

Annual report 2007

In 2007, Vlerick Alumni, the alumni association of Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School evolved into a community of nearly 13,000 members operating in almost 100 countries. Vlerick Alumni has been active in 8 countries: Belgium, China, France, the Netherlands, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States and Switzerland.

The networking provided by the alumni association constitutes an indispensable supplement to the Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School programs. Its mission is to assist the alumni in making progress on a personal, corporate and social level, offering a range of services and events that stimulate professional networking and lifelong learning. This renewed mission was headed by alumnus Martine Dykmans, the new General Manager at Vlerick Alumni, who assumed her duties in early 2007. Together with her team she had a large-scale market research conducted among the members in order to assess the association's mission, reformulate the strategy and renew or modify the events and services portfolio, wherever necessary.

Besides this strategic thinking exercise we have also maintained the traditional relationship between the alumni. 2007 saw the organisation of 68 events in total, 46 of which took place in Belgium. One of the many highlights was the Vlerick Award ceremony on Friday 20 April; Patrick De Maeseneire was celebrated for the durable results that he, as Ceo of Barry Callebaut, achieved on an international scale. At the Winter Reunion we welcomed a somewhat extraordinary speaker named Bertrand Picard, psychiatrist and '*savonturier*', who was able to fascinate the +/- 800 present alumni with the experience he gathered on personal and management level during his successful balloon trip around the world. Other events such as the New year's reception (606 participants), the Easter Reunion (466 participants) and the Marketing Colloquium (280 participants) attracted large audiences as usual.

After ten years of well organised Lunch causeries, the 50th edition was celebrated in a ceremonial style, with Karel Van Miert as guest speaker.

In addition we also organised several smaller events, mainly emphasizing the personal and informal contacts between the alumni. In the meantime we are trying to provide a wider scope and giving more depth to the service package. The bimonthly magazine Connexis informed the alumni about the latest news and activities of the School and its alumni. A twelfth edition of the members' directory was published at the end of 2007.

In 2007, Vlerick Alumni elaborated its international activities, which lead to 22 international alumni events in eight different countries: China, France, the Netherlands, Russia, Singapore, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States. A further international growth will depend on the integration of the International School of Management alumni in Sint-Petersburg, which last year became part of the Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School. Setting up new alumni departments in new countries requires a minimum of 50 alumni per country.

2007 also observed the third edition of the mentorship programme, which links the fulltime MBA students during their formation to the alumni residing in Belgium.