead, see it as a challenge, and a chance to shine and show what you know. Keep calm: if you are prepared and professional, the only other thing to remember is to be yourself. Good luck! 🍀



# ABE members'

Early this year we undertook some market research into the career paths of ABE qualification holders (alumni). Some were recent graduates at Level 4 or 5, still on their ABE journey, while others had completed many years ago. Around 2,000 people took part in the research, and here is what they told us...



**ABE alumni  
are diverse:  
more than**

**100**

**different fields or  
sectors were named**

**ABE alumni  
are adaptable:  
more than**

**1,000**

**different job titles  
were given**

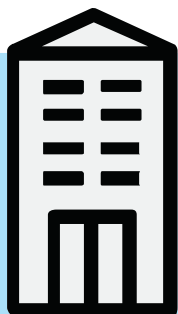


**ABE alumni  
are global:  
Responses  
came from  
more than**

**70**

**countries and every  
continent (except  
Antarctica)**

# careers survey



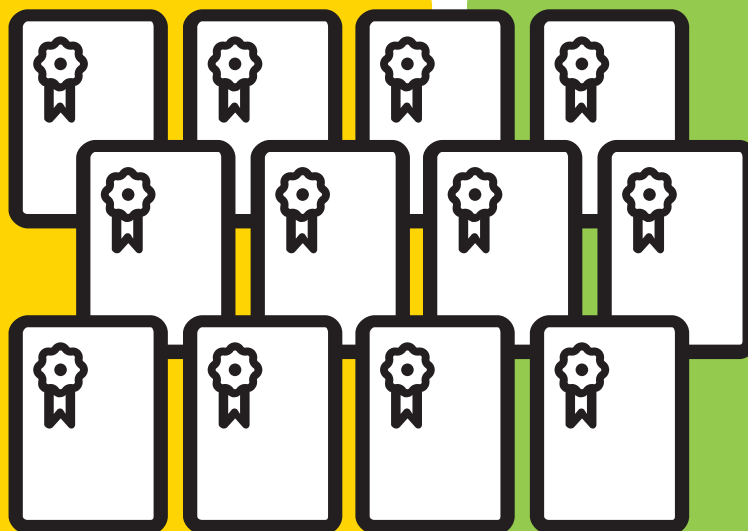
More than

**65%**

of alumni are working at organisations that employ more than 50 people, with

**45%**

working at organisations larger than 250 people



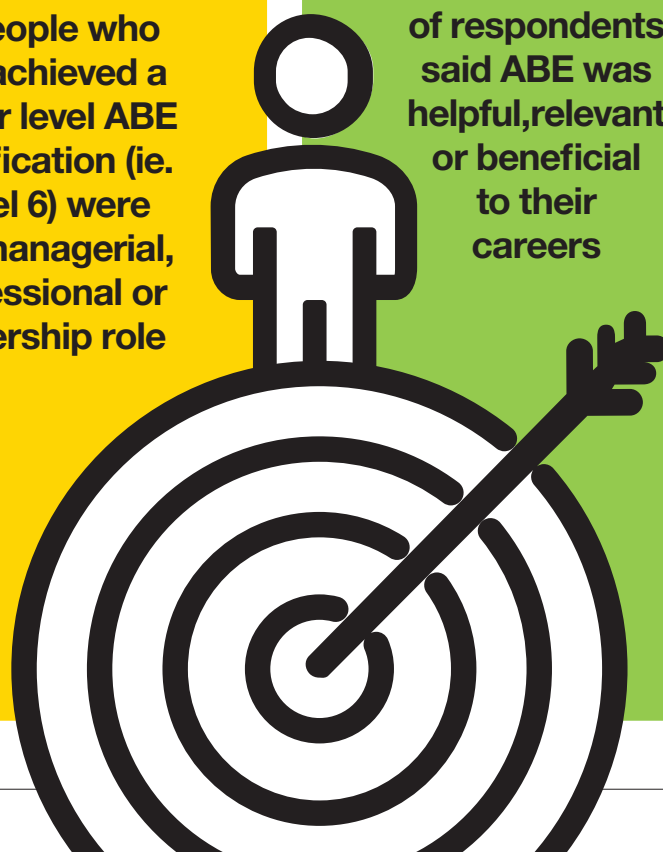
More than

**70%**

of people who had achieved a higher level ABE qualification (ie. Level 6) were in a managerial, professional or leadership role

**97%**

of respondents said ABE was helpful, relevant or beneficial to their careers





# Meet the ABE award winners

ABE Top Paper Awards are given to the most successful candidates worldwide. Below are extracts from longer testimonials sent in by some of our prizewinners. You can read the full stories online at [www.abeuk.com/blog](http://www.abeuk.com/blog)

You can see the full list of Top Paper Award winners from December 2016 on page 30. Winners from June 2017 will be featured in the next issue.



**Samantha Warnahalu,  
Sri Lanka – Winner of  
the President's Prize,  
studied at the  
Academy of Higher  
Learning**

Science graduate and  
banking executive

Samantha chose ABE when her employer listed it as a qualification that would lead to promotion. We are delighted to say that, on receipt of the President's Prize, Samantha also gained her promotion at work. Congratulations, Samantha!

*"It is an exciting experience for me from the science background. The way the lessons are structured and the way my lecturer presented the subject in the classroom – and the connection he made to my real work experience – made my learning very interesting and appealing."*



**Michael Obeng,  
Ghana – Top Paper  
Award in Business  
Plan for Enterprise  
Start Up /  
Understanding  
Entrepreneurship,  
studied at Pentecost  
University College**

After recommendations, Michael chose ABE because he saw it was a quick route to help him achieve his aims; in the long term, he plans to become a strategic sales manager.

*"The best thing about ABE is that its courses are practical. I have gained skills and tactics in the area of personal selling. I found putting myself in practical scenarios and conducting research using the internet helped me a lot in studying this course."*



**Kulsum Nasser,  
Tanzania – Top Paper  
Award in  
Entrepreneurship and  
Business  
Development,  
studied at Financial  
Training Centre**

Financial Associate Kulsum loved the fact that ABE enabled her to complete from Level 4 to Level 6 in just two and half years, and online she shares some great study tips. She plans to use her ABE qualifications to progress onto a Masters degree, then gain some corporate experience before becoming an entrepreneur. *"I think the best part about ABE is that it's always evolving to provide better and more relevant qualifications to students. The public acknowledges that ABE graduates offer a great value proposition to potential employers, because of the wide range of competences and knowledge they acquire during their studies."*



**Kariah Medard, St  
Lucia – Top Paper  
Award in Introduction  
to Accounting,  
studied at National  
Research &  
Development  
Foundation**

Kariah has already found her studies benefiting her work. She praises the high level of tuition provided by her college and has found ABE Business Management fuelled her ambition to run her own business. She is now studying for a BSc in Business Management.

*"I knew that I made the right move choosing to study with ABE. From the courses that I have completed, I have been able to*

*apply concepts and rules to my job on a daily basis."*



**Leah Chiwaula,  
Botswana – Top  
Paper Award in  
Personnel  
Administration  
studied at Gaborone  
University College  
of Law**

Education graduate Leah plans to use her ABE studies to help her run her own school.

*"The best thing about studying ABE is that it equips someone with skills that adapt to any workplace and it helps to develop a spirit of entrepreneurship."*



**Robert  
Kambwembwe,  
Malawi – Top Paper  
Award in Managing  
People, studied at  
The University of  
Malawi Management  
Centre**

Robert works for the Malawi government as a curator for the Museum of Malawi and holds a degree in Humanities. He now plans to progress to the highest level of qualification in the field of human resources.

*"I chose ABE for many reasons. For example, I conducted research on the exam boards that provide Human Resource Management (HRM) programmes and I discovered your diplomas were rich in content and offered a good grounding for a proper career in HRM. ABE is a reputable and competitive board that offers internationally recognised qualifications that equip students with valuable skills to perform their duties effectively."*



**Cathryn Carew, Guyana – Top Paper Award in Personnel Administration, studied at The Business School**

Cathryn is the Human Resources Officer for

one of Guyana's most prestigious shipping companies and she's mother to four children. She chose ABE because it was flexible enough to combine with her busy work and family life.

*"I have learned how to link my experience with the knowledge gained and have a greater appreciation for the 'whats' and 'whys' of management, a broader perspective on why certain decisions are taken by management, and have grown my knowledge base and understanding."*



**Rubinia Joseph, St Lucia – Top Paper Award in Employment Relations, studied at National Research and Development Foundation**

For Special Services police officer Rubinia, a lack of funds meant she had to leave education after high school. Now, ABE is enabling her to realise her dreams of higher-level study. She plans to use her Diploma to gain a promotion, go to university and eventually become a successful entrepreneur.

*"This course has allowed me to learn better management of my time, organise more and think more critically. I have also sharpened my analytical skills. The best thing about studying with ABE is that it allows freedom of choice, and flexibility with time."*



**Pradesh Jaimungalsingh, Trinidad & Tobago – Top Paper Award in Strategic Human Resource Management, studied at School of Business and Computer Science – San Fernando**

Administration Manager, Pradesh, had always regretted dropping out of university when he was younger and found his lack of professional qualifications were limiting his career opportunities. After noticing how his colleagues gained promotion and developed through studying with ABE, he realised it offered the ideal solution for him to progress professionally and academically.

*"I would say that studying ABE has given me a lot more confidence in my job. I learned theory that I can apply and understand in the workplace. I am able to speak with authority on many functions."*



**Sabita Lalbiharie, Trinidad & Tobago – Top Paper Award in Project Management, studied at CTS College of Business and**

#### Computer Science

Graphic artist, Sabita, plans to become a business leader and entrepreneur. She has developed many skills during her course and online provides some top study tips.

*"Registering with CTS for the ABE course of study was one of the best decisions I have made, financially and career wise."*



**Lucius Dan, Malawi – Top Paper Award in Principles of Marketing, studied at Lilongwe Technical College**

Marketing strategist, Lucius, chose ABE

because he feels the qualifications will help him advance his career. He plans to gain a few more years' work experience before progressing to a Masters and then launching his own business.

*"Having an ABE graduate in an organisation here is taken by employers as a source of success. ABE students learn both practical and theory, and are very innovative and strategic."*



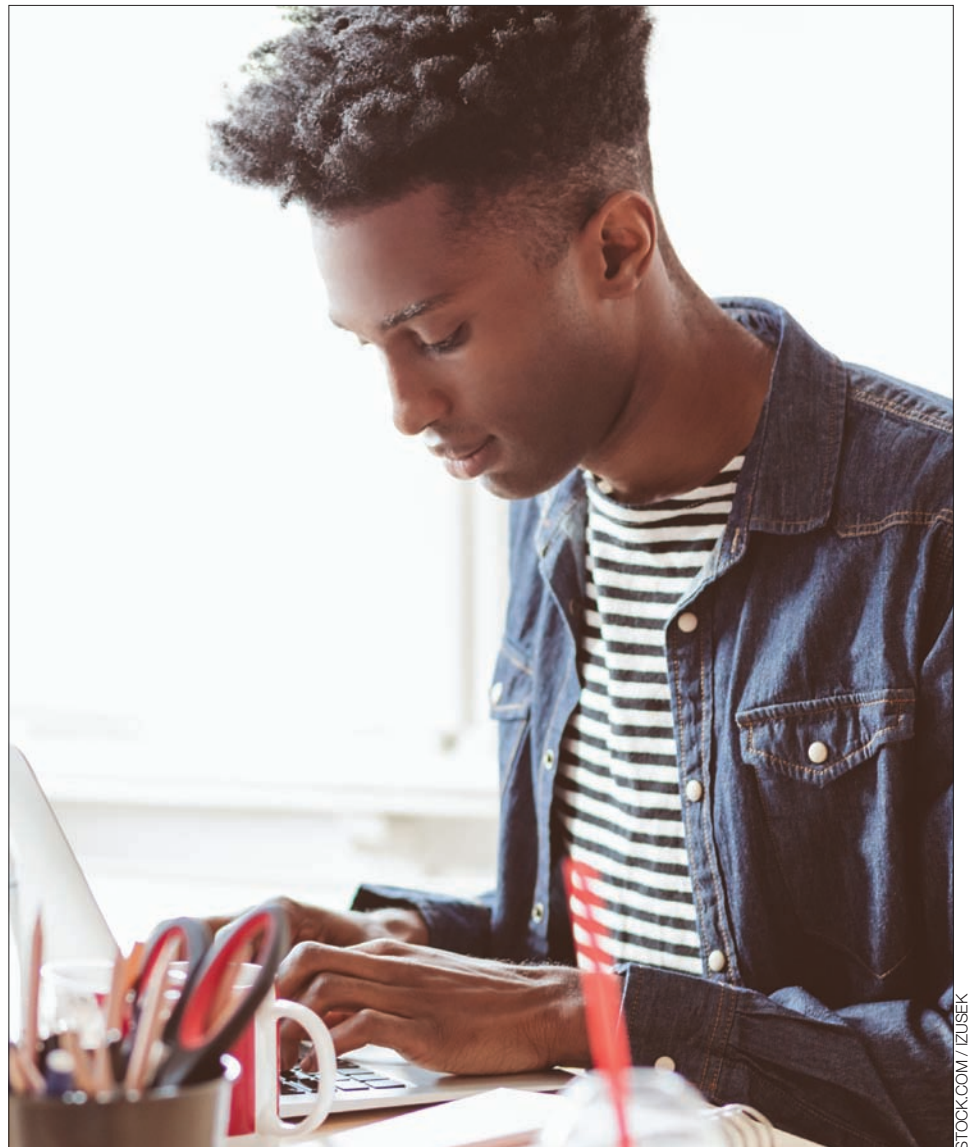
**Ruth Teye, Ghana – Top Paper Award in People Planning and Resourcing, studied at Pentecost University College**

Ruth plans to use her qualifications to

become an HR consultant or a beauty and fashion entrepreneur.

*"I chose ABE because I wanted a professional qualification that helps you to*

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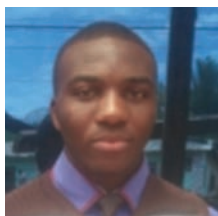


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climb the academic ladder at a quick pace. The majority of people who know about ABE see it as a professional course that enhances one's ability and develops work skills and competencies."



**Nformi Damien Tancho, Cameroon** – Top Paper Award in International Business Finance and Planning, studied at Oxford University College

Accounts Clerk, Nformi, has ambitions to further his academic development and professional financial career. "ABE is classified as one of the best and faster-to-achieve programmes in Cameroon now. I am the second ABE holder to be employed by my employer. They rank ABE as the best qualification because of the outstanding performance and skills we possess."



**Yoon May Lwin, Myanmar** – Top Paper Award in Financial Accounting, studied at Myanmar Human Resources Co.

After a gap year, Yoon had ABE recommended to her as one of the best local study options, and she found it had many great selling points. "ABE lives up to its values and offers confidence in the education we receive

because it is globally recognised. I also like the fact that ABE is flexible. We can take the exam as many times as we like and we can choose not to take the exams for all subjects in one period. Everyone is different and has different capabilities."



**Aashni Bhuva, Kenya** – Top Paper Award in Economics for Business, studied at SCLP Samaj Australian College

Aashni followed in the footsteps of her three sisters when she chose ABE. She plans to specialise in accountancy and run her own business.

"The majority of businesses here in Kenya require job candidates to have managerial skills to qualify for top positions in their organisations. The ABE concept goes hand in hand with the skills required for almost any job candidate."



**Christian Tetteh, Ghana** – Top Paper Award in Sales Management, studied at Pentecost University College

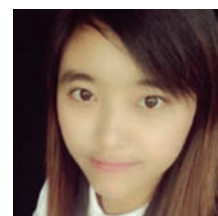
Christian chose ABE because he wanted to differentiate himself in the workplace. He plans to develop as a marketing manager and entrepreneur. "A good thing about ABE is that it broadens

one's scope in the field of business and work. I have gained a lot of skills in managing the customer relationship."



**Khant Naing, Myanmar** – Top Paper Award in Quantitative Methods for Business Management, studied at Myanmar Human Resources (MHR) Co.

Khant originally studied medicine but found his heart wasn't in it. After searching around, he found the ABE course at MHR offered exactly what he was looking for at an affordable price. "I had much support from teachers and friends from MHR, studied regularly and, finally, I got the highest marks in Quantitative Methods for Business Management."



**Su Sandi, Myanmar** – Top Paper Award in Strategic Marketing Management, studied at PS Business School

Pharmacy graduate, Su, realised she needed to upgrade her skills when she started working in the banking sector. Her sister recommended ABE as the best option to provide the business expertise she required. "My ambition is to become an outstanding CEO in a reputable organisation. I believe that knowledge from ABE can help me a lot in my future development."



**Shushelia Ragoobar, Guyana** – Top Paper Award in Principles of Business Law, studied at Nations School of Business & Management

Shushelia felt opportunities were limited in her rural home and wanted to develop a career in business. She plans to progress with her studies while working, and then use her skills to make a real difference to society as an entrepreneur. "I chose ABE because I have a passion and interest in the business environment. I wanted to have in my possession an internationally recognised and mobile qualification."



**Hnin Yadana Htet Htet Tun, Myanmar** – Top Paper Award in Introduction to Quantitative Method, studied at Myanmar Human Resources Co.

Initially a novice to business, Hnin is now working towards her MBA while helping



new ABE students and continuing with her ABE studies.

*"I believe that ABE qualification holders can get good positions in successful companies, and this will be a good help in my career pathway. That's why I chose ABE."*



**Hailyanna Mader, Trinidad and Tobago – Top Paper Award in Human Resource Management, studied at the School of Business and Computer Science**

Hailyanna likes the fact that ABE is flexible enough to allow her to combine study with her job at a bank. Long term, she plans to run her own business in fashion and beauty.

*"ABE helps to create business executives and enhance the knowledge, skills and abilities of professionals, by offering a wide range of qualifications relevant to the business world... These courses are of a high quality and are very much affordable."*



**Anaka Akemecha, Cameroon – Top Paper Award in Systems Management and Internal Financial Controls, studied at Yaounde**

#### Business School

University Administrator, Anaka, plans to progress to a Masters degree and use his studies to forge ahead in his career.

*"ABE provides resource material for study which is very useful and I have gained many skills since I started this programme – for example, preparation of budgets for the financial year, auditing information systems, preparing financial statements and management of people."*



**Caleb Kasentin, Ghana – Top Paper Award in Introduction to Travel, Tourism and Hospitality, studied at Pentecost University College**

Caleb has enjoyed the creativity and innovation of his studies and plans to use his knowledge to become a successful entrepreneur.

**"A skill I gained from studying with ABE has been applying the knowledge acquired in a work environment and using it in solving problems"**

**Emmanuel Duku**

*"I chose to study ABE because it is a short route to attain a degree, as well as a professional qualification, recognised globally."*



**Kishan Rathod, Kenya – Top Paper Award in Marketing Information Systems, studied at Jaffery Institute of Professional Studies**

Kishan has studied both Business Management

and Marketing so that he develops all-round expertise and can choose his future path. He thanks his lecturer, Mr Evans Onditi (also an ABE alumni), for helping him to achieve his award.

*"I chose ABE because I wanted to attain a qualification that is recognised both locally and internationally, and which would allow me to get exemptions so that I am able to complete my Bachelors studies at university level."*



**Emmanuel Duku, Ghana – Top Paper Award in IT in Hospitality and Tourism Operations, studied at Pentecost University College**

Office Clerk, Emmanuel,

saw that ABE qualifications would offer him the opportunity to work in many fields. He is already applying his studies to his job and, long term, plans to become a hospitality manager.

*"A skill I gained from studying with ABE has been applying the knowledge acquired in a work environment and using it in solving problems. My leadership and management skills have really been improved."*



**Jemima Laurence, Malaysia – Top Paper Award in Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Operations Management (Self-study)**

Jemima likes that ABE

enables her to study at her own pace and she plans to use her qualification to top-up to a degree.

*"I have acquired a great amount of useful and important business skills, such as customer care, analytical skills and handling complaints in a more professional manner, and this has allowed me to expand my knowledge in the tourism sector and the current issues around the world."*



**Paul Kandiwo, Zambia – Top Paper Awards in IT in Hospitality and Tourism Operations / Information Systems Development (self-study)**

Business consultant and enterprise architect Paul found his ABE studies so inspiring he went on to take every ABE Diploma, in addition to gaining other qualifications, including an MBA. He is currently completing an MSc in Information Systems.

*"I settled on ABE as a launching qualification because of its course content (approach, focus and relevance to the business environment, both domestically and internationally), flexibility in study, and the reasonable rates of exams in comparison with other professional bodies."*



**Victor Peacock-Sawyer, Sierra Leone – Top Paper Awards in Human Resource Development / Performance Management and Reward, studied**

**at Institute of Public Administration and Management**

Victor was initially planning to study law, but chose ABE after recommendations led him to review the syllabus.

*"The unique and contemporary syllabus provides the requisite competencies to attain employability in the labour market, no matter how tight."*



**Anjalie Kimberly Simboo, Trinidad and Tobago – Top Paper Awards in Introduction to Quantitative Methods/ Quantitative Methods for Business**

**Management/The Business Environment, studied at CTS College of Business and Computer Science**

Anjalie chose ABE because it is widely recognised in Trinidad. She plans to use her studies to advance her ambition to work in business and run her own gourmet cafe.


*"ABE has assisted me in becoming an increasingly independent and efficient budding professional. Having a positive outlook is the first step in being successful at anything you aspire to accomplish."*



**Tanaka Moyo, Zimbabwe – Top Paper Award in Travel, Tourism and Hospitality studied at Trust Academy**

Tanaka chose ABE because he felt it

would give him the knowledge he needed to realise his ambition to be an entrepreneur in the tourism sector.

*"I am thinking about applying for a job at a hotel right here in Zimbabwe, then maybe start my own business using the knowledge I have accumulated."* 

# Congratulations to ABE Top Paper Award winners

ABE believes in rewarding success. After each exam session, we honour the highest achievers in individual units with a special 'Top Paper Award'. The President's Prize is awarded to the student sitting all five Level 6 course units in one examination session and gaining the highest aggregate mark at Grades A\*, A and B.

Listed below are the award winners from the December 2016 exam session. Many congratulations to all. It is a great achievement.

## The President's Prize Winner

Winner's name	Country of study	Centre
Samanthi Girly Warnahalu	Sri Lanka	Academy of Higher Learning

## Top Paper Awards Winners

Name	Country	Study Centre	Top Paper Award Unit
Mrs Cathryn Carew	Guyana	The Business School	Personnel Administration
Mr Thato Lawrence B Phiri	Botswana	Byte Size College of Computer & Business Studies	Introduction to Quantitative Methods
Mr Kedumetse Kedumetse	Botswana	Byte Size College of Computer & Business Studies	Introduction to Travel, Tourism and Hospitality
Ms Fathmath Nazaha	Maldives	Clique College	Personnel Information Systems
Ms Aishath Aufa Abdulla	Maldives	Clique College	Contemporary Hospitality Management / Sustainable Tourism, Planning and Development
Ms Aishath Ashna Abdul Rasheed	Maldives	Clique College	Introduction to Marketing
Miss Anjalie Kimberly Simboo	Trinidad & Tobago	CTS College of Business and Computer Science	Quantitative Methods for Business Management / The Business Environment
Miss Sabita Lalbiharie	Trinidad & Tobago	CTS College of Business and Computer Science	Project Management
Miss Kulsum Murtaza Nasser	Tanzania	Financial Training Centre	Entrepreneurship and Business Development
Miss Leah Chiwaula	Botswana	Gaborone University College of Law	Personnel Administration
Miss Tiny Manyepedza	Botswana	Gaborone University College of Law	Introduction to Business Communication
Mr Shanganani Dennis Mawelo	Botswana	Imperial School of Business and Science	International Travel, Tourism and Hospitality
Miss Emmanuella Olive Ayong Abena	Cameroon	Institute of Professional Studies	International Business Finance and Planning
Mr Victor Olufemi Peacock-Sawyer	Sierra Leone	Institute of Public Administration and Management	Performance Management and Reward
Mr Senesie A Momoh	Sierra Leone	Institute of Public Administration and Management	Information Systems Applications for Business
Mr Kishan Kaushik Rathod	Kenya	Jaffery Institute of Professional Studies	Marketing Information Systems
Mr Lucius Dan	Malawi	Lilongwe Technical College	Principles of Marketing
Mr Festus Agbi	Nigeria	Market Space	International Marketing
Miss Hnin Yadana Htet Htet Tun	Myanmar	Myanmar Human Resources Co	Introduction to Quantitative Methods
Mr Khant Naing	Myanmar	Myanmar Human Resources Co	Quantitative Methods for Business Management
Miss Yoon May Lwin	Myanmar	Myanmar Human Resources Co	Financial Accounting

Miss Rubinia Joseph	St Lucia	National Research & Development Foundation	Employment Relations
Miss Kariah Medard	St Lucia	National Research & Development Foundation	Introduction to Accounting
Miss Shushelia Ragoobar	Guyana	Nations School of Business & Management	Principles of Business Law
Ms Oratilwe Bathoeng	Botswana	New Era College	Introduction to Business
Miss Fathima Rizla Mohammed Uduman Ali	Sri Lanka	Oxford College of Business	Economics for Business / Organisational Behaviour
Mr Nformi Damien Tancho	Cameroon	Oxford University College	International Business Finance and Planning
Mr Mphatso Kalele	Malawi	Pact College	Managerial Accounting
Miss Emily Siphwe Chirwa	Malawi	Pact College	Managing the Customer Relationship
Mr Emmanuel Dukuh	Ghana	Pentecost University College	IT in Hospitality and Tourism Operations
Miss Ruth Teye	Ghana	Pentecost University College	People Planning and Resourcing
Mr Christian Tetteh	Ghana	Pentecost University College	Sales Management
Mr Caleb Kwesi Kasentin	Ghana	Pentecost University College	Introduction to Travel, Tourism and Hospitality
Mr Michael Obeng	Ghana	Pentecost University College	Business Plan for Enterprise Start Up / Understanding Entrepreneurship
Miss Pham Thi Thanh Hong	Vietnam	Self-study	Corporate Strategy and Planning
Mrs Fadzai Caroline Makhalima	Zimbabwe	Self-study	International Business Case Study
Ms Prestlynne Goredema	Zimbabwe	Self-study	Introduction to Management Information Systems
Ms Jemima Laurence	Malaysia	Self-study	Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Operations Management
Ms Marsha Somar	Trinidad & Tobago	Self-study	Introduction to Business Communication
Ms Pulmattie Rabinchand	Guyana	Self-study	Accounting for Financial Managers
Mr Paul Elias Kandiwo	Zambia	Self-study	Information Systems Development / IT in Hospitality and Tourism Operations
Mr Sebastian Sowela	Zimbabwe	Self-study	Information Systems for Strategic Management
Ms Su Sandi	Myanmar	PS Business School	Strategic Marketing Management
Ms Kadimo Gorata Galeboe	Botswana	Realic Educational Services	Introduction to Business Communication
Miss Hailyanna Mader	Trinidad & Tobago	School of Business & Computer Science	Human Resource Management
Mr Pradesh Jaimungalsingh	Trinidad & Tobago	School of Business and Computer Science – San Fernando	Strategic Human Resource Management
Miss Charlene Claudia Alexander	Trinidad & Tobago	School of Higher Education	Human Resource Management
Ms Pafel Heena Patel	Kenya	SCLP Samaj Australian College	Marketing Policy, Planning and Communication
Miss Kinjal Ravji Jesani	Kenya	SCLP Samaj Australian College	Introduction to Accounting
Miss Aashni Bhuvu	Kenya	SCLP Samaj Australian College	Economics for Business
Mr Umar Cassim	Zimbabwe	Speciss College – Bulawayo Campus	Introduction to Business
Mrs Rutendo Kagondo	Zimbabwe	Speciss College – Bulawayo Campus	Enterprise Start Up
Miss Kaone Osiame	Botswana	Supabrain College	Introduction to Business
Mr Clement Mkandawire	Malawi	The University of Malawi Management Centre	Corporate Finance
Mr Robert Kambwembwe	Malawi	The University of Malawi Management Centre	Managing People
Mr Tanaka Prince Moyo	Zimbabwe	Trust Academy	Travel, Tourism and Hospitality
Mr Zakariah Chapepa	Botswana	UEL Vocational College	Introduction to the World of Computers
Miss Senuri Christina Sumanasekara Arachchige	Kuwait	UK International Training Institute	Managing in Organisations
Mr Anaka Priscod Akemecha	Cameroon	Yaounde Business School	Systems Management and Internal Financial Controls



# Qualifications for ambitious people

You are on the road to success