

THE BSL RESEARCH VISION

Contributing to resolve the key issues in business & management of the 21st century.

To us management is a profession that, like any other profession, has a role to play and a responsibility beyond business success, but to society and towards our planet and society.

Research at BSL is dedicated to enable business and management to embrace this responsibility and to become a positive force in solving the burning issues of our times. By understanding factors contributing to sustainable business success, we seek to create a foundation for successful and sustainable entrepreneurship. For this, we explore the relationship between sustainability, values such as ethics, personal responsibility and integrity, and other key drivers of continued success in business. We seek to achieve this by:

- focusing on applied, practice-oriented and highly relevant research
- pioneering efforts for business to become sustainable
- favoring a broad, global approach to research, instead of a piecemeal approach
- collaborating with both academics and business practitioners.

Research domains

We are interested in pursuing research in the following domains:

1. Business sustainability and ethics

- Embedding sustainability into the core strategies
- Clarifying requirements and examples of truly sustainable products and services
- Developing tools, solutions and measurements to make business sustainable

2. Entrepreneurship and strategic thinking

- Developing entrepreneurial approaches to strategic development (e.g. blue ocean strategies)
- Organizing objectives, resources and decision-making effectively and sustainably
- Improving approaches to ensure effective implementation of ideas and goals

3. Leadership and management effectiveness

- New approaches to develop reflective and courageous leaders (e.g. coaching)
- Developing new solutions for managerial, personal and operational effectiveness
- Exploring effective ways for team and communication effectiveness

4. Alternative business models and new ideas

- Integrating business profitability with sustainability
- New models to ensure effective corporate governance
- Applying emerging ideas (e.g. brand aesthetics, understanding customer satisfaction)

5. Higher business education

- Explore new ways to create powerful and safe learning environments
- Clarify requirements for business schools to prepare future leaders
- Explore and integrate new ideas and concepts to address and deal with future challenges

The importance of sustainability and our understanding of business

BSL seeks to contribute to the well-being of the planet by creating a learning platform through relevant research and teaching in order to enable business to become sustainable. We define sustainability in business in broad terms.

Sustainability:

Ensuring the well-being of all life on our planet in everything we do.

Sustainable business:

Innovating, producing and delivering products or services that ensure the well-being of all life on our planet in a measurable and repeatable manner.

Well-being of all life on our planet:

We are all part of a larger system called planet Earth including the atmosphere, water, minerals, plants, animals and human beings. Well-being can be defined as a condition whereby each member can live up to its full potential.

As a result, we take a broader look at business which needs to be clarified:

We consider business people first and foremost as entrepreneurs. As such, they seek to add value by offering an innovative product or service in a more appropriate and relevant way than anybody else. They are driving the innovation, production and delivery of such products and services, always in search of improved customer satisfaction, process and resource optimization, thus seeking to create strategic value. Profit is an important result of these considerations and an important element to ensure the sustainability of a business. Profit, however, is only rarely the crucial motivator to conduct business, even though - unfortunately - developments in certain sectors (investment banking and financial services in particular) indicate that businessmen seem to be guided mainly by greed. We believe that entrepreneurs mostly are guided by higher aspirations, trying to make real contributions to society. We defend these higher purposes of entrepreneurs which are based on a sense of personal accountability and responsibility, quite different from those of administrators or managers running larger businesses, who are much more oriented towards fulfilling the demands of the financial markets.

We believe that ***business has to respond to a larger purpose and responsibility*** beyond its own existence and survival, like any other professional field. Medicine is meant to heal, law is meant to ensure justice, schools are meant to seek and transmit knowledge, and business - in our opinion - is meant to contribute to society in making the world a better place to live in. Business has been a key driver in providing products and services that have allowed inhabitants of the developed world to spend less time worrying about survival and basic needs and more time about developing and fulfilling their human potential, ultimately leading to self-realization (Maslow).

Who do we seek to work with?

We are interested in providing an academic research home to any intellectually-curious and business-savvy person world-wide. You don't have to teach at BSL, you don't necessarily have to live in Switzerland, your topic of research simply needs to fit into our research scope and we can engage in a dialogue of how we can collaborate.

There are a number of different possibilities how we can collaborate:

- You are a **seasoned business practitioner**, typically between 40-65 years, with a desire and passion to use and develop your business intuition by exposing your business experience to the rigor of academic research, thereby contributing to a new and deeper understanding of business and management. Our DBA (doctorate in business administration) would be the perfect solution for you. It offers an applied research degree in approximately 3 years that can be done from anywhere in the world, with 4-5 research and advisory sessions in Switzerland to be arranged according to your schedule and a continued adviser support during your studies.
- You are an **experienced and established academic** seeking to contribute to broader issues in business and management, possibly bridging several traditional research fields. Or you have somewhat limited global contacts outside your field of expertise or limited possibilities within your university to conduct applied research. The global research platform at BSL might be an alternative for your practitioner-oriented research, connecting you with other like-minded researchers and helping you to focus on the big and relevant issues, others would typically not dare to address. Besides enabling you to do highly relevant applied research, we are prepared to award results that can be published in recognized research outlets.
- You are a **young PhD graduate** looking for an academic home. You have a desire to break out of the traditional piecemeal research, to contribute in a more relevant way to the burning topics in business, management and its education. Our applied research platform may be the right solution for you to gain visibility with your applied research, enabling you to be hired in a faculty position at a university of your choice.
- You are a **like-minded head of (department) of a business school**, management institute or university seeking to broaden your research focus beyond its traditional narrowly defined, silo-like, approach. You may have limited possibilities to explore such a re-orientation within your own institutional framework, yet recognize that applied research is an important avenue to be pursued and developed. You may want to join us at the WBSCSB (the World Business School Council of Sustainable Business, www.wbscsb.com) where BSL is a founding member, or otherwise you may want to contact our Dean, Katrin Muff (katrin.muff@bsl-lausanne.ch) for an informal discussion of how we can join forces.

For our admission requirements please go to BSL DBA admission requirements or BSL Research Collaboration application.

The BSL spirit of collaboration

At BSL, the spirit of learning, the pursuit of life-long learning, is deeply embedded in how we approach research and those with whom we collaborate to pursue our research objectives. Our small and flexible organizational structure has enabled us to test new forms of research collaborations prior to defining how these might fit into an existing structure. At BSL, structure follows ideas.

Most of us are strong in contributing as individuals, missing a sense of contributing in a larger sense and we. At BSL, we seek to strengthen this sense of belonging recognizing that we are all part of something beyond our individual contributions. We wish to offer a home, a place of belonging, for like-minded souls.

BSL's position within academic research in business and management

Over the past 50 years, the academic research focus in business and management has become increasingly specialized with a tendency of narrowing fields, favoring depth over breath. This development has generated significant new findings to the previously limited body of knowledge with a large amount of highly scientific papers to academic journals predominately read by other experts in the field. The disadvantage of this specialization lies in its limitation to generate relevant insight to be applied in concrete business and management situations. In the past two decades, practitioner-oriented journals, such as the Harvard Business Review in the US or IMD Perspectives in Europe, have opened the door for applied research to be considered as part of academic research. Applied research differentiated itself from traditional scientific research with its focus on contribute to real issues a business or a manager faces, balancing rigor with relevance. We believe, it is time to recognize a need for academic research to focus less on piece-mill and more on broad, domain-overarching results contributing to resolve the significant challenges business faces in the coming 50 years.

At BSL, we benefit from the academic freedom elite private business schools are so well known for. We differentiate ourselves by offering highly relevant degree programs taught by seasoned business practitioners with a passion for teaching. Our faculty is not rewarded or hired for their publication list or citation references, they are hired because they have the skills for what matters most to us: creating a powerful and safe learning environment for our students. We have always considered our prime duty to provide the best possible education we can.

In terms of research, BSL has pursued an equally pragmatic approach, focusing on applied research only. Rather than seeking to add to the body of knowledge, we challenged ourselves to apply knowledge across domains or within a new context. In the late eighties, BSL was among the first business schools in Europe to introduce a DBA program, recognizing the importance of applied research in the field of business. More recently, recognizing the need to balance relevance with rigor, BSL has adopted a stronger and more focused research strategy, supporting BSL's overall vision as a leading innovator in higher business education.