



## **THUNDERBIRD SUCCESSFULLY CLOSSES INAUGURAL GLOBAL BUSINESS DIALOGUE**

*“Davos in the Desert” leadership forum brought together 1,100 attendees, 95+ total global speakers*

(GLENDALE, Ariz.) November 11, 2011 —Thunderbird School of Global Management successfully closed its first Thunderbird Global Business Dialogue, a keynote business conference that brought together a diverse lineup of speakers and attendees from all over the world. The event’s theme was “Redefining Global Leadership,” and the two-day forum was held at the Glendale Renaissance Hotel and Spa. The second day of the conference featured specific panels on energy, private equity, family business, and global brands, as well as sessions on social networking and global financial solutions.

As a key leader in energy management, family business, global branding and private equity, Thunderbird was able to bring together key leaders from each sector. **Michael Moffett, Ph.D.**, a Thunderbird professor and co-director of the newly launched [Thunderbird Center for Global Energy Studies](#), led the energy panel, which featured executives from ExxonMobil, Taylor-DeJongh, Trilliant and AREVA Inc. The session focused heavily on diversification of energy sources, new technologies in the sector, and a discussion of emerging markets that will affect the industry and consumers in the next decade.

**John C. Cook**, a 1979 Thunderbird alumnus and Chairman of Rock Lake Associates, led the private equity breakout session. Panelists from organizations including Alpha Associates, Robeco, Capital Dynamics and the National Venture Capital Association discussed key issues and trends in private equity investing from four key perspectives: impact investing, venture capital, transition economies and the global limited partner. Participants also discussed the on-the-ground impact private equity can have in addressing technological, social and economic challenges around the world.

The Family Business panel, moderated by Thunderbird professor **Ernesto Poza**, stressed the importance of preparing the next generation of leaders for family business. Panelists and attendees addressed the particular need for leadership education among the world’s family businesses, which account for 87% of all businesses in the world and are responsible for more than 80% of the GDP of emerging economies.

The Global Brands panel, led by Professor **Rich Ettenson, Ph.D.**, focused on the challenges various firms encounter when going overseas. **Ted Sarandos**, Netflix’s Chief Content Officer, discussed trying to operate in the world’s most ambitious film market, China, where a new theater opens every three days but piracy issues are rampant. **Larry Thomas**, the CEO of Fender Musical Instruments describes how the company creates brand evangelists through social media that help propel the company’s image globally. One of Fender’s most successful social media campaigns was on Facebook, where fans were told to upload pictures of their Fender tattoos. “Brand loyalty?” Thomas asks. “No question.”

One of the most anticipated panels of the day was about social media. The discussion featured three successful Thunderbird alumni: **Howard Lindzon** ’91, the Co-founder and CEO of StockTwits; **Ekaterina Walter** ’08, Social Media Strategist for Intel; **Nico Posner** ’00, Principal Product Manager for International at LinkedIn; as well as **Michael Marquez**, a partner with CODE Advisors; and **Brad Feld**, Managing Director of Foundry Group. The discussion ranged from “machines are taking over” to leading practices for gaining an online following, what the next social startup will look like, and why you should throw away your newspaper and television.

“Up until now this world has been built on financial leverage, and now it will be built on social leverage,” said Lindzon, a serial entrepreneur and venture capitalist who runs StockTwits, a successful microblogging site for investment and financial advice. The panel encouraged social media users to be authentic and to make an effort to get to know others via the social web, as opposed to following more traditional forms of media. Brands have also been pushed to evolve on new platforms. “Customers are now the content creators,” Walter said. “They are defining your brand, and that can make companies nervous.”

**Justin Fox**, Editorial Director of the Harvard Business Review, led the next session on financial solutions for global growth, which took a hard look at the 2008 financial collapse and the new era of Occupy Wall Street demonstrators. “The idea of blaming the poor when really it was reckless risk-taking by the rich is outrageous,” said **Matthew Bishop**, American Business Editor of The Economist and author of *Philanthrocapitalism: How Giving Can Save the World*. “There needs to be engaging debate, not fights between the top one percent and the bottom 99 percent.”

The conference ended with a lunch address given by keynote speaker **Mark Penn**, Worldwide CEO of Burson-Marsteller and CEO, Penn Schoen Berland. Penn, who has served as a senior strategic adviser to leaders such as Bill Gates, UK Prime Minister Tony Blair, and Bill and Hillary Clinton, spoke about global reputation management in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Penn’s mantra, “Numbers + Creativity = Strategy” led to the targeting of the “soccer moms” in Bill Clinton’s campaign and in helping Microsoft repair its brand image in the late 1990s.

The 2011 Thunderbird Global Business Dialogue was Thunderbird School of Global Management’s first attempt to hold a signature international business conference. Held at the Renaissance Glendale Hotel and Spa, this two-day “Davos in the Desert” brought together more than [95 world-class speakers and panelists](#) and 1,100 participants from 50 nations. For more information, please see <http://www.thunderbird.edu/dialogue>.

Thunderbird’s next Dialogue event will be held in Berlin, Germany in May 2012 and will focus on European perspectives. More information is available at <http://www.thunderbird.edu/dialogue>.

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#### ***About Thunderbird***

*Thunderbird is the world’s No. 1-ranked school of international business with more than 60 years of experience in developing leaders with the global mindset, business skills and social responsibility necessary to create real, sustainable value for their organizations, communities and the world. Dedicated to preparing students to be global leaders and committed global citizens, Thunderbird was the first graduate business school to adopt an official Professional Oath of Honor. Thunderbird is sought out by graduate students, working professionals and companies worldwide seeking to gain the leadership skills they need to succeed in today’s global economy. For more about Thunderbird, please visit: [www.thunderbird.edu](http://www.thunderbird.edu).*

#### ***Thunderbird’s offerings***

*Thunderbird offers a wide range of global management [graduate degrees](#) and [certificate programs](#) for full-time students, working professionals, distance learners and companies, including Full-time, Executive, Evening and Distance-learning MBAs, a Master of Science, a Master of Arts and a comprehensive suite of executive education programs. The school is also home of the [Thunderbird Knowledge Network](#), the school’s hub of research and cutting-edge global business knowledge that includes six centers of excellence focused on [cultures and languages](#), [global mindset](#), [ethics and corporate citizenship](#), [global financial services](#), [global private equity](#) and [global entrepreneurship](#).*

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