



Irish management's new stamp

Ireland's new generation of managers holds the key to survival.

The key to the recovery of the Irish economy lies in an overlooked resource - managers who share global ambition, an innovative mindset and socialisation capabilities. This was the message delivered by Dr James Cunningham, director of the Centre for Innovation & Structural Change at NUI Galway, at a business event held by the MBA Association of Ireland (MBAAI) in Dublin last month.

Cunningham is also the author of a new book, *Irish Management 2.0: New Priorities for a Changing Economy*, co-edited by Dr Denis Harrington, head of graduate business at WIT. The book examines the nature of success in a series of Irish companies - from U2 and CRH to Cloon Keen Candles and Vivas Health. Its conclusions show a clear capability within the new crop of Irish managers: a combination of creativity, innovation and socialisation, all of which can make the notion of Irish competitiveness and the knowledge economy a reality.

At the MBAAI event, Cunningham outlined some of these conclusions. His recommendations to the business community and the Government were as follows:

1. Put innovation at the heart of Irish business - that is the key to medium and long range competitive distinctiveness
2. Have global ambition - then develop the global perspective needed to grow businesses beyond our borders
3. Create flexible, agile organisations that nurture and harness talent to take ownership of convergent, competitive spaces
4. Have absolute clarity of purpose, and focus relentlessly on competitiveness

Greg Devlin of the MBAAI, which co-sponsored the book with Enterprise Ireland, echoed Cunningham's messages: "The way to meet challenging circumstances is to deploy the best you have. And we have grown an exceptional new generation of dynamic, professional managers and leaders in our recent past, whose expertise has been honed by their international business experience as much as by the domestic economic boom. They are better equipped than any previous generation to

rise to the twin challenges of domestic recovery and international competitiveness.

"We need to remember that the Irish companies examined in *Irish Management 2.0* were not simply swimming in the slipstream of a Tiger economy, but have built solid success on the strength of innovative founder entrepreneurs, energetic and resourceful managers, courageous risk takers and organisational ambition and vision. Those human assets will be key to our economic recovery," he concluded. ■



Dr James Cunningham