

Effective Management  
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*Vida y Exito*

In this society of knowledge nothing can be left for granted and in the corporate world innovation commands. It is indispensable to know how to interpret and adapt to the continuous changes of our surroundings, to remain open to new ways of doing business and to maximize the opportunities of the market. The famous phrase of renowned management expert and bestseller Arie de Geus summarizes this when he cites that, "The capacity to learn quicker than your competitors is probably the only sustainable advantage."

It is from this context that the Center for Executive Education (CEE) of the Haas School of Business has focused on programs for continuous development and renovation.

"Currently, what we offer most is the so called 'custom programs,' which are tailored solutions; courses made exactly to measure of the business community that demand them. This type of programs represent close to 75% of our business," accounts Assistant Dean Whitney Hischier.

The target audience is high level professionals as well as those on the fast track to getting to that level who have at least seven years of experience in their field. Though according to Hischier the majority of her clients have between 15 and 20 years of professional experience.

Hischier affirms that in general there has been an increase in the demand for executive education programs in the US, Europe and other parts of the world. This has been especially the case over the last four years as the *baby boomer* generation begins to retire and there exists a void of leadership within companies. These conditions have lead business to invest heavily in their leadership successors in order to maintain their position and to raise the level of their teams.

"It is true that businesses will cut down their education budgets in tough times like the one we are experiencing. Nevertheless, I believe that as soon as the market recovers the demand for these types of courses and seminars will be even larger," Hischier adds.

Berkeley has bet on a strategy that has given it great results: to train executives "on site," within the context of their own business, provide them with functional value and a multidisciplinary enrichment, with content that takes advantage of the resources and talent of the Haas School of Business, as well as the surrounding business knowledge of the Bay Area and the Silicone Valley.

According to the Assistant Dean, the goal is to help professionals with diverse backgrounds, perspectives and experiences to develop the ability, knowledge and mentality to embrace change and utilize it as a catalyst for success. Resulting in personal and organizational success.

"There's a tendency in the market to create what we call 'plug and play' programs that are completely predetermined. We on the other hand develop new content," Hischier details. "We strive so that our programs are up to date, original, relevant and very flexible. We are open to new ways of learning and attentive to the best practices in the industry, always with a clear focus on results."

In these programs made to measure a team of distinguished academics from Haas along with researchers from diverse fields across the University work with representatives of the client company to design a curriculum that will allow the company to reach its business objectives and increase their strategic capacities with innovating ideas and future forging tools.

Among their major clients you can find the Norwegian petroleum and natural gas giant StatoilHydro ASA, which is expanding its operations in emerging markets like Russia and Libya. Their objective is that their executives receive an innovative leadership program that will prepare them to be successful regardless of where they operate, whether in the North Sea or in the delta of the Niger river.

“In this global age, for many corporations it is crucial to develop executives capable of executing projects effectively in countries which they are foreign to, that can lead diverse groups and know how to act through their instinct through different formalities, because although technology provides much data, there are decisions that cannot await the careful analysis of information,” Hirsch affirms, “a lot of our executives have realized that life goes much further than a business, that they must understand about public policy and the cultural context in which they operate. And accordingly knowing about history, geography, political science and psychology becomes very relevant. That is why these executives command a comprehensive education.”

The CEE has also created successful leadership programs so that psychologists, medical doctors, political scientists, engineers and other people with a technical background can develop their capacity at an executive level and can implement administrative strategies. All of this is done with the understanding that all facets of business must understand each other – the technicians need to understand marketing, the product managers need to know about budgeting and the financiers need to be familiarized with the rest of the organization.

The other 25% of programs are classified as “open enrollment” and cover a wide range of topics: leadership and strategy, finance, corporate governance, corporate social responsibility, innovation and entrepreneurial spirit, technology, marketing, negotiations and product management among others.

“In these programs we look to identify niches,” maintains Hirsch. “The challenge is that these programs do not become commodities and rather remain focused on industry or on certain functional levels. The programs are also very original.”

Part of the effort includes staying in contact with the clients. “We invite them to special events, we keep them informed of what is happening at Haas and we consult with them to make sure that the knowledge they acquire provides a clear framework for their future strategy and tactics,” Hirsch asserts.

Lack of time is no longer an excuse since the courses are designed with a schedule that is compatible with the busy agendas of professionals. The courses last anywhere from two days to a week, and not necessarily concurrently. In some instances, the programs are given once or twice a month on the University Campus or even on site of the corporate partner. This way the participants can acquire knowledge without having to neglect their responsibilities.

“It’s a matter of opportunity cost. Knowing that businesses do not want to halt their work routine by sending their executives to foreign schools and that there are very few people who can spend extended time out of the office we have structured shorter and more intense programs,” Hirsch explains.

In these executive education programs University credits are not awarded, though certificates of completion are presented. There are some programs designed exclusively for Latin American executives that take place in their respective countries with partnerships with local institutions.

Product Management is currently one of the most demanded courses, along with Business Planning and Strategic Decision Making. In these programs it is common to have waiting lists and therefore it is recommended to make proper planning. Learn to learn and your professional performance will come out on top.