



The Future of Executive Education

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What do great leaders have in common? They never stop learning. For great leaders, development lasts a lifetime and draws upon surprising sources, far beyond their day-to-day worlds.

But great leaders don't keep learning just for their own sakes. They know in their bones that the measure of their success stands or falls on the caliber of the leaders they grow. So they do their best to inspire every person in the organization to develop their potential greatness. And great leaders never let a high-potential employee get away. They trust their eye for talent and they challenge the most, those they believe have the best inside.

What does the future of executive education look like?

In the past, all too often, executive education served as a nice diversion. A little learning, a few rounds of golf, shopping and sightseeing, and then back to the grind. No more.

If the future is here, but just unevenly distributed, then what does the future of executive education look like?

First, it's radical. Full-on. Bring your whole person or don't come. As the Marines say, "The way we train is the way we fight." Executive education of the future will feel more like simulated battle than like death by PowerPoint.

Second, it's real. Program participants won't be allowed to come back to work without ideas and tools they can use immediately. Forget stale case studies about another firm's challenges or problems. Tomorrow's executive education will be all about your organization, your challenges, and your problems.

Third, it's relational. The world will belong to those who can sense, create, relate, engage, inspire, motivate,

and challenge. No matter what you're learning, if you're not learning to bring out the best in others and the best in yourself, then you (or your sponsoring company) are wasting your money.

Radical Executive Education: The key to keeping the very best of the best

The *retention* of top talent has become equally important, if not more important, than the *development* of top talent. Senior leaders are now believers that it is their employees—rather than new products, services or technology—that will drive the future growth and success of the company. The book *Employees First, Customers Second: Turning Conventional Management Upside Down* by Vineet Nayar provides important lessons on how one CEO used the Employees First, Customers Second (EFCS) approach to transform their company from a slow-growth bureaucracy into a marketplace powerhouse. Sending high-performing, high-potential employees to executive education programs is a great way to retain them because it is both a tangible demonstration of the company's ongoing investment in their future, as well as a "thank you" for past contributions.

Real Executive Education: Lead innovation and growth, or else...

Adaptive leadership and strategic innovation are the hottest topics in executive education today. A recent IBM-sponsored survey of 1,541 CEOs, general managers and senior public sector leaders worldwide reported "that events, threats and opportunities aren't just coming at us faster or with less predictability; they are converging and influencing each other to create entirely unique situations. These first-of-their-kind developments require unprecedented degrees of creativity—which has become a more important leadership quality than attributes like management discipline, rigor or operational acumen." Successful

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organizations are those that have learned to integrate creativity and innovation with leadership and strategy.

Relational Executive Education: Working together to deliver business results

Organizations are demanding that executive development programs deliver immediate business results. They want their employees-participants to acquire the knowledge, skills, and creativity needed to lead the company into uncharted territory while simultaneously solving strategic problems. To achieve these dual objectives, executives are working more closely with business school professors to both design and teach programs. Future executive education programs must offer the right balance of theory and practice. Theory without practice is irrelevant but practice without theory is unsustainable.

The Increasing Demand for Professional Certificates and Executive MBA Degrees

In July 2012, a surge in demand for its Executive MBA (EMBA) program inspired Georgia State University's J. Mack Robinson College of Business to introduce a spring cohort in addition to its long-standing fall cohort. According to EMBA director Laura Crawley, "The demand for our fall 2012 cohort was so great that we had to ask dozens of highly-qualified applicants to defer. Rather than ask them to wait a year to begin their graduate education, we decided to launch a new cohort in January."

There is also a dramatic increase in demand for the College's one-week certificate and certification programs. Executive education certificates are especially valuable to professionals who already have advanced degrees but who need to enhance their knowledge and skills in key areas such as adaptive leadership, business innovation, emerging markets, finance and accounting, project management, Lean Six Sigma, or sales management. Certificate programs are typically delivered in a five-day, Monday-Friday live-classroom format and program participants represent a variety of companies, industries, and countries.

On the technology front, top business schools around the world including the Robinson College of Business are embracing the concept of "flipping the classroom" where the lecture portions of the content are delivered to participants before the program via pre-recorded webinars. Then the face-to-face part of the program is devoted to discussing and applying the frameworks and models to real-work projects.

Developing your leadership skills is the best way to accelerate your career. The most effective way to make your organization better is by helping others develop their leadership skills too.

An English nobleman sought to reward a selfless, heroic Scotsman who saved his son from certain death. The humble Scot refused any reward. The lord, sensing greatness in the man, insisted. When the Scot refused again, the nobleman said "Alright, but let me pay to educate your son the way I am educating my own." The Scot accepted. His son went on to make one of the greatest medical discoveries of all time. When the lord's son lay dying from infection, the Scotsman's son's discovery saved him. The Scotsman's son? Alexander Fleming, discoverer of penicillin. And the nobleman's son? Winston Churchill.

Our world needs more great leaders and courageous innovators. Steve Jobs said it well: "Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower." But John Quincy Adams said it first and best: "If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."

The largest business school in the South and part of a major research institution, Georgia State University's J. Mack Robinson College of Business has 220 faculty, 8,000 students and 80,000 alumni. With programs on five continents and students from 88 countries, the College is world-class and worldwide. Its part-time MBA program is ranked among the best by the Aspen Institute, *Bloomberg Businessweek* and *U.S. News and World Report*, and its Executive MBA is on the *Financial Times* list of the world's premiere programs. Located in Atlanta, the Robinson College of Business and Georgia State have produced more of Georgia's top executives with graduate degrees than any other school in the Southeast.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Steven D. Olson, Ph.D., is Assistant Professor and Director of the Center for Ethics and Corporate Responsibility at Georgia State University's Robinson College of Business. Steve is an award-winning teacher in the College's executive education, EMBA and Executive Doctorate in Business programs. He is an expert in fuses theory and practice in leadership, innovation, and environmental sustainability. Steve advises leaders in some of the most successful organizations including the U. S. Marine Corp's Officer Leadership Academy. He was also the co-founder and managing partner of Generative Consulting, a leadership development firm whose clients regularly appear on Fortune's list of the "100 Best Companies to Work For in America." Steve earned a Master's Degree from Yale University and a Ph.D. from Emory University.



Daniel L. Stotz, M.S., is Senior Director of Executive Education and Lecturer at Georgia State University's Robinson College of Business. Dan has 18 years of experience designing senior-level executive development programs that integrate the topics of leadership, innovation and strategy. He plays the lead role in working with senior executives to design customized executive education programs that accelerate the leadership development process. His current and past clients include Cox Enterprises, the FBI Crime Labs, GE Energy, Georgia Gulf Corporation, McKesson Technology Solutions, NCR Corporation, Regions Financial, Rollins Inc., and the NASA Johnson Space Center to name just a few. Dan earned a Master's of Science in Management from Colorado State University.



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