

MANAGEMENT

Flat is in

LOCAL AND OVERSEAS businesses are currently finding that in order to adjust more rapidly and efficiently in line with the changing business landscape – and in the process function in a more adaptable and market-driven way – they have to switch to flatter, decentralised management structures. In fact, there's increasing emphasis on "horizontal management".

Professor Michael Osbaldeston, former dean of Britain's esteemed Cranfield School of Management and past chairman of the Association of Business Schools, says such changes are increasingly forcing companies to rely on people and not so much on systems and procedures.

"Business leaders will ultimately solve many of the problems that arose over the

past two years because of the financial crisis. However, the concept of radical change – a result of the crisis – is here to stay," he said during a recent talk at the University of Stellenbosch Business School. "Tomorrow's business leaders will have to cope with a rapidly changing business world, experiencing enormous pressure through increasing competition from globalisation. They'll have to cope with even higher levels of personal challenges and the tension that goes along with that."

Osbaldeston said it means even traditional business schools as they developed in the United States will

feel that pressure. "Theory and academic research are out," he warned. "It's essential business schools will have to integrate even more closely with the business world now."

Those who don't manage to achieve that will fall by the wayside.

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