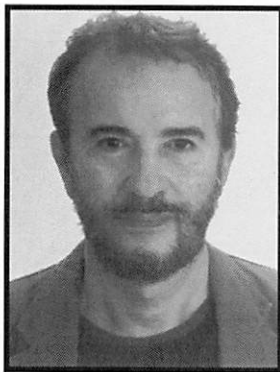


**José A.D. Machuca**

### **About the P&OM World Conferences**



Almost 20 years have gone by since the first P&OM World Conference was held, and this might be a good time to think back over the reasons why the conferences were set up, especially for newer colleagues who do not know

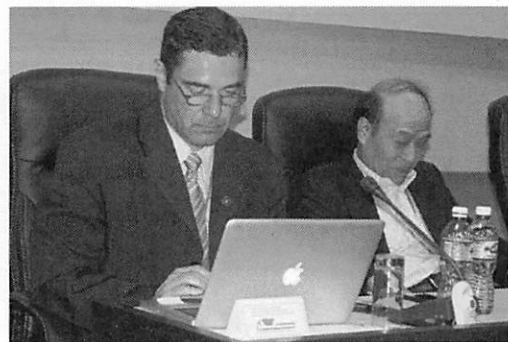
P&OM had already become a key area in Business Administration by the end of the last century. However it did not enjoy the standing and recognition that it deserved compared to other disciplines, such as Marketing, Finance and Management, for example. And so, in 1998, when POMS' Martin Starr and Sushil Gupta asked me to organize the POMS International Conference, I told them that it was a good opportunity to do something new and constructive: to put forward the idea that all the P&OM Associations in America (POMS), Europe (EurOMA) and Asia (JOMSA), which were operating separately at the time, could "join forces" for the first time and hold a World P&OM Conference, which would generate synergy to the benefit of the P&OM field as a whole. They fully agreed with the idea and I was asked to approach EurOMA and JOMSA, where I had good contacts (Chris Voss and Michiya Morita), and invite them to take part in the endeavor. The respective Boards agreed. As a result, the idea behind the P&OM World Conferences was born: to launch a new kind of Conference, designed to provide: 1) a richer and wider worldwide debate and exchange of knowledge in the discipline with the large-scale involvement of fellow P&OMers from all over the world and the collaboration of P&OM leaders; 2) a major effort to enable greater worldwide networking of OM academics. With so many different Conference tasks to address, its organization would have to be underpinned by the joint work of the three Associations and their members.

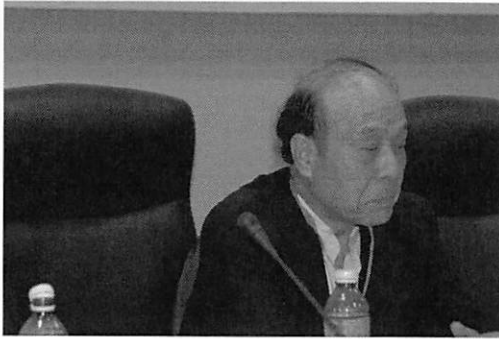
The first World P&OM Conference in Seville (2000) was so successful that an agreement was struck there and then between the three associations to continue holding a Conference every 4 years (just like the Olympic Games). Their Presidents, Bob Hayes, Chris Voss and Masanori Kodama, all put their names to the agreement, literally on a barrel of sherry wine, which can still be seen in one of the most famous sherry cellars in Spain! Since then, Conferences have been held every 4 years and have all been a huge success. After Seville (2000), Cancun (2004), Tokyo (2008) and Amsterdam (2012), the time arrived for the fifth, and this was duly held in September 2016 in Havana ([www.pomhavana2016.com](http://www.pomhavana2016.com)), a mythical, spell-binding venue, designated one of the "7 wonder Cities of the World". The time had once again come to "join forces" during a period of increasing complexity in the rapidly growing field of OM!

### **5<sup>th</sup> P&OM World Conference: P&OM Havana 2016 (September 6-10, 2016)**

The Opening Ceremony took place on September 6 in one of the main rooms of the Havana International Convention Center, which was the Conference venue. Along with the

Steering Committee Chair (Jose A. D. Machuca), representatives from EurOMA (Andy Neely and Giovanni Perrone), POMS (Jeet Gupta and Sergio Gouvea), JOMSA (Masaharu Ota and Michiya Morita), and the local Committee (Jose A. Acevedo) all extended a warm welcome to participants.





The ceremony was followed by the first plenary session, a City Tour around Old Havana and a Welcome Cocktail at the Hotel Nacional.

### Scientific features

The theme of the Conference was "*Joining P&OM forces worldwide: Present and future of Operations Management*", embodying the spirit of the P&OM World Conferences and seeking to encourage people from all over the world to attend and collaborate. In the same spirit of cooperation and with the same aim, the *Steering Committee* was made up of members from the three co-organizing Associations (<http://www.pomhabana2016.com/index.php?module=committees>).

As far as the *scientific side of the Conference* is concerned, a huge effort was made to ignite a rich, worldwide debate. For this we were fortunate in that we were able to count on the generous participation of a large number of P&OMers from all over the world, representing EurOMA, POMS and JOMSA, who collaborated as keynote speakers or as organizers of invited tracks and sessions. The bottom line is that well-known scholars from Europe, America and Asia took part in *7 keynote sessions, 5 invited tracks and 35 invited sessions* (see [www.pomhabana2016.com/index.php?module=speaker](http://www.pomhabana2016.com/index.php?module=speaker) and [www.pomhabana2016.com/index.php?module=general10](http://www.pomhabana2016.com/index.php?module=general10)). In order to lay the ground and generate worldwide discussion on different relevant topics, a particular innovation was introduced: keynote presentations were not made by a single person, but using a panel format with three or more presenters, who set out the points of view of their respective geographic areas. **Simultaneous translation** was provided for the plenary keynote sessions as well as for the Opening and Closing ceremonies

The *regular sessions* were organized around a list of selected OM topics ([www.pomhabana2016.com/index.php?module=topics](http://www.pomhabana2016.com/index.php?module=topics)). The *Program Committee* had 4 co-chairs, representing the three associations and a fifth one from the local team (<http://www.pomhabana2016.com/index.php?module=general6>). 602 extended abstracts were submitted and double blind reviewed by the 205 EurOMA, POMS and JOMSA members on the Scientific Committee. 377 papers were presented in 123 parallel sessions at the Havana International Convention Center over three days.

Following the tradition of the P&OM World Conferences, there were **Spanish-speaking sessions**. A total of 27 papers were presented in 9 sessions, 2 of them with simultaneous translation.



Two prizes were awarded: the *Jose A. D. Machuca P&OM World Conference Best paper Award* and the *Emerald Best Paper Award* (<http://www.pomhavana2016.com/index.php?module=general9> ).



Four major Journals have agreed to publish pre-selected Conference papers in *Special* (IJOPM, IJPDLM and JOMS) or *regular* issues (IJPE) (<http://www.pomhavana2016.com/index.php?module=general14>). This important post-conference task is ongoing.

P&OMHavana2016 continued the tradition of being a truly World Conference. Huge European participation (58%) can be highlighted. Participants were geographically distributed as follows:

5 <sup>th</sup> P&OM World Conference, Geographical Distribution of Participants					
Total participant countries	38				
Total participants	432				
Continents	Europe	America	Asia	Africa	Australia
Countries per continent	19	8	7	3	1
Participants per continent	252	123	48	4	5



Country	Number of participants per Country
UK	61
USA	58
Germany	30
Spain	30
Sweden	27
Cuba	27
Japan	27
Denmark	22
Finland	17
Netherlands	15
Brazil	15
Turkey	8
Colombia	8
China	8
Ireland	7
Italy	7
Norway	7
Canada	6
Honduras	6
India	6
Australia	5
Austria	4
Belgium	4
France	4
Switzerland	4
Romany	2
Mexico	2
Bangladesh	2
Israel	2
South Korea	2
South Africa	2
Croatia	1
Slovenia	1
Hungary	1
Ecuador	1
Singapore	1
Nigeria	1
Egypt	1

### Networking

In keeping with the aims of the P&OM World Conferences, *special attention* was also paid to enable the best opportunities for **networking** at a wonderful and exciting location. Included in the Conference fees, and with joint activities almost every day, a carefully-designed Social Program played a major role, starting with a bus and walking tour of Old Havana ([www.oldhavanaweb.com](http://www.oldhavanaweb.com)), a UNESCO world heritage site where the past lingers in the air (rumba riffs, vintage cars, historic forts, museums and beautifully restored architectural gems), followed by The Welcome Cocktail to the sound of live Cuban music at the Hotel Nacional (the icon of Havana hotels). The Conference dinner was held at the Tropicana Cabaret (a quite unique spot in the world for enjoying music and Cuban

folklore), where we were also treated to a show ([www.cabaret-tropicana.com](http://www.cabaret-tropicana.com)). The cabaret showcased a kind of sequin-and-feather musical theater that would later be reproduced in Paris, New York, and Las Vegas. The Farewell Cocktail was held at the Havana International Convention Center hotel, once more to live Cuban music. The conference ended with a tour of the Viñales National Park (one of Cuba's most magnificent natural settings and a UNESCO World Heritage site, <http://pnvinales.webcindario.com/>), including a visit to a tobacco plantation (with an *in situ* demonstration of how Havana cigars are produced). The tour finished with a typical Cuban lunch to the sound of live Cuban music. Some networking pictures are shown at the end.

### Conference evaluation

A survey has been given to participants to gauge satisfaction and the extent to which the conference goals were accomplished. Although I will try to give full results in the next Newsletter, some of the overall headline results are included below (from a representative 35% response rate). Questions were measured on the following scale: 1(poor)-2 (fair)-3 (good)-4 (very good)-5(excellent).

The survey results show a very high degree of satisfaction: the *Conference as a whole* was very well considered (Good (26.8%)-Very good (45.6%)-Excellent (22.1%)), as were two major aspects relating to P&OM World Conference aims: the *sessions* (Good (34.7%)-Very good (42.2%)-Excellent (14.3%)) and the *networking/Social program* (Good (17.8%)-Very good (35.6%)-Excellent (40.4%)). Two other important aspects relating to the human factor also scored highly: *organization* (Good (21.6%)-Very good (40.5%)-Excellent (23.6%)) and the *closeness and kindness of the organizers* (Good (16.4%)-Very good (34.2%)-Excellent (39.%)).

### Final remarks

This P&OM World Conference has had to contend with a number of factors that might have undermined its success, including: not being organized jointly with the Annual Conference of one of the Associations (and with a EurOMA conference having been held just 2 months before); the dates (at the beginning of September work has already started at most Universities and in Cuba it is the hurricane season); difficulties for US citizens to travel to Cuba; and, above all, Cuba's deficient infrastructure, which made the organization of this Conference the most challenging and time demanding that I have ever experienced.

Fortunately on the plus side there were also some very positive factors, such as the location and the scientific and social programs. And no less important- there has been the collaboration of so many friends and colleagues from all over the world. The survey results show that the Conference has been a great success in spite of the difficulties found for its organization.

As Steering Committee Chair, I would personally like to thank all the people and organizations that made this conference possible. They include the Steering Committee that I represent, appointed by the three Organizing Associations (EurOMA, POMS and JOMSA), the Program and the Scientific Committee (with special thanks to Gerald Reiner and Cesar Ortega), the local Organizing Committee (with special thanks to José Acevedo, Martha Gómez and Roberto Cespón), the Keynote Speakers and the organizers of invited Sessions, the Session Chairs and the Best Paper Awards Review Committees. I would also like to thank the EIASM team (and particularly Ene Kannel), with whom we have worked closely and with such great efficiency. I also gratefully acknowledge the financial support of our sponsors (EIASM, Emerald, UNIA). And finally, thank you to all the participants at the 5th World P&OM Conference for joining forces with us in this challenging experience

and sharing your OM knowledge with scholars from around the world in a discussion about the present and future of OM.

I think the Conference can be said to have been a success and I would like to stress that it has been important to have this P&OM World Conference in a country like Cuba because:

- 1) It has allowed 27 Cuban academics to attend such an important Conference and enabled them to network with over 400 P&OM scholars from all over the world. This would have been impossible if the Conference had taken place in a developed country
- 2) It has shown us what it is like to arrange Conference activities in a very challenging environment. And also to better understand how difficult it is for our Cuban colleagues to carry out their daily work under such difficult conditions, with a scarcity of resources that we cannot even begin to imagine in developed countries. This is why we must show such great appreciation for their good work, their friendship and their kindness.
- 3) It has enabled us to provide a better service, including a wide variety of social activities at no additional charge to standard Conference fees. And, in spite of this, the Conference has made a profit that has enabled us to set up a Logistics and Supply Chain Management laboratory at the Technological University of Havana (CUJAE). This would not have been possible without the Conference. On behalf of EurOMA, POMS and JOMSA, I have to say that this is one of the very best outcomes of the event. This Conference and all those who took part in one way or another have contributed to enhancing our Cuban colleagues' research resources and that should make us all extremely happy.

The time and effort devoted to the 5<sup>th</sup> P&OM world Conference was worthy. My thanks to all those who made this possible by "joining forces" at the 5<sup>th</sup> P&OM World Conference.

**Jose A.D. Machuca (Steering Committee Chair on behalf of EurOMA, POMS and JOMSA)**



## Some networking pictures

