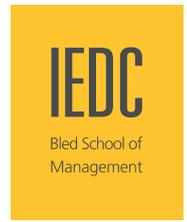


# IEDC Faculty: Learning from the best



*A School with a View*

Date: 22. 5. 2013

Prof. Nancy Adler, visiting professor at IEDC

## “I WORK WITH IEDC, BECAUSE I WANT TO BE A PART OF ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING APPROACHES TO MANAGEMENT ON THE PLANET”

Prof. Nancy J. Adler is the S. Bronfman Chair in Management at McGill University in Montreal, Canada, and visiting professor at IEDC-Bled School of Management (IEDC). She conducts research and consults on global leadership and cross-cultural management. Prof. Adler has authored over 125 articles, produced films, and published 10 books and edited volumes. On the top of her successful professional career in management education, she is also a visual artist, whose paintings are held in private collections worldwide.

Compiled by Tonja Blatnik

Exactly 27 years has passed since the establishment of the IEDC-Bled School of Management. Why did you decide to be part of this story? After all, your primary University – McGill – comes with much longer tradition (190 years).

I first met Prof. Danica Purg, IEDC's founder, at small invitational seminar on strategic international human resource conference in Germany in the 1980s. I immediately knew that her perceptive and insight were unique. I later had a chance to visit IEDC-Bled School of Management (IEDC) to give a guest lecture on leadership artistry and discovered that IEDC had a commitment to making the world a more beautiful place, long before any other business school had even considered such a perspective or goal. IEDC not only understood the power of business and markets, it also understood that combing a commitment to doing well financially by doing good in the world was one of the most powerful business models

imaginable. I chose to work with IEDC because I strongly support their values and approach, and I wanted to be a part of one of the most important and exciting approaches to management on the planet.

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**You are definitely not a traditional university professor. As a visual artist you are working primarily in water-based media. What is the main advantage of painting for you and your students?**

Artistic process is based much more on 'discovery' than simply on planning. Increasingly, we understand that successful businesses, especially in the rapidly changing environment of the 21st century, also base their strategy as much on discovery as on the more structured, traditional business disciplines. Yes, you need to understand economics (in fact, my first degree is in econometrics – mathematical economics), finance, accounting,



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marketing, etc., but that isn't enough. The reason Warren Buffet describes himself as 'an artist, not a businessman' is that his investment process is based on the artist's process of discovery. He sees what others' fail to see. He can imagine possibility where others fail to see it. By bringing artistic processes to managers and management students, I am able to offer them approaches that support them in leading – in creating what others have failed to see and failed to do.

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**The Financial Times introduced you as 'a professor who encourages MBA students to appreciate beauty and not just financial wealth'. Why do you believe this is so important?**

Ultimately, financial success is necessary, but not sufficient for business success. If a business is not financially successful, it will go bankrupt – it will fail to exist, and it will contribute nothing. The goal of business is to offer products and services that fill real needs. Those companies that address the most pressing and important needs in the world engage in much bigger questions than simple financial success. Financial success becomes an outcome; it's not a sole goal. Think of Apple, which became the most valuable company in the world (based on market capitalization) in 2012. Apple didn't ignore technical excellence – it transcended it. Apple, under Steve Jobs' leadership understood that the world craves beauty as well as technical functionality.

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**How do you define your success and the success of (your) students?**

Extraordinary leaders work at the intersection of three important domains. They ask themselves: What am I really good at doing? (What am I skilled at?) What do I love doing? And what is the world's greatest need? My hope and intention is that the managers in my seminars reclaim their ability to do all three; to simultaneously do what they are very good at, what they love doing and that which addresses one of the world's greatest needs. If they do, they will have the courage to lead beautifully. My wish for myself is exactly the same as my wish for the managers in my seminars.

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**What is your favorite memory from the class at IEDC?**

Being invited to paint while another professor was combining a lecture with a piano performance. I was invited to paint the music and its meaning. That certainly is not something I am invited to do with executives at most management schools! And, the two paintings from that performance are now a part of the gallery of paintings hanging on the wall at IEDC.

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**Name three reasons, why companies should invest in general employee talent development, despite the global recession?**

The 21st century is the century of learning. More unique knowledge was created in 2012 than in the prior 5000 years combined. None of us have the luxury of succeeding by continuing to repeat what we did yesterday – even if it led to prior success. There is nothing more important that companies can do to insure their future success than to continue to support their managers and employees – people at all levels of the firm – to continuously upgrade not only their knowledge, but their ability to learn.

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**Many successful women are often very busy. What would be your advice to younger generation in terms of balancing family and work?**

Decide what is most important to you and make it a top priority. The more successful, and busier, you are, the more opportunities you will have that you will have to say no to. Be very selective. If an opportunity doesn't thrill you, don't even consider it. AND, as you discover the ways in which your private life supports your professional life and vice versa, make sure you guard time for you – quiet time, on a regular basis, when you can reflect on if you are on the right path, and correct course if you are not – time when you celebrate the people, events, and accomplishments that make your life special.

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**What inspires you?**

Beauty and especially the beauty of nature. Walking around Lake Bled and looking out toward the mountains is one of life's pure pleasures.