



# MBA Career Stories

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**MBACareer Stories**

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# Preface

The idea of MBA Career Stories sprang into life for several reasons. I wanted to write a book, and this was the first idea that came to my mind. I also thought it would be interesting to learn more about the experiences of MBA's around the world – how people have managed their careers, and how useful the MBA as a degree has been to them.

I started some serious networking on the professional LinkedIn platform in March 2013 and that is where I thought about this small project. I wanted to see if I can really get into touch with people on LinkedIn, and create something in co-operation with other MBA's.

LinkedIn turned out to be a somewhat useful tool for finding participants. I sent more than 500 mails to MBA's through LinkedIn, and posted about the eBook project in a few LinkedIn groups. Chris Lentzy, who is also one of the contributors to this eBook, helped me in finding the participants. In addition to the two of us we managed to find 31 other participants in quite a short time period.

Another important reason for creating MBA Career Stories was because I have noticed that the MBA as an education has been discussed quite extensively by thought leaders on LinkedIn, at least by John A. Byrne and Vivek Wadhwa, who both have written and even debated about the usefulness of an MBA as a degree. The debate was about whether an MBA is useful for people who want to become entrepreneurs. You will find links to both gentlemen's MBA articles in the end of the eBook.

I would like to thank Chris Lentzy who helped me in finding participants, and everyone else who contributed to MBA Career Stories. I hope you enjoy reading the stories as much as I did.

You are welcome to contact me for any feedback and/or questions.

Espoo, Finland, September 2013.

Anne-Maria Yritys

# What is an MBA?

The Master of Business Administration (MBA or M.B.A.) is a master's degree in business administration, attracting people from a wide range of academic disciplines. Originating in the United States, it emerged from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the industrialization as companies sought out scientific approaches to management.

The core courses in various MBA programs introduce students to the various business areas including accounting, finance, marketing, human resources, and operations management.

Accreditation bodies exist specifically for MBA programs to ensure consistency and quality of graduate business education. Business schools in most countries offer MBA programs tailored to full-time, part-time, executive, and distance learning students, with specialized concentrations.

MBA programs are structured around a usually standard compulsory part and elective courses allowing for a subject specialty or concentration. A thesis, preceded by additional course work in research methodology, is usually required; some programs also allow for a "Major Project".

In the program's first part, students will acquire the analytical tools necessary for academic training in the key management

functions, as well as a working knowledge of these functions. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> part students pursue a specialized curriculum. "Business Strategy", where the key areas are synthesized or integrated, is usually offered as a capstone course; related participation in a business simulation or game is a common degree requirement. Course work in Business ethics can be included in the first or second part, with a correspondingly different focus.

Below a list of the most typical courses:

- Analytical: accounting, economics, operations research, organizational behavior, statistics
- Functional: financial management, human resource management, marketing management, operations management
- Specialization: entrepreneurship, finance (including corporate finance and investment management), international business, management information systems, management science, marketing, operations management, organizational design, project management, real estate, risk management and strategy, among others.

The analytical courses may treat financial- and management accounting separately, and may focus on managerial economics as opposed to the more traditional introductory treatment. Sometimes business law and tax may be included. As regards the functional courses,

further course work may be specified in parallel to the specialty. Here, the first course provides an overview, while the second revisits the subject in depth. Alternatively, the first course addresses short-term, tactical problems, while the second course addresses long-term, strategic problems (e.g. "Financial Management I" covers working capital management, while part II covers capital investment decisions).

Programs may also include (course-work based) training in soft skills, such as leadership and negotiation, in hard skills, such as spreadsheets, project management and foreign languages, and in areas such as multiculturalism and corporate social responsibility. Company visits (including overseas travel), and guest lectures or seminars with well-known CEOs and management personalities, are common.

Full-time students generally seek an internship during the interim. In some programs, students' Major Projects will address a problem current in their organization; particularly in programs with an action learning orientation, these may be practically oriented. **(Wikipedia.com.)**

**Chris Lentzy, MBA**  
**European University Munich, Germany**



I originally studied mechanical engineering in Cork, Ireland, graduating in 1988. However, not long after, I got roped into my family business. I studied for my MBA at the European University in Munich, Germany and graduated in 1994. Having come from a business family I always liked and appreciated that an MBA gave a great overview of the various business functions required to run a company. I still think this is the main benefit of an MBA. I was always a strategic thinker and tend to think in terms of the big picture doing things for the long run, this again is a vital part of the MBA mentality.

For some reason in Europe the MBA qualification does not have the same recognition as in the United States. A multi-disciplinary background is not appreciated in companies that are run by accountants. This is my experience. HR departments also struggle multi-disciplinary personality types and I have found it best to stay away from recruiters.

Following roles in production management and sales, I ran my family business between 1997 and 2010. I had full profit and loss responsibility for this company and employed 32 people at peak. I had more than doubled sales and manufacturing capacity during this period only to see sales drop significantly due to the economic down turn.

One of the main problems with a local business is that you are constantly involved in chasing sales and concerned with cash flow issues. Looking back I would have liked to have had more time to “work on the business rather than in the business”. However expansion and diversification all cost money which again are limited by cash flow.

I decided to go my own way at the end of 2010. The business was carried on by my sister until the company’s closure at the end of 2012.

I currently work as an independent business development consultant. I specialize in the use of social media to grow online sales. I do believe that social media will yet transform businesses but we have a long way to go. If I had my choice I would like to return to an operations or general management role with profit and loss responsibility. I know that I cannot do this here in Ireland given the current economic climate.



## Things I learnt the hard way

1. Always trust your gut and don't be swayed from that.
2. Be aware of family pressures and family guilt because these will be used against you in a family business.
3. If you can't make a difference where you are working for whatever reason, move. Move to another country if you have to. Aim to make a difference and be the best.
4. The choice of industry type that you enter is a very important one. If you happen to find yourself in a mature market, your business options will always be limited, your salary also. Moral of the story you cannot swim against an ebbing tide no matter how good you are.
5. Product lifecycles are getting shorter and shorter. To survive your company needs to keep innovating. If your organization does not buy into this, they will not survive (unless they are government funded).
6. Always take action. You can take further corrective later if needed. This keeps your business moving forward and it is something that a customer likes to see.
7. Build relationships even with your competitors, as you never know how you can help one another.
8. Always build your network and consciously keep extending your reach.
9. I am a big believer in the continuous improvement of business processes in order to stay competitive.
10. Continual learning and self-development is vital in today's work.
11. Mentor those around you.
12. Deal with problems and people will respect you.
13. Fire those that you have to carry, those who stand in the way of your company's progress.
14. I have "collected" a series of words to describe the ideal business I would like to be in, my words are GLOBAL, SOCIAL, USEFUL and SCALABLE. Do the same.

"You can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards. So you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future. You have to trust in something – your gut, destiny, life, karma, whatever. Because believing that the dots will connect down the road will give you the confidence to follow your heart even when it leads you off the well-worn path; and that will make all the difference." (Steve Jobs)

**Tyra Oldham, PhD, MBA**  
**Miami University Oxford, Ohio**



My MBA was an experience and a start of a life's pursuit. I attended Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. The campus is secluded and beautifully placed, nestled in the woods at the edge of a small town. The campus provides the feeling of small town despite its size. I was a member of a 35 student MBA program. The program was global consisting of students from China, Africa, Turkey, Russia, India, Japan, Europe, the U.S. and more. This global mix contributed to a deeper learning of business, culture and critical thinking within the constructed classroom. Each student was placed in a team of four. This team began my field of study and a unique lens that led me to acquire a PhD under multidisciplinary thinking in decision-making. My team consisted of an Indian male in economics, Asian male in accounting, and a U.S. Caucasian male in finance. This cultural immersion of males within the hard sciences began my growth in interdisciplinary communication and interpretation. As the U.S. woman in my team, I was called to provide the softer interpretation to our rigor this was enriching, stressful, expansive and developmental.

My MBA has benefited me in various unique ways. My MBA allowed me to understand more about my global background and its benefit to the work environment. My MBA was the restart of my educational journey. Further, it provided me a platform to understand that I could engage across discourse, discipline and

systems to translate value and opportunities in any situation. My MBA coursework revealed the surface in which business professionals engage and depth that is necessary for the next big, new thing.

My experience was challenging within my team but ended up as a great reward. I entered my MBA unexpected. One day, I was working and three days later under invitation I was asked to apply. I applied under a cloud as I had been in a tragic car accident that pained me over a year of my two year program. My experience reaffirmed I could succeed under various conditions. Further, it provided my re-engagement into scholarly thinking and the art of pedagogy, practice and mastery of a life's work. My focus within my MBA was Operations and Technology that has served me well no matter my work or within any setting.

As a woman of color and business professional, I suggest education is always valuable and profitable to one's tool kit. Consider your program and yourself within the program. My advice is to learn all that is available. Become an intellectual sponge and a life learner. Today's world requires agile learners who can



use knowledge to benefit others uniquely and strategically for sustainability. My MBA was a tool that enabled opportunities to engage and advance my career continuously. It is a gift that keeps giving.

Today, I own a business in which I use my multidisciplinary background that I gained from my experience within my MBA program. I am a strategy management consultant delivering sustainability solutions. My industries of strategic focus are energy, manufacturing, construction, healthcare, communications and technology supporting public, private and government sectors.

I would rather be doing more of what I am doing, around the world. I love what I do and only seek to do it bigger and better. I am a writer, public speaker and provide analyses, research, business development, consulting, content and analytics. I seek a bigger platform to deliver these solutions and additional partners to synergize solutions to deliver more value. Additionally, my goal is to deliver a technology to market and a sustainable product within the year.

What I wish I had known earlier in my career:

This is always an interesting question. What I wish I knew that if I knew, I could have achieved. I can only state that it would have been great to create that big idea producing a vast fortune to use now as a private fund. Other than that I am on my path and journey as it was meant.

**Pierre A. Morgon, MBA**  
ESSEC, France



Before answering on the “where”, I should address the “why”! I started by college education in the School of Pharmacy in Lyon, France and I was orienting my career towards hospital biology. I have even been a resident for two years. For various reasons, including a change of the regulations on that profession in France, I decided to explore other directions, starting by the legal one. I joined Law School and got a Master in business and economic law. Then, I joined the industry for a short stint and quickly decided that I wanted more opening to the broad field of business, and this is why I opted for a MBA program, which I completed at ESSEC, one of the leading French business schools.

This program had a marketing and management major, and wasn’t specialized on the healthcare industry. It was extremely useful to acquire all the basics that business school students learn over three years, and to be exposed to numerous case studies taken from many different industry segments. In retrospect, this program helped me to build a very diverse and versatile toolkit, which I’ve been burnishing in many situations (I have been working on all sorts of healthcare products, from primary care to specialty care and hospital care, and across many geographies, including mature markets and emerging economies) and honing through continuous reading of business journals and attending professional conferences and

executive education programs. And my toolkit is still extremely useful today, on a daily basis.

Assuming that the question refers to the experience during the MBA program, well, the experience was... like being lost in space during the first weeks! Picture this... a completely new jargon, loads of homework (although healthcare studies are pretty intense too), plenty of group work with people of different origins (hence with different lines of reasoning and personalities, resulting in a rainbow of interactions, from the most fruitful and open to the most unpleasant and spark-generating...).

Once past the first few weeks, I got in the tempo and... never lost it since these college days! Overall, it was like a bolus of a biologically shocking component. The organisms react by developing a whole new set of skills and capabilities.

Therefore, the advice that I would give to other MBA students is to get ready for that shock. Louis Pasteur reportedly said “Fortune favors the prepared mind”. There’s a lot to gain in a MBA program and the “prepared” mind is one

that's open, curious, willing to let itself soaked by new concepts and ideas. In a way, it is the real-life experience of the Japanese proverb, "remember that you have two ears and one mouth". And to that proverb, I'll personally add "remember that you have two eyes, too"! The experience will be tiring, yet exhilarating, a kind of "hadron collider" for business brains.

Today, after 26 years in the healthcare industry, I have joined a healthcare IT company which is undergoing a transformation of its business model. My remit includes the review of all the existing processes (or non-existing, for that matter) and the design of new approaches, from the delineation of the opportunity, to the strategic scenarios, the definition of the competitive spaces and the design of the execution plan. In short, it is organizational redesign at its best.

In parallel, I'm a board member for a small in vitro diagnostic company, I lecture in business schools, I'm providing consulting advice through various networks and I'm editing a book on sustainable development in the health care industry.

What would I rather be doing? I guess that if I was winning the lottery, I would take a few month sabbatical (up to one year, but not more) to tour the world in order to do two things simultaneously: look at the functioning of the healthcare system across countries, and play the local golf courses.

The value would be an accumulated experience that I'd be able to provide to private and public

players under the form of consulting advice, hence helping to make the procurement of healthcare more effective.

As far as the golfing is concerned, it would only help me concentrate on the serious issues while giving me gulps of fresh air and polishing my short game...

In retrospect, had I known what the future was holding, I would have been studying economics a lot more.

Today, I'm an avid reader of economic paper and journals (such as The Economist), as we live in a world of intertwined business and economic relationships. The world is already global: it belongs to those who understand the metabolism of this gigantic organism, which used to be made of disjoint pieces and is now, and increasingly, a kind of Frankenstein creature, with a life of its own, escaping the understanding and control of its creators.

**Elizabeth Burton, MBA**  
**Eastern Oregon University (EOU), USA**



I completed my MBA at Eastern Oregon University (EOU), where I was working as a Regional Director. Working in higher education, I felt that attaining a graduate degree would offer me some exciting challenges as well as open career doors, and that was very much the case.

In the midst of my career as an administrative professional, I realized that I wanted to further explore management approaches and study best practices in my field. I began to look into graduate programs that I could complete while working and when EOU developed an MBA program that accommodated my schedule, I applied.

I found that graduate coursework offered me a positive framework to objectively address questions of managerial decision-making, ethics, budgeting and operations design that improved my attitude and enhanced my work performance. I was energized by the learning and by being able to directly apply new knowledge for the benefit of my employer, my colleagues, and those whom we served.

I would advise others to carefully consider their MBA options in light of each program's 'fit' to their own situation in terms of regional accreditation, professional accreditation, teaching faculty, scheduling, delivery mode, core content, electives, thesis/project requirements and cost. If seeking a specific

career or advancement path, I would also advise potential students to investigate the employing organization's preferences regarding MBA schools and programs.

One of my goals in attaining an MBA was to qualify to teach college Business courses. I was able to secure a part-time instructional position that began just three weeks after graduation, and I have continued teaching for the last seven years.

I also had the opportunity to advance in higher education administration, and I feel that my MBA completion was a strong influence in my selection. Having recently been a graduate student exposed me to current university culture and policies from a student perspective, and that was extremely valuable in forming approaches to problem solving and strategic planning.

After several years commuting to a very demanding campus job, I recently returned to teaching at a local community college, managing real estate, and increasing participation on business and non-profit organization boards. My MBA studies and

credentialing have been helpful in all of these roles, and in working toward a different career focus toward supporting economic development as a strategy for alleviating poverty in developing areas. I would love to work internationally in micro-lending or in Study Abroad education opportunities for students of all ages.

With 20-20 hindsight, I wish that I had known how accessible and rewarding an MBA program could be, so that I would have pursued it earlier. Graduate work in Business gave me vision that better informed my subsequent career choices, and I would highly recommend it to others who are looking for more than just another credential or, heaven forbid, a strategy to delay repaying student loans! A quality MBA program requires real engagement and commitment for a life-changing outcome, and I hope that those who read this will be inspired to seek that kind of experience for themselves.

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Nowadays, knowledge plays an important role in your life because without having it, people do not know how to do the work, get a good job or achieve their goals. Understanding it, they have the tendency to improve their knowledge by taking Master courses to satisfy with their demands. There are the varieties of reason they choose to get MBA such as: 1. Being jobless and wanting to learn more through a MBA, 2.

Taking MBA course to get to the managerial level, etc...

I took the MBA because I wanted to improve my leadership skills as well as update the new knowledge to achieve my goals. I got three acceptance letters for attending MBA course in Philippines, South Korea and Singapore after applying for scholarship there. I selected to study in Singapore because it was a one year course and internationally recognized by UK University.

Even though I had taken my Bachelor in Marketing in Malaysia and had over five years of experience the MBA course also gave me new knowledge as I could learn deeply about leadership and management.

Before attending MBA course, I had worked as Regional Manager for Donate For Children, a US based non-profit organization in Viet Nam; I travelled many provinces/cities and found that almost none of the students had training on soft or other leadership skills when studying at school because they are always expected to focus on studying only and rarely to learn interpersonal skills. They do not have the orientation or know what career they will persuade in future; hence they lack social leadership, and interpersonal skills.

Another thing is that the nutrition is not considered on each meal, people just care how they consume the food to make full for having enough energy to work for the whole day. As the result, their health is not good as lacking of the calcium, vitamins and other supplements. Besides that, the pollution from factories, firms, waste materials are factors influencing food quality (food is not clean and fresh). That makes me think that I have to do business in healthcare and education.



After completing my MBA in Singapore, I opened a social enterprise which focused on the industry I mentioned above. The projects/ programs are related to the following missions:

- Providing competent and quality healthcare services by consultants, testing and training programs to community health.
- Improving the horizons of medical knowledge to doctors, other healthcare professionals, medical students through conferences, seminars and training combined domestic and international tours, explore and experience.
- Enhancing relationships locally and internationally with scientists, doctors, nurses, other healthcare professionals to support and assist community healthcare programs together.
- Giving scholarships for poor medical students who have good academic results as well as having the spiritual community.

These missions makes my Association to enhance position as the leading education and healthcare Association, committed to the care and improvement of human life to community region. Moreover, it is a choice in Vietnam from scientists, doctors, nurses, other healthcare professionals, medical students in region because of our preminent poor patient care and training programs.

It takes time to achieve these goals but I believe that I can make it happen when having

experiences and gaining the knowledge from MBA course as well.

## Mary Salvino MBA'08

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I graduated from the University of Phoenix in 2008 and worked full-time while earning my degree.

The University of Phoenix offered the program in 6-week modules that allowed for students to skip courses at the time the courses were originally offered and pick them up when those courses come back in the rotation - this option was extremely valuable for me due to the fact that I knew in advance that I knew when I was going to be busy at work

Earning my MBA gave me the opportunity to learn about different ways to approach naturally occurring problems in the workplace. Attending the University of Phoenix gave me the opportunity to connect with senior level executives in a variety of industries.

I earned my MBA at the height of a global economic recession, the company wherein I worked restructured, my immediate superior left the company and I was a casualty of that decision. I then decided to open my own company and marketed myself as a career and

business strategist that catered to both individuals and small businesses.

My advice to others wanting to pursue an MBA is:

Know the 'why' of deciding to put in the resources to earn your MBA – If you are 40+ and earning your MBA, it is unlikely that you will recover the financial costs related to acquiring your advanced degree. This is especially true if you are a woman.

Earning your MBA is a two-edged sword insofar as if you are in a career transition, it is likely that you will be perceived as, 'too expensive' to be considered for some opportunities.

Expect the best, plan for the worst and know that nothing lasts forever.

I am currently and adjunct instructor at a private college that caters to international students. I am also still working as a career and business management strategist.

I am thoroughly enjoying my current positions, and I have a feeling that there is at least one book in my future.

What I wish I had known earlier in my career:

- Everyone can be replaced
- The only way that you can advance your career when working for someone else is to make money for your employer

- Improving the company's 'bottom line' can be done by one of two ways:

- Find and implement ways to save the company money
- Identify new sources of income for the company

**Phil Sproat, MBA**  
**St. George's University, Grenada, West Indies, USA**



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I took my MBA at St. George's University, Grenada, West Indies. The MBA opened up additional career opportunities, the ability to post for better positions, self-enrichment, improved/refreshed/broadened critical thinking skills, and demonstrated an interest in my own development as a person and an employee.

So, I am 50. This was always a personal goal of mine. I do have the satisfaction of achieving that goal. However, I did not stop my career, life and family and do this MBA through one of the more pretentiously acclaimed Universities. Thus, I am not sure how much weight the degree carries with it.

My advice for other people thinking about doing an MBA's would be to determine what you want from the degree, how much you can invest and how much you can sacrifice. Understanding this will impact the timing and manner in which you will attempt

the coursework. Don't be intimidated by those who have attended prestigious programs. You've put in your time, and effort to complete the requirements and expand your perspective.

I am currently looking for a new professional role e.g. as a Program Director, Operations role, or a Key Administrative support role with an NGO, Healthcare Group, or similar large organization. My MBA has re-energized me in regards to wanting to make a positive difference in society.

I wish I had had more confidence, poise, and a stronger sense of accomplishment already earlier in my career. The maturity I possess now could have assisted me at a few different points and junctions in my career and how to apply passion and courage at the right times and diplomacy at other points.

**Nicole Le Maire, MBA**  
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My preference was to start as a distance learning MBA student at Bradford University, UK, in 2004. Yet, as I was travelling 75% of my time, I had to move onto the part-time weekend programme at NIMBAS, the Netherlands and did various subjects in Germany. I then decided to finish my MBA as a full-time exchange student at York University, Canada, and graduated with an MBA in 2007 – overall, it took me four years with distance learning, part-time and full time – a real adventure.

I actually started with my MBA because I wanted to do something next to work with a totally different focus. I gained various practical skills and was offered an unbiased perspective on international business processes, learning the latest organizational techniques and tools.

I benefited from my MBA as a new frontier of entrepreneurial model activity in my eyes would be the idea of keep sustainability of a business within HR (people), with quite specific implications both for entrepreneurs



and existing businesses. “As an entrepreneur, if you’re the originator, you need to be faster than ever”. Nilas Zennstorm

I found that certain organizations fully adopt a supportive approach to assisting and facilitating MBA possibilities and those which uphold fair scope for career advancement and opportunities (overseas) stand a much better chance of successfully employing talent.

However, it is by which we judge ourselves, as my experience of MBA students or graduates is that they do not understand that operational and tactical experience is necessary as well – it is not only strategy. Rolling up your sleeves and actually working from the ground up is necessary for everyone, even MBA’s!

I believe part-time and distance learning is better suited for people a little bit older. Full-time means that you are likely to be the oldest in the group, which means that your experience is different as you have more years in the business world. You may not get as much

experience out of it as you may want. Ask for the minimum requirements expected from MBA students of all ages.

The new niche service I offer (now live at <http://www.newtohr.com>), looks to close the gap which exists within human resources globally and is designed specifically to offer guidance, support and development opportunities to new entrants, encouraging talented and able individuals to develop to their full potential and become the next generation of MDs, CEOs and industry leaders.

There is no denying that running a business is hard work. There are days when it may feel like a chore, rather than a pleasure. However the nature of my work is helping people. I help them to get their own HR functions off the ground and talk them through what is involved with HR at their particular stage. It is inspiring to see them go from strength to strength off the back of my advice. That is empowering!

NewToHR offers support through a range of developmental opportunities including bespoke 'career plans' tailored to the individuals needs and aspirations, mentoring plans, personal advice for graduates and junior entrants, workshops and also confidential consultations.

I currently am doing what I wanted – guiding and assisting other people with their careers and helping start-up businesses with HR.

Looking on opening up a few offices in Asia and South America over the next 3 years. We endeavor to provide an exceptional service as

we advice organizations on how to make HR operations more effective in a non-traditional HR way.

I think the advice to follow your dreams where ever they may lead you is the best I have heard. For me that led me on an adventure which took me around the world. I never looked back and enjoyed success (and some failures) by simply following where my heart led me. It isn't always plain sailing, but being open to something new is always a great idea and that is why I love my business.

Don't ask for permission to be successful! What you choose to do with your life is not based on your parents expectations, what your teachers thought you were capable of, what your husband or partner thinks you should do or even what your friends are doing with their lives. It is all about what moves and inspires you. You should never need anyone else to tell you what that is or should be.



## Aamer Trambu, MBA

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The most important thing I learned during my MBA was how a change in any single business process can impact the entire organization.

E.g.: You run a cookie store. In order to increase revenue you decide to sell more cookies, but what impact will it have on the dough supplies in inventory, on the vendor that supplies you sugar, flour; how does it impact accounting, taxes, equipment and more importantly your employees. An MBA makes you appreciate the multiple moving parts in a business and helps create a mind set to better understand how each part can contribute to building a great business.

An MBA won't help you find the answer to every business' immediate problems. However, it will help you understand what questions you need to ask and whom to ask these questions to. It helps you better isolate a problem area or problem team member and help you address this issue in a professional manner. Since starting my MBA, I have been able to identify some common bottlenecks and operational issues that most businesses face every day but most businesses don't realize these problems can lead to severe problems.

My advice for other MBAs:

- 1) Read
- 2) Question Every Assumption
- 3) During your MBA; begin consulting local businesses and non-profits (do it for free)

I am currently working as a Senior Business Analyst for the third largest pay-tv service in the US, Dish Network.

Take notes all the time, this is the single most useful technique in retaining and applying new knowledge you learn every day.

**Lesley J. Davidson, P.E., St.S2, MBA**  
**University of Florida, USA**



My MBA is my fourth degree. I guess you could say I was one of those people that never had a clear five year plan, but now I hear that is a good thing! I have a BS in Biology and a BS in Anthropology from Emory University. Not wanting to go the medical school route, I soon found that biology did not support me comfortably. Also, there was little job security and after a particularly bad real estate bubble in Southern California (1990), I found myself laid off. Seeking more marketable skills, I then matriculated at CSULB (Go Long Beach State 49ers!) where I earned a BSCE (Civil/Structural - Seismic) engineering degree. I have almost 20 years of engineering experience now.

During the last few years, I have been employed in the public sector working for a municipal government. Tired of continual (and drastic) challenges to our budget and typical political maneuvers, I decided again to increase my skillset and earn my MBA with the goal of returning to the private sector.

In May 2013, I completed the University of Florida (yup, Go GATORS!) Executive MBA program which has an emphasis on finance, but covers all the basics - accounting, strategy, statistical data analysis, marketing, logistics and ops. I loved the program. I think the multi-disciplinary background will help me move forward in business as well as start my own company. The support and network of my

MBA cohort and Gator Nation is invaluable as well.

I am currently negotiating for a new position, a higher level position at a private sector engineering firm. My new role will be leadership, business development as well as managing engineers. I will work at a higher management level with my MBA skills while guiding younger engineers. The MBA training has given me a new, wider perspective grounded in data, yet infused with confidence. I wish I earned my MBA ten years earlier! But, I think the timing was best for me (and my teenaged daughter). Actually, my MBA cohort's average age was unusually high. As such, I learned as much from my classmates as I did from my excellent professors.

Faults I have found...recruiters are very narrow minded. They do not understand multi-disciplinary students. Nor do they add enough value to older (more experienced) students. Friends in other cohorts say that the younger, professional MBA programs are simply not as rich because the students don't have as much real world/business experience. I recommend

gaining at least 5 to 10 years of business experience before attempting your MBA.

Things I learned in school....CONNECT. Network with your classmates, professors, administrators and their networks. Networking is not just to help you, but also how YOU can help others. Every time you help someone else, you learn, you gain, and you grow. Get out of your comfort spot cause that is where the learning is! Be strong! As they say, fake it until you make it! And enjoy the journey.

STUDY...you just cannot get around the statistics and numbers. They tell a story too. Don't be blind to the facts and don't be swayed by gut reactions. Don't fall for heuristics that will steer you toward an incorrect decision. Ask questions. Give input. Participate. It will help you become a better MBA.

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I am an MBA graduate from Buckinghamshire New University in the UK (2011/2012). During my MBA classes, I acquired lots of skills that helped shape my ideas and made me become a well-informed management consultant, and excellent business manager.

My main reason for choosing to study an MBA is to be able to develop business management skills and have a deep understanding of business from a global perspective. These skills will enable me to become a well-informed management consultant being able to analyze challenges faced by businesses, so as to shape out reasonable solutions of action.

The following knowledge was gained during my MBA classes.

- i. Business report writing and Research Skills
- ii. Effect of culture on globalization of business
- iii. Business decision making and management
- iv. Presentation Skills
- v. Evaluation of company using financial ratios

- vi. Business problem solving techniques
- vii. Market Research and Audit
- viii. Managing organizational Change in a global context
- ix. Work Force Engagement
- x. Consultancy skills

Prior to my MBA, I had three years of experience in B2B high-tech marketing as a marketing manager of an ICT company based in Nigeria.

Furthermore, during my MBA program, I carried out a consultancy project for a B2B high-tech company based in UK, where I created a “Marketing Strategy for a Next Generation Platform Launch”. This experience enabled me to be an expert in high-tech marketing.

In addition, as a result of my excellent presentation skills, I was invited by my department at the end of my program to present a speech to the new cohorts of business postgraduate students on the challenges and benefit of an MBA program.

Presently, I have started a management and IT consulting company (Padron Consulting) based in Nigeria, and I aim to establish a branch in the UK by 2014, and also to other parts of the world.

This has been my ambition and main reason for studying and MBA in the UK. I am very happy with the skills acquired as I am able to apply them to my business.

My future aim is to make Padron Consulting a global brand, shaping solutions to international business challenges, helping companies gain presence and market share in foreign countries.

## **Violeta Ilic, MBA**

**University of Westminster, London, UK**

I took my MBA at the University of Westminster, Baker Street, W1, London. The Westminster MBA is accredited by the Association of MBA's (AMBA).

The knowledge and skills acquired on the programme are designed to build on existing experience and to develop the ability to solve any business challenges that might arise in a future career. The MBA programme curriculum was split into two different learning experiences. The core modules covered the factors that shape the business environment and the functional dimensions of management, while two elective modules provided the opportunity for a degree of specialization to be achieved.

I was a mature student and had already enjoyed a substantial life and work experience prior to joining the course. I had experience in both state controlled and market economies, thus giving me a comparative advantage over my fellow students in understanding the strength and weaknesses of different economic environments. In professional terms, there were relatively few unknowns for me, especially as I have moved between different sectors and industries. I had already gained a generic skill set required for a business environment however I lacked technical, analytical and research skills. These deficiencies were the main reason for my joining the course. My experience has taught



me that in order to move forward, it is essential to continually develop new skill sets, acquire knowledge, and stay in tune, not just with technology which is rapidly becoming a key factor in most business activity, but also with the new perspectives that any manager must constantly update.

The MBA experience opened a whole new world to me. The disciplines studied have had a huge impact on the way I now formulate opinion. The methodology of approach and analysis of a problem, the conducting of research in order to devise an executable plan are among the key disciplines I have developed. In addition the MBA instilled in me real confidence in my ability to make informed decisions, providing a greater appreciation of the rationale behind company's directives, and how to implement them decisively.

The first week of induction was really quite daunting. We were told that this would probably be the most difficult year in our lives (professionally), but one that will be the most rewarding too. We were left in no doubt that



we would be required to study extensively and diligently, work by the deadline, score minimum 65 to pass exams, participate in workshops and that this regime would start from the day one. There were 14 modules to fit in one year, plus the project at the end of the year. With word limitations, it was necessary to be concise without compromising on the content. All assignments required the inclusion of complete referencing from a variety of sources. Participation in group projects was a valuable experience, and made me aware that the complexity of most of the processes in an organization places them beyond the control of any one individual. The only effective way to tackle process improvement or re-design is through the use of teamwork.

Prior to enrolling I had confidence to handle almost any business problems. I had already become skilled at time and people management, but had little experience to risk management. One of the compelling reasons for my taking the MBA course was to be able to analyze risk and make educated and cost effective decisions. I found the experience was stimulating and transformative, and aside from the specific applications studied the self-analysis we had to do throughout the course was enlightening for me. I became aware of weaknesses especially in terms of my leadership and communications skills. I had always thought of myself to be a great listener, able to lead and inspire people around me, but during team work it became apparent that I was reluctant to trust other members to make important decisions. The course has taught me

to be more inclusive while still maintaining my assertiveness in delivering my message. This has been a particular skill that I have improved on.

There are two types of MBA's, those that move towards a "business" path (banking, marketing, project management, etc.) and those that end up doing the same job they would have done without the MBA (such as an accountant now being the team lead of accountants). The first type is the one that really benefitted from the MBA. Only a small percentage of the value of an MBA comes from in-class learning. The real value comes from networking with classmates and alumni, not just the opportunity to do so, but also the forced practice since you are essentially required to attend so many networking events.

Reputation; a professional with Cass MBA will be perceived as having something more than someone who merely read some finance books, even if both actually know the same material. It's called "brand equity" and the value of an MBA has only real value if it is gained from a reputable university or education facility. Finally and crucially I would advise people to undertake the course while they are in their late twenties, as even with an MBA it will still be a long route before progression to senior management.

I have not found it easy after completing the course. I am not especially a good networker and the rigors and time constraints of making a living have prevented me from tapping into my

Alumni. I need to address this as if I leave it for much longer, I could find myself without any real prospect of actually benefiting from my MBA. I haven't progressed as I would have hoped and haven't yet reached a desired goal.

I want to progress to a more strategic role, I found during the course that my analytical skills and ability to see a "bigger picture" are my core strengths and with the newly acquired skill to analyze financial statements, define appropriate organizational structures and think about business strategy, I am confident in taking a challenge. I have gained most of my work experience in fashion retail, and would like to employ my newly honed skill sets to radically change the industry.

I wish I had more belief in myself and to recognize that experience is not enough to make a difference. Also, I wish I had been more assertive in defining my goal, something that MBA makes you really think about.

**Kirk Anderson, MBA**  
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Indiana University – South Bend (IUSB) is where I completed my MBA. There are a number of satellite campuses throughout the state that are all accredited, very challenging, and on Par with the IU Kelly School of Business MBA. My undergraduate degree was a BS in Chemical Engineering from Michigan State University, graduating in the spring of 1999. I moved to South Bend shortly after for a position at a Supply Chain Software Firm (Manhattan Associates). IUSB conveniently offered night classes and allowed for an MBA candidate to spread the program out over a number of years. I completed the program in roughly 3 years while working full time.

After receiving my MBA I was able to move into a business role with my company that focused more on account management and sales. With hard work this accelerated my path up the corporate ladder as well as my earnings potential. Without the MBA I would have been

overlooked for some opportunities and I do feel it's been a differentiator when looking for new roles. For my MBA, I focused on Domestic and International Finance and feel my background in engineering and new understanding of financial matters has allowed me to be very creative in offering my clients solutions to their business issues.

I've spent my whole career (Roughly 15 years) in the Supply Chain Software and Services industry. In the late 1990's the internet bubble was at its peak and all software companies were hiring as many engineers as possible regardless of their discipline. They figured if they could sign an engineer they could teach and train them to code. With this said I started in a technical support/development role and quickly found that I was more of a people person than a coder. Choosing to get an MBA meant I could move more into a business function and open up future possibilities for my career. I've enjoyed the path I've taken and feel the MBA has been an important asset if not

just to check the box when looking for a new opportunity. To date I'm heading up software sales for a cloud based Warehouse Management Solution (WMS) that is disruptive in the market and the future of my industry. I'm very excited to be with Synergy / Snapfulfil and expect to grow the North American Market rapidly!

Advice for other MBA's is to make sure you have a good understanding of why you are putting the effort into receiving an MBA. The title doesn't automatically open all doors these days and you need to know how best to use the education and experience. For me, I knew I wanted an advanced degree to differentiate myself from the rest and preferably an MBA. The title "might" give you your first shot but it's up to you to make the most of the opportunity.

I am Vice President of Sales with Synergy North America, provider of Snapfulfil. Snapfulfil is a proven Cloud/SaaS based Warehouse Management Solution (WMS) built exclusively for the web, based on 35 years of WMS experience. Unique to Snapfulfil there are no upfront Capital Expenditure requirements and no long-term contracts. Included in the low monthly subscription is the software solution, implementation services, essential hardware, training, and integration needed to run a business. Snapfulfil provides significant value for Small/Medium sized businesses to Enterprise clients! Cloud based solutions are the wave of the future and Snapfulfil is well positioned to give customers an option of future technology today. Typically the ROI is

immediate given the rapid implementation (roughly 45 business days), operational savings of 15% - 30%, little to no IT requirements, and no payment until agreed go-live. I'm very excited to support our customers with a strategic business solution that reduces operations costs, improves inventory & order fulfillment accuracy, frees up capital investment for other strategic projects, and allows their supply chain to be a competitive advantage in the marketplace!

I can't say I would rather be in a different role. I feel my background education and work experience has set me up for my current role very nicely. I guess if I had to do it all over again I might think about a role in Finance. Maybe a financial or wealth advisor but I'm pretty happy with where I am now.

Always evaluate your current situation and available options. There have been times in my career where I have been naïve about the "State of the Union" for my current employer and their ability to turn on a dime to reduce staff. Always have a backup plan and a strong network of who you know and more importantly who knows you! Contact your network regularly and offer your time to help others as one day you will need their help in your career advancement.

Contact: Please direct readers to my LinkedIn profile for contact and networking connection.

I accept all LinkedIn connections @ [www.linkedin.com/in/kirkeanderson](http://www.linkedin.com/in/kirkeanderson). Please send invites to [anderson.kirk1@gmail.com](mailto:anderson.kirk1@gmail.com).

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“The organization is a living entity” ..!

I'm pleased to share within this e-book my exciting learning experience through the Executive MBA's studies at the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) where I got my degree in 2010.

The decision to start the process was not easy to be taken first because of the responsibilities I had at professional and family level, second because of the duration of the program and third because at that moment I had not enough information and feedback from other MBA's to analyze the issues whether embarking or not in a such process.

However, at the same time, I felt a need to have a polyvalent profile. As my first academic degree is engineer, I felt during the eight years of professional experience within various areas, especially in sustainable development and strategy planning, that having additional managerial skills at high level will be very helpful to get a whole picture of the organization to a better understanding of its complexity and then being more efficient in increasing the company's productivity. This

has been confirmed within the MBA studies after which not only my perception of the organization system has been changed but also my professional's interest area has turned to the business development wherein I have been finding interest, pleasure and satisfaction with a strong green influences driven both from my initial agronomist profile and my initial working experience in environment and sustainable development. Let me share with you my perception of some of the most relevant elements through my experience which I hope could help to make decision if you were analyzing the opportunity to follow such Executive MBA process.

Every training course followed within the program deserve to be a subject of a book in itself with the lessons learned, the analogies with the field, the keys, the dynamic of the students, the interference with the family life etc., but for this first article linked to that subject, let me give you a general idea about the EMBA process from my point of view.

The most exciting level within the Executive MBA studies is the fact that across the program, the emphasis is put on the action learning educational approach rather than the theoretical one which we can characterize as just an essential input to standardize concepts for MBA's students at worldwide level. Such process helps a lot to integrate what you learn directly to your work and then make your new knowledge easy to assimilate as it stimulates both of the two cognitive learning processes: organization and elaboration. What was amazing is that, for each course you find a link with at least one of your current or previous work situation. Thus, you got the answer to several questions you might asked yourself, to others you did not find any answer before and especially how to complete with the missed puzzle piece which sometimes, even it could be the smallest one, it is the most active on the project system that you have to look for and give the importance that it deserve.

Moreover, the chronological succession of the different courses was well-organized and helped you to assimilate the different pillars of the management organizational system which are the keys to success. Since the first training module you realize that the company is a 'living' entity that breathes the projects and communicates with its pillars that are its human resources that the manager should value, motivate and recognize their contribution to achieve the expected results. The challenge of the manager is to give the organization a long life by managing its complexity through personalizing and

designing the relevant tools according to the particularities of the organization which is very specific to each one.

By the second training module, you understand that, to grow within a market, the 'living' entity needs a marketing strategies which the manager have to develop, actualize and adapt to the market context so as to provide a continuity of the services and/or products. This is strongly linked and contributes directly to the company financial performance which reflects the 'health' situation of the company. At this level of the MBA's process, we ask about the mechanism and the tools to let the manager optimize the resources in transforming them into goods and services, like the regulation system for human and the photosynthesis for plants and then, by the middle of the MBA's learning process, you will be given the answer. However, what you should know is that there are various tools and the challenge of the manager is to adopt the suitable one to be integrated with the existing information systems to strengthen the competitive strategies. As regards the organizational replication, the manager of the 'living' entity needs a long term strategy designing whether to spread at local level, regional and/or international one. Here is the expectation from the last training module: Strategic management. Thereby, you confirm that the living entity is a dynamic system where every pillar is strongly linked to the others to ensure the sustainability of the organization. The strategy should be built within a participatory approach where all the stakeholders are

relevant to contribute with their input taking into consideration the particularities of the Economic and Socio-political context and according to the market business intelligence. There is no magic baton behind a success of the organization however when you recognize a successful business know that there is a strong united team working behind within an iterative and flexible approach able to a quick adaptability allowing a clever positioning in the market. However, the sustainability can only be guaranteed if and only if the corporative social responsibility (CSR) component is integrated to each axe of the company's strategy. That is why I believe that the social business model is having the most promising future since the CSR is integrated to each component of the project's value chain of the organization's business. This is what I hope to continue developing over the near future within SOLIDEVE International, a Canadian NGO of which I'm a co-founder.

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Once upon a time there was a teenage boy, who wanted to purchase those-days-popular high-heel shoes. After the negative answer from the potential sponsors, his parents, a new strategy was needed. "Have to sell some golf balls I have found!" A certain target customer in mind, a set of balls was carefully selected. Within a few hours the young man was all smiles.

Economics, and commercial industry, was a short-listed educational path in the secondary high school. The military service in the Telephone Company, one year at the UN-forces in Syria and the forthcoming transition from NMT technology to GSM changed the plans. ICT&telecom industry offered me a number of different assignments in Finland and abroad. The long career, with several roles and responsibilities at the same employer, provided me with a set of knowledge, experience and skills. Certain competences and capabilities that were gained proved to be essential and common within the business management area, too. This was noticed and verified first during the MBA-studies. Of course, my investor and forestry/agricultural hobbies have also contributed to the personal intangible assets acquired so far.



In 2008, when my son was old enough not to be attended 24/7, I started looking for master level business education, to be carried out while working. Hanken and Henley had the most interesting and suitable MBA-programmes. Due to the changed company policy, I was forced to make another analysis round. The focus was put on the price-quality ratio, instead of the qualitative factors only. The pointer stopped at the Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences. The only but was the pre-requisite that "the applicant should be a Master or Bachelor of Economics, or possess similar knowledge and skills". I ventured to apply, passed the exam and started my studies in autumn 2009. The other impediment one might think of was the distance: to study in Tornio and live in Espoo. That was solved by taking advantage of technology; lectures were given over the Internet. Actually, the Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences has over ten years' experience to exploit distance learning methods. Additionally, course materials were mainly available via a Web-based application,

which was also used to upload students' case studies and other assignments to. Each semester was kicked off locally by a face-to-face seminar. There upcoming courses were introduced to students by lecturers, principal lecturers and professors originated from the Netherlands, Austria, Russia, Nigeria, China and Finland. The programme consists of modules, which are logically intertwined with one another and which proceed collectively in the form of research schools every semester.

Lecturers emphasized repeatedly the significance of critical, objective and holistic thinking, as well as justified and evidence based argumentation. Contents wise many courses included empirically familiar aspects, but now one have had an opportunity to build up also the theoretical side of the big picture. I found new internal strengths, for example, analytical skills - in addition to the ability to learn lots of new things. Also the abilities to justify and argue one's opinions developed during the studies. By utilizing recent practical experiences, lecturers' advice and facts from research literature, one has been able to create new insights. Apart from the more or less common core MBA courses, the most interesting ones were Knowledge and Innovation Management, and Value Network Management. Additionally, Marketing, which I thought to be my weakness, proved to be easy and funny.

If being an MBA means that one has proved to manage business acumen in a concrete way, it will be recommended to gain diverse

experience first. For example, I had experience of two decades in international organizations, proven capabilities to manage projects, products, services, innovation, Agile and processes, to consult sales, as well as 15 years' experience in competence and change management, before the MBA-studies. I have also improved strategic, operational and financial efficiency to achieve shorter time-to-customer, higher customer satisfaction, revenue growth, cost savings and sustainability. Investing as a hobby since the 80s involves the passion to execute company and macro level analyses. Also entrepreneurship, financial management and accounting experience, besides a dedicated attitude and advanced capabilities to learn and apply new skills, contributed to the GPA of 4,6 in the MBA Diploma.

Currently, after having graduated, I know that my dream job may utilize a strong combination of business, leadership and ICT&telecom technology competences. The willingness for further personal development is strong, e.g. by visiting the discomfort zone every now and then. I am enthusiastic about business and strategy development related programs/projects, incorporating gladly collaboration, innovation and financial management. I am ready for new challenges – ready when you are.

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I earned my MBA from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. The MBA from Case Western is an excellent mix of quantitative and leadership skills development due to its focus on EQ (emotional intelligence.) Because fully half of us on the part-time MBA were also working full time for organizations, and because this program was not "amended" for part-time students (it was the exact same program as the full-time MBA students would take, same time commitment and very rigorous), we were able to apply what we read, studied and learned at University on the job on a constant basis, gaining real-time feedback and seeing actual results from implementations, forecasts and modeling, which was invaluable.

The MBA has enabled me to change job duties fluidly, and to be prepared for projects that would be somewhat out of my direct sphere of control and responsibility. I've been able to change jobs, titles and even career paths numerous times, and the diversity of responsibility, challenges and corporate cultures makes all the difference. I have never remained bored at work for very long, and when I have, I move to the next job, company, project or challenge. Since my career has thus

far entailed many more job titles, responsibilities and skills requirement changes, I embrace change more readily; I am not intimidated by the prospect of a project ending, a company being acquired, etc., because I know I will find another fit, and a new set of challenges waiting right behind the closing door (and in front of that open window!).

Beyond the career impact that the MBA degree provided, personal finance and investing benefits have been outstanding. This may not apply for all MBAs (more on that later), but the fact that my work was predominantly in finance, I have been able to build and manage an impressive investment portfolio, and help colleagues to do the same using the principles and discipline learned during my years of study. I often get asked, "Does a finance background really help in gaining better returns?" I can tell you from my own experience that it absolutely does. Finance theories, when applied together with critical thinking and common sense experience, are a

key advantage in competitive (i.e. not just standard returns) investing.

My experience has been overwhelmingly positive. Sure, I read the never-ending diatribes about the value, or lack of value, of the MBA degree, the stereotypical MBA grad with little interactive skill, little concept of entrepreneurship, etc., but for me, the value of my MBA degree is very high. Perhaps the reason is that I have never focused on getting the best title, the most prestigious office, the fattest possible paycheck, but instead on the ability to apply what I have learned and learn continuously. These are the things I value most in a professional career and those that will matter most when my professional career has ended.

I happen to be partial to the part-time MBA not only because that is the one I chose, but because this allowed me to apply what I learned every day. The degree took me 5 years to achieve, but the reinforcement of seeing results on the job of what I learned in the classroom was invaluable. In my experience, the best managers are those with an advanced degree, and those who earned those after some time in the workforce.

The MBA degree pursuit taught me that learning really never stops. Effective people, not just managers, should always be looking for opportunities to try new things, move out of comfort zones and most of all never sit still.

There is one absolute recommendation I would make to those considering getting an MBA

degree and that is if you are going to invest the resources (time, money, emotional energy, etc.) in this degree, absolutely choose a fully accredited and recognized MBA program. I stress recognized, because there are so many MBA degrees being awarded by marginally effective organizations. The definition of recognized goes beyond just accredited as well; choose a school that ideally has an international reputation or recognition (you can find these in the Financial Times, for example) or if you are not able to attend a school with an international reputation, attend one that will be easily identifiable to an out of state employer or organization. Finally, please know that one cannot earn a valuable MBA online only. That would be like learning to be a surgeon online. Sure, you might be able to take some classes online, but in reality, the true value of the MBA comes from working with people (and machines, too) in an interactively competitive and dynamic environment. I have yet to find online courses with a truly dynamic interchange capability, and I have taken, and continue to study, through very reputable online programs.

I am currently working as an accountant and operations consultant for promising start ups and very highly regarded non-profit, society, community and scientifically- forward organizations. I love the diversity of experience required in this job, and the intrinsic pleasure of working with brilliant entrepreneurs and imaginative, focused leaders. I take care of the financial, accounting and operational background stuff, so the

entrepreneurs and organizational leaders can focus on strategic goals. My competitive advantage is that I have intentionally developed myself to be the best second-in-command, the "great number two person," with high EQ enabling me to build and motivate effective teams, build customer base and sales while at the same time proud to be in the background, taking care of the work that has to be done so the CEO can stay on target with their key mission.

I'd like to continue in this line of work, insuring that innovative technologies and ideas become reality, and participating in what promises to be a very different work model for the future.

I wish I had known that jobs are not supposed to get, or be, boring. When a job gets boring, this is a clue that something is lacking with the organization model or the management. Both of these are warning signals. Sure, there are parts of every function that are more "standardized" than others; I am an accountant and a business process consultant after all, so I understand that each function has some more intrinsically exciting tasks than others. I also understand that you, the employee, have the obligation to the organization and to yourself, to seek out new challenges, find better ways to get to goal, take on valuable new projects, etc., but when these efforts are not met with enthusiasm from the organization, it really is time to leave, unless a management shakeup, buyout, etc. is on the horizon.

## **Ali Siddiqui, MBA**

**The Aligarh Muslim University, India**

(The author is an experienced human resources professional working on various niche assignments in India and the Gulf. He can be contacted at: [ali.delhi@yahoo.com](mailto:ali.delhi@yahoo.com)).

My name is Ali and I'm an Indian by nationality. I was born to a beautiful family comprising of my father – Mr. Khursheed Ahmad (an Electrical Engineer by profession), my mother – Mrs. Shaheda Jamal (an Urdu poet and homemaker) and an amazing pair of brothers and sisters. My hobbies have included playing the sport most Asians love – Cricket! I have also been fond of composing English poetry from an early age. Many felt I would end up in English literature but ultimately, here I am. Today, I hold a First Class degree - Master of Business Administration with specialization in Human Resources. Professionally, I have been working in responsible profiles handling various managerial assignments in Human Resources at reputed companies in India and am currently based at Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

I completed my MBA course specializing in Human Resources from the Aligarh Muslim University (popularly known as AMU globally). My University is widely recognized across the world as a leading institution for its quality of education, talented alumnus, excellent pedagogy, multi-cultural environment and its unique on-board medium of learning. Over 30,000 students of various bachelors, masters or research courses stay on campus hostels and



attend University during the morning and evening shifts.

Upon qualifying the rather difficult entrance exam for my MBA, I was also allotted a hostel close to the Faculty of Business Administration and this was where my real life and learning began. I had won the prestigious Vice Chancellor's Scholarship and was happy to be here. I had heard people complain of the quality of life in general hostels but I was awed by the excellent facilities and peers I found around myself in my hostel called Morrison Court at AMU. Over the course of the day we would attend insightful lectures on various Management subjects and in the evening participated in some wonderfully memorable Life Skill trainings. As we were benefiting theoretically from classroom lessons of Management Concepts, Leadership, Research, Marketing Communications and Human Resource Development (and dozens more); at the same time practical learning was being infused in all of us through the seminars, workshops, trainings and soft skill courses. When I could finally complete my degree, after



some real hard work (and a lifetime of fun); I could actually realize that the general perception of MBA as a mere degree is false. MBA is not just a degree; it's a way of life. Post qualification, students are not just expected to grab multi-figure salaries and mouth-watering perks in the corporate world. Much more than that, students are expected to get hold of their future, to manage their resources, their priorities, and their time. To manage life itself!

I remember in our last semester of MBA, campus interviews had started and all blue chip companies were flooding our campus to 'buy' the best management graduate that they could 'afford'. As my specialization was in Human Resources, hence during the campus interviews I found myself facing super polished interviewers expecting me to be the same. Yes, I was good. I was amongst the toppers of my batch and was considered one of the best public speaker/orator of the whole University in my time. But I was young. And I knew that this wasn't an Inter-University Debate competition in which I participated to win laurels and impress peers. This was serious. This was about my future, my career and my life. And yes, I was nervous. I appeared for a couple of interviews and was able to answer their questions. And gradually after facing a couple of interviews, I was again at the top of my game. I was offered positions with a reputed HR Consulting multinational company, and another good one with a French Food company. But remember, I told you I was young. So what I did was refuse both offers and thereafter I stopped appearing in the

interviews altogether. I thought I could anytime get these offers when I wanted. And hence, continued with my course, completed it with a First Class grade and went off to my hometown for a relaxed vacation. My family was a bit upset with my careless attitude towards my future, but they loved me a lot to push me too hard. I stayed at home for around a month. I went to play long games of cricket. I had fun with my siblings. I wrote a dozen poems and received appreciation. And so it went on. Till one day, I met few of my friends from MBA. They had landed up good jobs and were all so suave and professional now. They offered me a treat, and they paid the bill as I watched. Now, this I didn't like. And for the first time since I had left AMU, I thought again about my future. I knew the fun was over. I had to catch up.

#### Taking Off

I talked to my father about it and he was happy to see me have my moment of truth and the same was felt by my mother as well. Together, they both packed my bags and wished me the best for a successful job hunt. I left for New Delhi and fortunately, within a week got an offer at Access Corporation. Access was an HR Services firm, new but growing. It was here that I started my career handling recruitments and trainings for clients across industry verticals. Just after a year of hard work at Access, I was offered a wonderful role with the Corporate Office of the Randstad Group, the world's largest HR Services company and from there on, it kept getting bigger, better. I worked



on various assignments in capacities of a Consultant, Manager and Specialist handling various HR roles. Gradually, I concentrated on my expertise and have been working in the Training & Development domain since the past several years. Around 2.5 years ago, I was offered a dream role of Regional Training Consultant to work in an advisory role for various construction projects at the Middle East and hence, I am based at Jeddah (Saudi Arabia) since then. I am not much of a planner for the future, but I believe the solid grounding that I received by virtue of my MBA education would not let me down. It has opened an unending quest for excellence in me and I wouldn't be surprised if I find myself running my own MBA institute some ten years down the line. That is the amount of belief I have in this degree. And that would be my message to all the bright ones out there seeking to excel in the domain of management. It's true that an MBA shouldn't be construed as the shortcut to success. But it definitely is a doorway that leads nowhere other than success. Trust me; if one is as truthful and determined during this course as a mother is to her child, then there is absolutely no way why they wouldn't reach where they wish to reach. You would encounter obstacles while on this learning path, sweet nothings would interrupt your pursuit but you shouldn't stop and keep your focus on the goal. And finally, the most critical success factor during your MBA would be the presence (or absence) of a true mentor. Somebody who can stand by your side motivates you, direct your energies in the right

direction and show you the way when you don't find one. For me, my mentors were my beloved parents. Life has been kind on me, and I would attribute that kindness to just three entities – The Almighty, My Parents and My MBA!

For you, and your mentor: maybe your parents, or your elder sibling, a teacher, a friend, anybody whom you have a deep faith in. And then you would know for sure, that you're holding a hand that will not let you go down. Only then, this MBA will take you where you dreamt of. And then would be no looking back for you also. You will take flight.

**Angela Banks-Pete, MBA**  
**University of Phoenix (UOP), Houston,**  
**Texas, USA**

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I acquired my MBA in 2010 from the University of Phoenix (UOP) ground campus in Houston, TX. I chose to gain my advanced degree during the economic crisis. I preferred UOP based on the fact that the GMAT was not required, plus I was able to complete the program in a shorter time frame by attending classes twice a week. At the time, I had a very demanding career which required more than 40 hours a week. Since earning an MBA, I have been "considered" for multiple career opportunities. The uncomplicated component was earning the degree; the most challenging aspect has been procurement of the desirable opportunity to employ the dexterities gained.

An advanced degree has permitted me to network business relationships with other MBA graduates; critically observe operations in anticipation of executing an innovative system, by using business strategies and concepts, in theory and in actuality. I have always been a risk taker, you cannot be afraid to take risk in business. I would propose that other MBA

graduates, not compromise on opportunities that are accessible to them. Some positions require the skills you possess; however, they are not willing to compensate what you are worth.

Therefore, the value of the degree is not appreciated as much as it should be. It is your responsibility to do the research to find out the salary rates in your area. Stop settling for less than you are worth and practice saying no to careers that are inadequate to your short-term and long-term plans.

My current role consists of being a solopreneur recruiter who partners with a virtual recruitment firm. I work for myself; however, not by myself. As per Christine Comaford, "When it comes to success in business, an MBA degree is optional. But a GSD, which is only earned by Getting Stuff Done, is required." As a solopreneur, I am required to be strategic, creative and apply time management. My future plans consist of a plethora of things such as; developing my solo career so I can oversee the business and becoming an author. I desire

to convey my story of what transpired to encourage me to continue my education; in addition to all the trials and tribulations that came along through the process. In my earlier career, I wish I would have known how to handle corporate politics, not base decisions on emotions, and how to effectively embrace opportunities. I have learned that as stated by Wayne Dyer, "Success is a journey, not a destination," regardless of if you have acquired an MBA or not. Especially, when you are motivated to become an entrepreneur as magnificently stated by Warren Tracy, "Entrepreneurship is living a few years of your life like most people will not so you can spend the rest of your life like most people cannot." As I stated previously attaining the MBA was not as challenging as exercising the proficiencies obtained. However; I highly recommend the program.

If you require any additional information or elaboration please contact.

Sincerely,

Angela Banks-Pete

**Cyril S. Thomas, MBA**  
**National Institute of Management**  
**(NIM)/Xavier School of Management, India**

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I did my MBA at NIM (National Institute of Management) and completing second one from XLRI (Xavier School of Management).

The MBA has helped me to gain better understanding of my profile and how business is affected with the work of its people. It has helped me in being more strategic toward my work delivery.

The MBA has guided and molded me to be a better performer, to understand my profile better and lead to better efficiency. I have been able to more strategic and able to lead to better performance for the whole team.

The MBA is a course that helps in polishing person to move into management role, helping organization to have more leaders to drive towards organization efficiency.

My last assignment was for AT&T as Project Manager - Global Staffing (India & APAC). I have been managing their social media recruitment, ATS, Processes and policy implementation for Recruitment, Campus



planning, Hiring plans, Branding activity.

I want to evolve myself to the next level and help organizations to grow and help in further talent attraction & innovation, be a pioneer and renowned professional in talent attraction across globe.

If I had known and done this course earlier in my career, I think I would now have a senior leadership level in some organization. I would have been able to implement more innovation and strategic work for the role being given to me.

## **Salman Shahid, MBA**

**Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad,  
Pakistan**

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I am from Pakistan; I did my masters in Information technology from National University of Modern languages Islamabad, but instead of some software house got job in banking sector so to excel in my career I did MBA (Risk Management) at Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad. It was conducted through distance learning degree launched by AIOU with collaboration of Sarc Countries. Then it was launched as COMMON WEALTH MBA (COL/MBA).

The MBA really helped me lot in my banking field as my specialized field was credits - so subjects like financial management & accounting, risk management etc. helped me lot in analyzing credit risk, calculating ratios understanding companies balance sheets. Not only did it help me in my professional field but also in tackling customer's complaints and managing my team. MBA also helped me to generate new leads and market new customers.

My experience was good but all the studied material is not implemented in reality - there's lot of difference in real market and between bookish study at Pakistan as all the study material and case studies published in our course material are of international market and the books implemented / recommended for studies are also written by foreign writers. If



we compare between our Pakistan economic condition along with growth rate in business sector and different scenarios with other foreign countries then there is a hell of a difference. So my advice is that the lay out or basic ingredients should be the same, but the practical examples should be given according to the country concerned for better understanding and implementation.

My advice to other MBA's is that practical life as compare to student life is totally different and we cannot not implement all the stuff what we have read in our courses of MBA, only some of it. An MBA can be helpful in being a better judge of things, and understanding in being a good professional.

I have total 08 years of experience in different banks at different seats. Currently I am working as manager operations in one of Pakistan Semi Government Bank.

My future plans are not yet finalized, but I have choked out two degrees from which I will choose one for growth in my banking career. One is Certified Management Accountant and other one is IBP (Institute of Bankers Pakistan)

a certified degree issued by State Bank of Pakistan after clearing 08 Papers related to banking field.

The institute does matter in your career if a master's degree done from top institutes then no doubt you will enjoy your career as growth is easy as compare to degree done from normal rating institute where you have to struggle very hard to reach at director level.

## **Terrance Brandon, MBA**

**University of Phoenix, USA**



I earned my MBA online at the University of Phoenix. Getting my MBA has been instrumental in my landing my current job and subsequent raises and/or promotions, as well as aiding me in my own and others' business ventures. I have been asked to write, edit or critique business plans on a regular basis for a variety of for-profit and non-profit ventures. My experience has been that having my MBA gets me noticed and my insights listened to and acted on in a way that they weren't when I had no degree or only a 4 year degree. I am also more confident of my own ideas and impressions and more willing to defend them, even against C level executives when necessary.

The advice I would give other MBA's and potential MBA's is twofold:

1. Get as much real world experience in doing what MBA's do as possible. Volunteer to help write, edit or critique business and marketing plans, do public speaking, attend networking groups like BNI and LeTip. Create a profile on LinkedIn. Network, Network, Network!
2. Find your passion. Pursuing an MBA is not a walk in the park. You will be called upon to make hard sacrifices in the areas of how you spend your time and who with. You may have to live without spending quality time with your family and friends, you may have to cut back on your usual hobbies and diversions and

television will become a forgotten word. If you don't have a strong 'Why?' a reason to put yourself through it that goes beyond money, you will never make it. Because there will be days when you would rather do anything than attend one more class, write one more paper or read one more chapter. You will need then to recall that you are doing this for a life-changing reason. I would even go so far as to tell you NOT to pursue your MBA until you have identified that reason or why. You need a why that is a 100 on a scale of 1-100 before you start. Because if your motivation is only at a 72 and you hit an obstacle that's a 73, you're done, you'll find some logical excuse to quit. But if your motivation is a 100, nothing can stop you from meeting your goals in school or in life.

I am currently employed as an IT support Analyst at a Large University and enjoy spending time with my family and serving in my local church. I also work a couple of part-time businesses to supplement my income and secure my retirement. If you'd like to know



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24 hr overview -

<http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/34893479> & <http://vimeo.com/59199013>

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**Jess Jandu, MBA**  
**University of Sunderland, UK**



The thought of doing a Master's degree came to me when I was still in High School. Every Friday, the Local Daily would have an exclusive edition for job postings advertised by all companies looking to hire professionals in various faculties. What I noticed at first was that majority (if not all) of the "big" companies then, were looking for a Bachelor's degree as a minimum prerequisite among others to fill these posts. Come the day of my graduation out of High School, this prerequisite had just been revised to a Master's qualification.

I figured, if ever, out of the thousands of qualified professionals in my country, I wanted to stand a chance to be hired by the best of companies, I would have to have a Master's qualification. As it were, I wanted to make my parents proud of their kid who back then, in society's eyes, didn't quite have an enviable reputation of a top scholar and thus be void of an illustrious career ahead of him. Hence, my two pronged motive to do a Master's degree took birth.

As I was completing my Higher National Diploma in Business Studies, I had been invited to United Kingdom to pursue my Bachelor's degree and I was working towards that goal till I read a post in the student magazine stating the beginning of the Bachelor's program in Kenya with the University of Sunderland through their new affiliation with Intel College

here. At the time I was already in the process of enrolling with an American University that was quite expensive. I opted for this instead as I did not have to leave my job as an Operation and Logistics Manager, nor emigrate and change my independent lifestyle at all. The immigration plans were then deferred for my perusal of a Master's degree with my sponsor in England.

Lucky enough, with perfect timing again, University of Sunderland granted the enrolment of their Master's program locally with the same Intel College. For the same reasons as before, I chose not to fly out but pursue this locally during evening classes and continue to garner my precious work experience. Why leave when you're King in your own den? ☺ At 26, I was the youngest in the program with already almost six years of professional work experience.

I got to interact with professionals from the local government, NGO bodies, bankers, doctors and other private companies which was really enriching as the experiences shared and learned were varied, interesting and most importantly, practical. Global and local

concepts were discussed in depth and jointly appraised to fit scenarios in all these outfits. This taught and equipped us to apply our skills and knowledge over a wide spectrum of our environment and its trends.

The MBA course is structured in such a way that it forces professionals to think broadly, objectively and proactively. Through research, case studies, group discussions and tailored assignments, each individual is able to merge their course learning outcomes with their own practical experiences and suggest a justified action for the future. If empowered to execute key decisions at a workplace, such an individual would achieve great heights in his/her respective career.

I was able to apply these acquired skills and knowledge in my career that fast tracked my progress to a senior management post as Human Resources and Administration Manager and Consultant in a privately owned large organization that is a leader in electrical engineering solutions in the region. I have been empowered to make certain decisions on behalf of the Management which has resulted in numerous achievements for the company and for me. The performance bonuses that I have received in the past three years gives me the indication that my work and effort is being well appreciated and recognized, a perfect balance between aspirations and reward. Graduating in 2012 with top honors was the icing on the cake. I achieved what I had set out to achieve.

MBA is like a bug. If bitten, you're smitten.

There is no boundary; there is no limit to what one can achieve in life. It all depends on who you really are and what you want in life. If you pursue your dreams, aspirations and ambition, chances are you will make it Big in life. A myriad of opportunities lie out there, it only takes an eye to spot them. I spot mine every day and knowing that am well equipped now, I plan on tapping into these by stepping into the shoes of entrepreneurship.

Life is all about challenges and risk - that's what makes it interesting. Of course there are Pros and Cons to everything, but if one maintains a positive outlook to things, it makes it easier to face the problems and move ahead.

Work to achieving your aspirations if you earnestly believe in them, and not because someone else wants you to pursue them. While doing so, do not compromise on your principles and virtues. It might be tempting to follow shortcuts en-route to glory but with the right path you will build a stronger foundation and covetable reputation that will last forever. Seek for the real inspiration within yourself, for the real power lies therein and nowhere outside.

Jess Jandu, Nairobi, Kenya.

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**Bernardo Munoz, LEED AP, MBA,  
Assoc. AIA,  
CEO at Green Systems Engineering, Inc.**

**University of Phoenix, the Pasadena,  
California, USA**



I have benefited from my MBA, by understanding the theories of business management & applying them to my business & my client relationships. This has permitted me to deliver a better product while earning the respect of my peers, clients & community.

My experience is primarily in the electrical engineering field. I have applied my knowledge of engineering & my knowledge of business to my everyday business operations & commitments.

The advice I would have for other MBA's is to form your business model, put into practice what you have learned. Be proactive & lead. One of the most important components of business is to offer your client the best possible service you can, meet his time frame, keep to his budget & above all listen to him/her. You will eventually gain his trust, confidence & respect and all of these will add to a long lasting & positive business relationship!

I am currently running my own Business,' Green Systems Engineering, Inc. in Monterey Park, Ca.

I would rather be sailing, but my business comes first. I plan on travel whenever that happens & possibly teach.

What I wish I had known earlier in my career, hmm, I guess how vast this e-world was going to be & how quickly it would evolve! I may have been more prepared for it, however, we the older generation need to catch up & become part of a fast track wonderful & explosive world in which we live that is taking us for a long journey in an exciting world filled with many questions, tremendous opportunities & new roads in both business & technology.

## **Mike VonPlinsky, MBA ('84)**

**Penn State University, USA**

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Given my BS in Aerospace Engineering, MS in Astronautical Engineering and my Military background (US Air Force Captain); my MBA was invaluable for exposure and training in a range of business skills to compliment my technical background. And, it showed future employers my commitment to continuing education that hopefully impressed them with that desire and ability.

I just started my own consulting firm to best advertise and apply my broad range of skills and experience gained in my last 35 years of work, education and growth. My plan is to use my new consulting business as a platform to apply my range of skills and experience, to get into real estate development focused on housing for disabled Veterans (I'm one myself) and to continue to expand my support for non-profit charity work ... I'm the executive director and board chair of the "Florida Helps" Foundation.

Advice to other MBA's:

- Unless you're a natural start-up Entrepreneur, leverage your MBA to get a good position in your field of choice BUT work to position yourself to move into building your own business. As the saying goes, no one ever got rich working for someone else! Real meaning... you will stretch your own capabilities and talents developing your own business; provide a more robust impact to your community thru job creation and growth, and the rewards, both financial and personal, will be much greater! Aim to develop businesses or investment opportunities that result in recurring income to best leverage your time and effort involved.
- Keep working on improving your skills and education thru post-MBA training, additional school courses, executive courses & symposium, and exposure to challenging jobs and assignments. Seek out opportunities to present papers, briefings, etc. In our current and future job markets, this will be increasingly important to not only those that hire but will

better position you to launch your own business when the time is right.

**Bio:**

I am the founder of *BIZolutions Consulting*, a growing consulting firm to address a wide range of client needs. Our focus is on business and marketing plans, start-up support and mentoring, financial plans and projections, proposal and grant writing, automated decision support applications, website design and development, etc. I have been a licensed real estate agent in FL for the past 8 years. I am also the Executive Director and Chairman of the Board of the *FLORIDA HELPS Foundation*, a non-profit organization with a mission to raise funds for selected Florida charities. Our flagship annual event, the "Surf and Song Festival", is held annually on or near Fort Myers Beach. In Sept. '04, I purchased a restaurant and bar on Fort Myers Beach, the Shamrock Irish Pub). I managed all aspects of its redevelopment activity to build a luxury set of Apartments / Condos and a high-end Deli and Market on this location (the "Beach Deli Company"). This project was derailed by the credit crisis of Sept. 2008. I ran Shamrock Pub for 6 years, running all aspects of the business and its 2 rental apartments.

Prior career assignments over my 27 year DoD-related career include:

- Frontier Technology, Inc. (FTI) Corporate Vice President (9/95 – 5/03): Founded FTI's Washington DC office and grew its sales to \$2M/yr. in 3 years. I was then transferred to

Corporate HQ in Santa Barbara, CA and promoted to Corporate VP of Information Technology Solutions, responsible for 40 personnel and \$4+M business area. I invented and managed 2 major software products; a web-based collaboration / acquisition management system and an automated tool set for decision support and cost / benefit analysis. I also acquired and led the company's support to the Space Architect Joint Program and the Joint Strike Fighter program. My last assignment was leading a Corporate-wide business development operation.

- SAIC, Vice President & Division Manager (3/85 – 8/95): Program Manager for the Pentagon's "Star Wars" Systems Engineering & Integration (SE&I) contract. Also supported the GPS and Anti-Satellite programs. I led a large multi-service and contractor team to produce the Star Wars Systems Survivability Specification and also managed a \$2+M/yr. SAIC Division with 9 staff.

- HRB Singer (10/81 - 2/85): led multi-million \$\$ classified electronics and telemetry processing system programs and aerospace systems analysis efforts.

- US Air Force – Space Division; Highest Rank of Captain (5/79 - 9/81): led the Systems Specification development team, the missile lower stage electronics package development, and the flight dynamics wind tunnel testing for Air Launched Anti-Satellite System (ASAT) program.

I hold a BS in Aerospace Engineering from Penn State Univ. ('77), a Master's Degree in Astronautical Engineering from the Air Force Institute of Technology ('79), and an MBA, Management Emphasis ('84), also from Penn State University plus many post-grad and executive courses. I am currently pursuing an Associate's Degree in Non-Profit Management at Miami-Dade College. I have held Top Secret and Special Compartmented Information (SCI) security clearances.



## **Jamie Turner, MBA**

**Hult International Business School,  
Shanghai**

[MrJamieTurner@gmail.com](mailto:MrJamieTurner@gmail.com)

### **Background & MBA**

Born and raised in Canada, I worked in Financial Services with GE Capital as an Operations Manager before moving to China. I was able to live and work in the Philippines for six months during an acquisition, an extremely fulfilling and enjoyable experience.

Wanting to return to Asia and pursue an accredited 1-year MBA, Hult offered a high standard with a quick admissions process.

### **The Hult MBA Experience**

I stayed at Hult's Shanghai campus for 12 months, and thoroughly enjoyed it. There is a lot of overlap between a 'regular' University's program and Hult's, but some apparent differences such as a mandatory Corporate Social Responsibility course, to stay aligned with the most current business trends.

With over 60 nationalities represented at the MBA in Shanghai, there was a rich mix of culture to stimulate interesting discussion around issues such as ethics, employee motivation, and other culturally sensitive topics. Being forced to work in assigned teams, with people from all different countries, it forced us to learn to tolerate differences between people and find ways to work together. Much like the corporate world, things don't always go smoothly in projects,



but managing through problems builds bonds and makes us stronger. It's great learning.

The MBA workload can be so heavy at times to impede learning things deeply enough to solidify understanding, but we learn well enough to remember tools and techniques for use when we require them at work. The intense nature of an MBA really brings people closer.

Doing the MBA full-time is rewarding, as it allows students to build ties as they all have similar challenges throughout the program, without work challenges getting in the way.

### **Advice for other MBA's**

*Be Humble:* A lot of people don't like working with MBA's. The perception is often that we're arrogant and difficult. A humble person with a solid education and good people skills will get more respect than an arrogant MBA from a better school.

*Listen:* Anyone who knows me very well knows I am extremely patient, except when it comes to poor listening. It's amazing how much more effective discussions are when

people engage in active listening.

*Always Learn:* In any experience, be open-minded. It's amazing how much we learn by having an open mind. Too many MBA candidates walk into a classroom thinking they know everything, and use the session as an opportunity to validate themselves rather than learning something. The same is true in business.

### **Where I am & Where I'm Going**

Right now I am looking at a few start-up business opportunities in the Asia-Pacific region, partnering with other classmates. I also hold a few real estate investments in Canada, and I look forward to other opportunities that may arise.

I'm always excited to meet new people; I'm happy to talk through email or in person. Get in touch.

## **Muhammad Tayyab, MBA**

**The Institute of Management Sciences, Pak-  
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I did my MBA at Pak-AIMS (The Institute of Management Sciences) Gulberg III, Lahore, Pakistan.

The MBA is a degree that has been very beneficial to me since it has made me a real professional, and I have had the opportunity to improve my links with business students, to improve my career, and now I also have the ability to run my own business with the expertise that I gained from my MBA. I think the most important aspect in business life is to always be innovative.

I have worked in multinational companies like Unilever FMCG, Warid Telecommunications and some other local companies. Currently I am occupied with Educational Institute in Lahore, Pakistan, that is KIPS as coordinator but I aim to work in and with a multinational organization.

My advice to other MBA's is to be active networkers, connect with other professionals, engineers, and all types of other business people. Work hard, set goals and take initiative in life.

I am working with Educational Institute in Lahore, Pakistan that is KIPS as Coordinator and improve my skills in Business Administration via social networking, through different communication channels and also improve communication skills in general because I love learning.

In future, I want to continue my studies and work with multinationals.

My goal is to be a good administrator and entrepreneur.

**Manfred Gollent, MBA**  
**IMADEC University, Vienna, Austria**



I got my MBA at IMADEC University in Vienna, Austria in 2006. For me the MBA represents the updating of 3+ decades of global business experience with the latest advances in thought leading education. It certainly provides a strong foundation for the less experienced and a great added perspective for the mature student.

The MBA gave me added perspective to my overall established views benefiting the productive outcome of decision making. The theories behind the course work are highly applicable into the business environment of any leader and aspiring manager.

My experience of getting my MBA was actually truly fascinating. The course structure provided by IMADEC is intense, supported by great international faculty and caters to the active working executive. I have been impressed by the effective and efficient way the courses were conducted while allowing a highly interactive learning experience.

Not every individual has the ambition to become a serious leader. Those that do should absolutely make the effort to acquire an MBA as it makes a difference on many levels. I am an executive coach ([www.qli-international.com](http://www.qli-international.com)) and lead an engineering company (<http://www.teamaec.com>) I co-own. I feel that my effectiveness in both is greatly improved

not only by my extensive experience but also by my education and continued training and development. I can certainly recommend taking the step forward by getting an MBA.

My only regret is that I did not do it earlier in my career.

As an experienced executive coach and group facilitator, I create a conducive environment for leaders and teams to develop, learn, grow and excel through maximizing their strengths. By supporting creative leaders to turn positive intentions into productive action, I help to expand performance capabilities yielding improved business results and personal balance. As a credentialed coach through RAC and LHH, I utilize my senior leadership experience as a global executive (various positions) combined with state-of-the-art processes and techniques with C-level executives and senior managers. With my background as a turn-around and start-up executive in companies in Asia, Europe and North America, I bring extensive cultural

experience as well as strong business acumen to my coaching engagements. I am experienced at successfully on-boarding senior leaders into new roles.

My corporate senior executive roles include corporate communication, ecology & sustainability and facilitating strategy development for companies in the UK, Belgium, Norway, France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Singapore, Philippines, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Australia and the USA. I have extensive experience in all areas of management including marketing, sales, financial operations, product development and manufacturing. I have served on company Boards in Norway, U.K., France, Belgium, Spain, Singapore, Taiwan, Australia and U.S.A.

#### Representative Client Engagements:

- Coached C-level (EVP) Executives to prepare for promotion to President/CEO (assimilation / on-boarding)
- Coached leaders and their teams in organizations of various sizes with a focus on relevant leadership capability enhancement and strategic thinking
- Coached young professionals (engineers) and high potentials to build strong leadership skills to support the growth of their organization in a proactive way with accountable action plans

#### Areas of Expertise:

- Senior level Executive Coaching
- Leadership Development for High Potentials

- Assimilation and Executive On-boarding of newly promoted executives (SVP and C-Level)
- Team coaching
- Strategy development
- Process improvement
- Executive Team Alignment
- P&L experience in F500 companies

#### Client Types/Levels of Experience:

- CEO – COO – CFO – CIO – CTO
- SVP – VP – Director – Senior Managers
- Entrepreneurs & Business Owners
- “Rain Makers”

#### Industry Experience:

- Financial/Professional Services
- Insurance
- Manufacturing / Industrial
- Telecommunications
- Aluminum industry
- Aviation industry
- Industrial ceramics industry
- Electrical components / lighting industry

#### Functional Experience:

- President / General Manager
- COO
- Board Member
- Sales and marketing executive
- Market Communications & PR Executive
- Strategy Development Consultant

#### Education:

- Degree in Electrical Engineering (Austria)

- EMBA (IMADEC University)

Certifications:

- MRG Leadership Effectiveness Analysis (LEA) 360
- RAC Certified Coach (Resource Associates Corporation)
- LHH Certified Executive Coach
- ASI (Achievement Seminars International)
- TQI (Total Quality Institute)
- Attribute Index
- DISK
- Values Index

Languages:

- English and German (fluent)

Notables:

- Led businesses in Europe, Asia and North America
- Speaker on Leadership Development and Business Improvement at numerous conferences

## **Zulfiqar Deo, MBA**

**Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences,  
Helsinki, Finland**

LinkedIn:

<http://www.linkedin.com/in/zulfiqardeo>



I am a Business Support provider to SME's and have been offering this support for nearly 8 years now. The SME's I have supported range from a multitude of different sectors from Fashion Retail to Charities. As part of my Career Development Plan I wanted to do an MBA to consolidate all my experience (over 15 years in the SME sector) and make effective use of all the tacit knowledge I had built up since graduating from University. The MBA allowed me to externalize my tacit knowledge, understand how to apply it effectively, ensure the Knowledge base was up to date and well-rounded along with providing me with the opportunity to develop new skills.

I attended Haaga Helia University of Applied Sciences in Helsinki, Finland, for my MBA because I felt the course structure allowed me the freedom to customize the content for my professional purposes. For example, I successfully completed 2 Business Consulting projects for SME's – a Business Strategy Solution and the other an Information Management Solution during the course. These solutions are now part of my service offering to my clients via [www.bizstuff.co](http://www.bizstuff.co).

I also used the course to develop systems and structure for my own business. For instance, the knowledge management frameworks and the project management methodologies I use to interact with my clients were custom designed for this purpose during my MBA. In some ways the MBA acted as the Research and Development Lab for my business, where everything was tried and tested to ensure once completed they would necessarily be fit for purpose. For example, I successfully crossed applied Classical Military Strategic thought for SME's (this has been published in Academic Journals since) along with successfully customizing a framework used by NATO for SME Managers. This framework ensures the business becomes more competitive and the managers are leveraging their tacit knowledge base to its optimal degree for the benefit of the business.

The MBA also gave me a chance to organize my Business. For example, identifying target markets, conducting market research, market testing, service delivery testing, channel identifications, etc. I would recommend other MBA's use this time to plan ahead, organize



their careers and ensure they are on that path before they complete the course.

My future plans are to focus on growing my Professional Support Service – [www.bizstuff.co](http://www.bizstuff.co) - into a successful business. Market my book – MBA for Startups – and ensure my CSR – Entrepreneur Commons, London – supports as many entrepreneurs as possible.

I wish I had known what the winters in Finland were like BEFORE I actually started the course



**Larry R. Smith, MBA**  
**Regis University, USA**



I am a product of the baby boomer generation, which are those born from 1945-1962. A mid-south born Anglo-Saxon mixed American Indian, around Memphis Tenn. west of the Mississippi, in the northern ridge of Arkansas. I am the oldest of four boys, a half sister and half brother. A son of a share cropper family who farmed cotton and corn, who grew up on a dirt farm with little elementary education and a small amount of secondary education, My mother, a daughter of an Alabama dirt farmer and an American Indian from the Cherokee tribe, what a combination, attended school until the seventh grade. My father the son of a Black Foot American Indian, who was an alcoholic and the middle son of a Cherokee prince who was from Dover Delaware, my grandmother, died at a young age of 24 while in an in-sane asylum. My grandfather a complete alcoholic from Colorado territory a dejected mentally ill died alone.

My father attended school until the second grade could hardly write and barely read. My family never had more than seven hundred dollars net worth at one time. My mother who worked at a factory, in town during the winter to make ends meet, played the piano at a Baptist church on Sunday's, labored while washing clothes and cooking meals, without the convenience of machines and never had more than one dress. She also never got over

the fact that she had low self-esteem and let the men in her life, as did her mother and her grand-mother before her, run her life. My father never could understand why he "just couldn't get a-head in life", a half-hearted farmer who struggled with self-confidence and drunkenness.

Both of my parents, God bless their souls, are no longer living, hopefully, they are, in a happier place.

I played sports in school to take the place of boredom in my life, studied very little and then, as well as two of my brothers, joined the military and went off to Viet Nam. I have returned to Northeast Arkansas just a few times, twice and these times were to attend my parent's funeral. Occasionally I will visit my siblings, who also have moved away from our birthplace, but never have they visited me.

While in the military I gained recognition of one who could talk and walk at the same time and was promoted to the rank of a petty officer, I also attended a class "A" vocational school learning the trade of Air conditioning and Heating mechanics. Here, I believe is where I began my journey toward a life of enlightenment. I excelled at understanding the

complex procedures and policy's of command and of leadership. Also, while in the military I studied for and attained my high school diploma, not just a "GED", but the real thing, this I was very proud of.

You see, I struggle with both the concepts of low self-esteem and lack of self-confidence and the only way I could figure out on how to remove these from my life was to educate my self. I started junior college after Viet Nam and finished with a bachelor's degree in business management 32 years later. I attending UMUC, and then graduated with an MBA from Regis University, I plan on attending Northeastern University in Boston next fall in the Masters of finance degree than when completed I plan on attending Gonzaga University for a Masters in Leadership.

My working life has had its ups and downs. A career of disruptions, changes and disappointments, but still, a success if one looks and where it started. My family life has had its up and down also. I was married, the first time for nineteen years, had three sons, one who struggles with addiction, one who is an officer in Iraq and one who seems to, just can't get it right, an ex-wife who stills hates me for screwing up her life and a present wife who doesn't understand why I, at age 57, still wants to go to school.

I live in Southern California, have respectable income, a half-paid for home, nice vehicles, a motorcycle and a job that requires a lot of travel. I am responsible for approximately 100 million dollars worth of product support for a

major manufacture of Air Conditioning equipment and enjoy my work.

**Rahul Magan, MBA Finance**  
**Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University,**  
**India**

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Publications:

Book - " Options for Risk Free Portfolios"

<http://www.amazon.com/Options-Risk-Free-Portfolios-Profiting-Strategies/dp/1137282576>

FX Paper - " Flaws with Black Scholes & Exotic Greeks".

<http://thomsettoptions.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Flaws-with-Black-Scholes-Exotic-Greeks.pdf>

I did my Masters in Business Administration ( MBA ) from one of the prestigious university in India – **Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University** where in did through study of Corporate Finance , International Finance , Foreign Exchange and other respective topics of core finance to name a few.. Financial modeling and Statistical modeling.

About University: - Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University established by Government of NCT of Delhi under the



provisions of Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University Act, 1998 read with its Amendment in 1999.

Vision: "The University will stimulate both the hearts and minds of scholars, empower them to contribute to the welfare of society at large; train them to adopt themselves to the changing needs of the economy; advocate them for cultural leadership to ensure peace, harmony and prosperity for all."

Mission: "Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University shall strive hard to provide a market oriented professional education to the student community of India in general and of Delhi in particular, with a view to serving the cause of higher education as well as to meet the needs of the Indian industries by promoting establishment of colleges and Schools of Studies as Centers of Excellence in emerging areas of education with focus on professional education in disciplines of engineering, technology, medicine, education, pharmacy, nursing, law, etc."

The biggest benefit from MBA is having through understanding of Corporate Finance , International Finance , Foreign Exchange and other respective topics fall under span of core finance like financial modeling and Statistical modeling.

MBA program would assist you to have deeper look into various corporate finance concepts across the world. A successful candidate can truly gain several benefits in pursuing an MBA degree not only for his personal development but for his professional career as well. For one thing, he or she can acquire additional knowledge on business and a wide range of relevant aspects.

The MBA program and business schools usually teach business strategies and concepts, in theory and in reality. And since an MBA course normally requires training and internship in some companies, a student will surely learn to use his skills in reality and in the daily business operations.

One important benefit any aspirant must have gained from MBA program is the network of business relationships. The associations created during the course of a student's MBA study are considered valuable resources which can continue even after graduating from the program. These extensive MBA networks can be sought by graduates when they need advice and can help them in their search for jobs as well as relocation issues.

In nutshell MBA helps you achieving below strategic objective in your life:-

#### ➤ Access to Top Lecturers

MBA students are the most knowledgeable and demanding audience that a Business School lecturer will face in the classroom. Business Schools select their best lecturers to teach in these programs. Often the lecturers who teach these programs will also have extensive consulting experience in the business world. Expect lecturers to be adept at teaching you from an executive perspective, and to be skilled at facilitating classroom interaction among experienced students.

#### ➤ Executive Perspective

Professionals look at the challenges of business with the benefit of experience. MBA programs help students look at business problems and opportunities from a CEO's perspective. You'll become knowledgeable about the concepts underpinning key business disciplines, and also focus on integrating this knowledge with your prior background and experience.

#### ➤ Collaborative Learning

You may think of a university classroom as a competitive environment, however at the MBA level, building partnerships, alliances and other cooperative relationships becomes as important as competing with others. MBA programs focus on collaboration rather than competition. In the classroom and in study groups, you'll test your own team building skills and learn to rely on others to help you succeed. Successful MBA students learn how to share responsibilities with others and take advantage of each other's' experience and

knowledge for mutual benefit – a skill directly transferable to their work.

➤ Immediate Applicability

Applying what you learn to challenges and opportunities in the business world is essential to the MBA experience. As an MBA student, the workplace becomes a laboratory in which you test what you've learned in the classroom. You will have opportunities to design projects that allow you to solve real problems you face at work as you complete course requirements.

➤ Increased Confidence

If you've developed business skills and knowledge on the job, an MBA program can help you fill in the gaps, learn the language of business and give you a firm grounding in the fundamentals of its various disciplines.

My experience was pretty great when it comes to understanding of corporate finance and linking with Business networks during my MBA program. I was always deeply involved in understanding of the linking b/w corporate finance terminology and effective usage in corporate finance balance sheets.

In my view every MBA aspirant should gather multiple perspective view of entrepreneurship and innovation, both as academic subjects, and in terms of practical entrepreneurial behavior. They should gain in-depth knowledge of the processes that both drive and constrain the ambitions of entrepreneurs as they seek, through innovative behavior, to launch and/or develop new business ventures. This will better

prepare you to progress towards the strategic leadership of business and innovation. The available tools and techniques, in an entrepreneurial sense, will be developed to direct strategically the development of innovation, and its management.

From my side two advices to all fellow MBA's - "Think and act beyond convention" and "Stay Hungry Stay Foolish".

**Think and act beyond convention:** - We are living in the world when conventions don't matter. Every second day we see greatest volatility in the financial markets across the world. All fellow MBA need to master themselves in latest technologies like the mobile revolution is here. People across the globe are increasingly connected and are digitally communicating with each other in ways that would have been impossible to imagine only a few years ago. As mobile connections become more ubiquitous, the value of deploying mobile technologies in learning seems to be both obvious and unavoidable.

**Stay Hungry Stay Foolish:** - As Mr. Jobs rightly said "Stay Hungry Stay Foolish". Keep doing new things in your life and it doesn't matter whether people across the world are admiring you or not. You just keep moving and as Albert Einstein rightly said – "If at first idea is not absurd then there is no hope for it" so keep moving with unique thoughts.

Right now working as Manager Treasury in an Indian counterpart of the US NASDAQ Listed

firm EXL Service Holdings, Inc and taking care of the following key Treasury activities covering Front & Middle Office.

- International Foreign exchange markets covering deliverable & non deliverable FX contracts
- Foreign Exchange Risk Management policies & Accounting implications
- Offshore and Onshore debt capital markets (Long term & Short term)
- Global Cash management & Cash flow forecasting at group level.
- Management reporting's and central bank compliances
- End to end designing of Treasury Management System covers all hedging & cash management activities

**Carrying two set of objectives -long term and Imminent one**

**Long term objective:-** To be an entrepreneur covering gamut of services like Foreign Exchange , Risk Management , Investments Management and last but not the least Treasury Management Solutions (TMS). Would like to offer below solutions to corporates across the world specially Aussie , British and American corporates.

**Imminent objective:** - The imminent objective is to become a known Foreign Exchange author by Year 2015. In that regards endorsed and participated in my maiden Derivatives book – *“Options for Risk Free Portfolio”* which published in NY and also published my 2<sup>nd</sup> FX working

*paper – “Flaws with Black Scholes & Exotic Greeks”* which circulated to over 1 Million people across the world.

*Presently working on my upcoming FX Paper titled – “Swaptions & FRA – Profiting Strategies using Options in Swaps & FRA “scheduled to release in Aug’13 on worldwide basis.*

**If there is something that you have learned throughout the years that you wish you had known earlier:-** Truth to be told ignored the importance of Social Networking “LinkedIn and Twitter” in early graduation days however realized their great importance specially LinkedIn in early part of post-graduation while doing Masters of Business administration.



**Islam El Khabaty, MBA**  
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I did my MBA at Athabasca University (<http://www.mba.athabascau.ca/>). The university campus is in Alberta, Canada. However, the program is offered online, having professors and students from all over the world.

My business perspective is now more developed thanks to the MBA. Not only am I able to formulate and implement business strategies and focus on the bottom-line but also I understand how each function with the organization operates and interacts with the other functions. That is to say, I can relate to the needs and concerns of each function. This knowledge allows me to establish effective communication between the different functions with the consequent improvement of operating efficiency. Moreover, my self-confidence has significantly increased.

The experience was great. I worked very hard between the reading material, the individual assignments and the group projects. However, I was very excited acquiring new and valuable knowledge. Moreover, the MBA allowed me to make friends with great people who are

executives and top managers at their organizations.

I remember the first advice I got when I started the MBA program was “doing the program is like eating an elephant... you can only eat it one bite at a time.” That is to say, worry about the task at hand and leave the rest to when you reach it.

I have just started a new venture that operates in telecom and power industries. As you can imagine, I am currently busy with such things as: recruiting, acquiring customers and making this new venture financially self-sufficient. I have ambitious objectives to achieve within the first year of operation and the price to pay to achieve these objectives is that I literally work 24/7.

I have several projects in mind, including investing in a small to medium size construction company and sitting in its board of directors. I would also like to invest in green energy and in infrastructure projects.

I wish I knew that a job does not necessarily provide financial security and how to find an opportunity to establish my own business.

**Dhiraj Karki, MBA**  
**Kathmandu University School of**  
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I am a business professional turned into an international development expert and academician with interests in trade and investment.

For the past seven years, I have been providing technical and advisory services, all related to private sector development and reforms to diverse stakeholders, those including the government, non-government and international organizations. Earlier, I worked for over six years in management positions at leading firms in Nepal.

I am also a visiting faculty for global business management course at the Kathmandu University School of Management.

As a founder and managing partner, I am currently focused in my international consulting start-up, dkompany ([www.dkompany.biz](http://www.dkompany.biz)).

I did my MBA from Kathmandu University School of Management (KUSOM) in Nepal. Incidentally, KUSOM is consistently ranked as Nepal's no. 1 b-school, since inception in 1993, and also rated highly in South Asia.

Please see [www.kusom.edu.np](http://www.kusom.edu.np)

My MBA helped me to gain generalist understanding of the business and management world. Also my MBA was instrumental to hone my leadership, communication and team-working skills.

My experience has been highly satisfying as I could make the most of my two year programme, in terms of studies, project works and internship plus my association in several students lead co-curricular activities and School's consulting assignments.

I was very clear what I wanted from my MBA i.e. career change into consulting after working for over 5 years with private sectors, and glad that I am still living by my ethos.

Of course, one needs to be clear behind the requirement of MBA as it serves differently to people with different background. The programme, being jack of all, fits to anyone's need if there is a clarity about making the most.

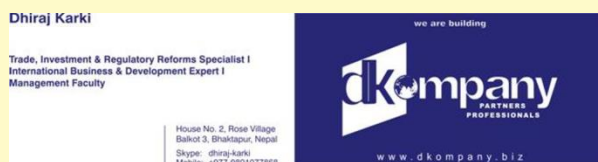
It is also advised to work out a plan to integrate the course' scope with one's interest and future career moves.

After my MBA, I embarked on specialized studies in law and ensured that it blended well with MBA and consulting career. I am glad that I have been highly served by both MBA and LL.M, and have designed my career in such a way that my past work experience, qualifications and interests, all goes hand-in-hand.

I have also recently launched my consulting start-up and must agree that MBA learning has helped me a lot to break the ice.

Next, I plan to focus on my start-up and bring in partners/professionals that share my vision on making a difference in the community by use of business, development and legal consulting.

I have been fortunate enough to see things in my favour, both in work and studies. I have nothing to be guilty about that I didn't know earlier in my career.

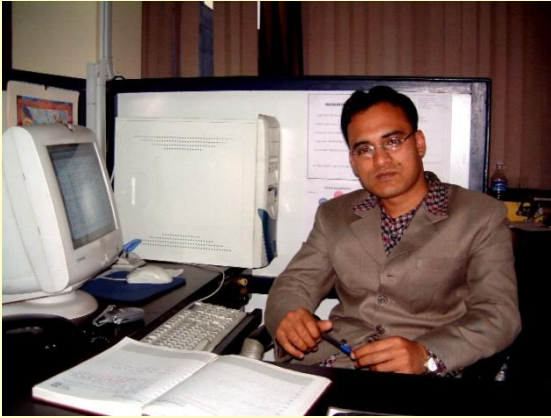


## Coffee with Dhiraj: A Student Source of Inspiration

DHIRAJ KARKI, THE FIRST ELECTED President of KUSOM Student Welfare Council (SWC), talked to Digdarshan, Ist Term MBA student of KUSOM, during a coffee on a New Year evening. During the talk, he shared his own experience and expressed his suggestions, how the students can make the best utilize of their 2 years in KUSOM and how they can try to make themselves stand out from the crowd. Here are some of the excerpts.

### **The SWC was established in November 2007 and it has been about five months. Do you find the progress matching with the vision you had before you joined SWC as the President?**

It was the first time the SWC has been established in KUSOM. Nothing was there and we had to start up from the scratch. We took permission from the management for our separate office space, arranged the furniture and stationeries, computers and have plans for the coming days. Since the establishment and my joining the council, we have been actively organizing different events successfully. Definitely there are so many things in our plan but within this time we have given all our efforts to make it established, and somewhat it fulfill my vision.



**How do you see the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for KUSOMites?**

*Strengths:* KUSOM is so far the best ranked university in Nepal. It has a good recognition in the market.

*Weaknesses:* Students are seen only to be focused on their grades, assignments, theoretical studies and other day to day chores. They are not fully utilizing their potential to practically utilize their knowledge and expertise while they study and develop additional features which will put them ahead.

*Opportunities:* 2 years in KUSOM is a wonderful opportunity where they can learn and experiment themselves. There are number of possibilities through which they can add features to their qualities and become successful be it through sports, public relations, events management, participations and competitions.

*Threats:* Unlike past, now there are many reputed institutions which produces MBA graduates in Nepal and around. After graduation all are in the same platform no matter where they come from. Besides, in global market KUSOM is not familiar to the

prospective employers and business communities. That is why it is important to constantly update and upgrade ourselves so that we can compete and win not only in local arena, but globally.

**According to your experience, do you find students trying and getting 100% from the MBA degree in KUSOM?**

There are already been about 500 graduates from KUSOM. Many of them are working in various corporate sectors, entrepreneurs, etc. But we can not hear about them in the market in so outstanding way. It is because may be they are simply following a trend, looking for a nice paying salary after graduation or got lost in the crowd. During studies they might have simply followed grades, assignments, theories and got lost in the rat race. I still see tremendous potential and space where students can improve and make themselves stand out to be heard in the market.

**Would you like to share your own experience why you joined MBA and how you tried to make yourself different ?**

I belong to Biratnagar. I graduated from Tribhuwan University with average marks. Then I worked for about 7 years in various companies. Lately I was earning about Nrs. 40000 at that time which is considered a good amount in Nepalese market. Suddenly I left my company and joined MBA. I was very clear about why I wanted a MBA degree. I tried to make the best utilize of my 2 years time in KUSOM. Not only as a President of SWC, but

when there was no SWC also, I took initiative to organize different events like the Industrial Tour, Momo Festival in KU Dhulikhel, sports week or career counseling or talk programs. Many were being done for the first time in KUSOM and Nepal like the KUSOM Annual Festival and KUSOM Placement Fair. The success of the events made us feel the success was ours and it brought everyone close and raised sense of belongingness. It is not needed to be a President or any positions, but there has to be someone to take the initiative and guide others. I have also organized and participated in various other talk programs, events, essays and proposal competitions locally and globally during study which have added feathers to the cap, at the same time leveraged KUSOM's and personal image. Lately, we are doing our college project in collaboration with Virginia Tech University in US. I have also started my own company together with my colleague and already started hiring staffs. There are many more to be done and the journey is on.

**What were the obstacles you faced during those time and how you overcome them?**

Definitely there was struggle. I belonged outside of Kathmandu and certainly managing time in absence of family for both studies and work was frustrating. But I had a definite goal for myself and had a vision. This helped to overcome my hurdles and now I feel pretty satisfied, further bringing in confidence that one can achieve anything if he has a dream and fire in belly.

**Any message to the new comers?**

Know why you need a MBA degree. If you have specific goal, vision and plan, then you can achieve anything, you can become anyone. Don't just get lost in the "rat race" of daily chores. Try to explore new things, new opportunities and learn to make mistakes. We have wonderful resources in college - extraordinary friends from various walks of life, faculties, lab, library, alumni etc. Why not seek our own identity and position, not only locally but beyond. I will be glad to see KUSOMites in the best fields and achieve higher successes. And finally don't be afraid to dream, big dreams.

All the best!

**Anne-Maria Yrityts, MBA**  
**Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences,**  
**Helsinki, Finland**

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LinkedIn group:

[http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Networkers-Without-Borders-4996536?trk=myg\\_ugrp\\_ovr](http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Networkers-Without-Borders-4996536?trk=myg_ugrp_ovr)

I graduated in 2012 from Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences in Helsinki, which is one of Finland's leading business schools. The reason for selecting this program was because of the great opportunity to choose free elective courses from other universities. Personally, I also took some courses from Aalto University, and participated in overseas courses at San José State University, the capital city of Silicon Valley, California, USA, and the Faculty of Economics at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia.

The program was quite extensive, as I studied more free electives than necessary. Beside my MBA studies, I completed two investment courses/exams at Aalto University. The core program was pretty much standard, including courses in quantitative/qualitative research methods, project management, and talent management.



As free electives I chose to take quite many strategic management courses, a couple of change management courses, including business ethics and CSR. The course in Silicon Valley included international marketing, mass media, PR and communication, and innovation management. Quite a package in two and a half years, and I worked full-time throughout my studies in retail banking – it was an intense period.

Previous to the MBA I had been working in the hotel, restaurant and travel industries for a decade after my Bachelor's Degree in Hospitality Management in 2001. In 2007, I changed careers into banking, and wanted to expand my knowledge from being an expert within hospitality, into learning more generally about international business management. I am satisfied about this decision, since this has given me more options and possibilities in business life.



I have until this day found the MBA useful in at least the following aspects:

- Increased confidence and trust in my own capacity/knowledge
- Improved networking skills
- Improved presentation and public speaking skills
- General increase of knowledge and knowledge creation
- If knowledge is not directly available, I know how and where to find it
- A strategic and holistic view upon business and life in general
- A better understanding of the big picture of how society and different industries and businesses work

I was a fairly critical thinker already before the MBA, but today I am even more critical in terms of putting things into a perspective. The MBA also enhanced my analytical skills.

After graduation, I worked as an investment manager in a small, private investment firm for about a year. I noticed it wasn't what I wanted in a longer-term, so I left the company.

At the moment I am working as a freelance business consultant, and I am available for (a) new assignment(s) and/or a permanent role e.g. within change and strategy consulting.

The MBA definitely opens up many new doors. The degree increased my appetite for continuous learning, development and

improvement not only of myself as a person, but in how I see organizations and different business areas.

My advice for other MBA's:

- Work hard to reach your goals
- Never give up
- Believe in yourself
- Be open for different options
- Be innovative
- If you are not ready to be an entrepreneur, become an intrapreneur

An MBA can pursue many kinds of careers in business life. Everything depends upon yourself, your motivations and areas of interest. You can start your own business, join a startup, advance your career in a medium-sized or large organization – whatever suits you best. The most important, however, is to remember to be a responsible leader/manager.

Take care of yourself mentally and physically, treat other people fairly, listen to people and be open for feedback. Know yourself and your values, and live according to them. Enjoy life – career is important, but it is not everything. Try to lead a stable life. If you notice something doesn't seem or feel right – you can always change direction.

I also wanted to test the usefulness of LinkedIn as a networking tool, and how it would help me in finding business opportunities. This eBook project is one of the steps I have taken to progress my career.

I think it is beneficial to have a wide experience, but real professional progress requires determination and focus. Since the world changes with such a fast pace today, it is of course good to be open for continuous change. Today, careers are not necessarily linear, so basically it is useful to always have a plan B, perhaps even a plan C, in case the original plan doesn't work out. With many decades of work life ahead of me, I want to continue making good decisions and keep on learning and developing throughout my life.

## Best Advice in a nutshell

- Always trust your instincts
- Be aware of family pressures and family guilt because these will be used against you in a family business.
- If you can't make a difference where you are working for whatever reason, move. Move to another country if you have to.
- Aim to make a difference and be the best.
- The choice of industry type that you enter is a very important one. If you happen to find yourself in a mature market, your business options will always be limited, your salary also. Moral of the story you cannot swim against an ebbing tide no matter how good you are.
- Product lifecycles are getting shorter and shorter. To survive your company needs to keep innovating. If your organization does not buy into this, they will not survive (unless they are government funded).
- Always take action. You can take further corrective later if needed. This keeps your business moving forward and it is something that a customer likes to see.
- Build relationships even with your competitors, as you never know how you can help one another.
- Always build your network and consciously keep extending your reach.
- Improve continuously in order to stay competitive.
- Continual learning and self-development is vital in today's work.
- Mentor those around you.
- Deal with problems and people will respect you.
- Fire those that you have to carry, those who stand in the way of your company's progress.
- Education is always valuable and profitable to one's tool kit. Consider your program and yourself within the program.
- Become an intellectual sponge and a life learner
- The MBA program is like eating an elephant. Get ready for that shock.
- "Fortune favors the prepared mind" (Louis Pasteur)
- There's a lot to gain in a MBA program and the "prepared" mind is one that's open, curious, willing to let itself soaked by new concepts and ideas.
- "Remember that you have two ears and one mouth" (Japanese proverb)
- "Remember that you have two eyes, too"!
- The experience will be tiring, yet exhilarating, a kind of "hadron collider" for business brains.
- Carefully consider your MBA options in light of each program's 'fit' to your own situation in terms of regional accreditation, professional accreditation, teaching faculty,

- scheduling, delivery mode, core content, electives, thesis/project requirements and cost.
- If seeking a specific career or advancement path, investigate the employing organization's preferences regarding MBA schools and programs.
  - Know the 'why' of deciding to put in the resources to earn your MBA – If you are 40+ and earning your MBA, it is unlikely that you will recover the financial costs related to acquiring your advanced degree. This is especially true if you are a woman.
  - Earning your MBA is a two-edged sword insofar as if you are in a career transition, it is likely that you will be perceived as, 'too expensive' to be considered for some opportunities.
  - Expect the best, plan for the worst and know that nothing lasts forever.
  - Determine what you want from the degree, how much you can invest and how much you can sacrifice. Understanding this will impact the timing and manner in which you will attempt the coursework.
  - Don't be intimidated by those who have attended prestigious programs. You've put in your time, and effort to complete the requirements and expand your perspective.
  - Follow your dreams where ever they may lead you.
  - Never look back and enjoy success (and some failures) by simply following where your heart leads you
  - It isn't always plain sailing, but being open to something new is always a great idea
  - Don't ask for permission to be successful! What you choose to do with your life is not based on your parents expectations, what your teachers thought you were capable of, what your husband or partner thinks you should do or even what your friends are doing with their lives. It is all about what moves and inspires you. You should never need anyone else to tell you what that is or should be.
  - Read
  - Question Every Assumption
  - During your MBA; begin consulting local businesses and non-profits (do it for free)
  - STUDY...you just cannot get around the statistics and numbers. They tell a story too.
  - Don't be blind to the facts and don't be swayed by gut reactions.
  - Don't fall for heuristics that will steer you toward an incorrect decision.
  - Ask questions.
  - Give input.
  - Participate. It will help you become a better MBA.
  - Make sure you have a good understanding of why you are putting the effort into receiving an MBA. The

title doesn't automatically open all doors these days and you need to know how best to use the education and experience.

- The title "might" give you your first shot but it's up to you to make the most of the opportunity.
- If you are going to invest the resources (time, money, emotional energy, etc.) in this degree, absolutely choose a fully accredited and recognized MBA program.
- If you are not able to attend a school with an international reputation, attend one that will be easily identifiable to an out of state employer or organization.
- Please know that one cannot earn a valuable MBA online only. That would be like learning to be a surgeon online. Sure, you might be able to take some classes online, but in reality, the true value of the MBA comes from working with people (and machines, too) in an interactively competitive and dynamic environment.
- Don't compromise on opportunities that are accessible to you
- Some positions require the skills you possess; however, they are not willing to compensate what you are worth.
- The value of the degree is not appreciated as much as it should be. It is your responsibility to do the research to find out the salary rates in your area.
- Stop settling for less than you are worth and practice saying no to careers

that are inadequate to your short-term and long-term plans.

- Practical life as compare to student life is totally different and we cannot not implement everything we've learned
- An MBA can be helpful in being a better judge of things, and understanding in being a good professional
- Get as much real world experience in doing what MBA's do as possible.
- Volunteer to help write, edit or critique business and marketing plans, do public speaking, attend networking groups like BNI and LeTip. Create a profile on LinkedIn. Network, Network, Network!
- Find your passion. Pursuing an MBA is not a walk in the park. You will be called upon to make hard sacrifices in the areas of how you spend your time and who with. You may have to live without spending quality time with your family and friends, you may have to cut back on your usual hobbies and diversions and television will become a forgotten word.
- If you don't have a strong 'Why?' a reason to put yourself through it that goes beyond money, you will never make it. Because there will be days when you would rather do anything than attend one more class, write one more paper or read one more chapter. You will need then to recall that you are doing this for a life-changing reason.

- Don't pursue your MBA until you have identified the reason for it
- You need a why that is a 100 on a scale of 1-100 before you start. Because if your motivation is only at a 72 and you hit an obstacle that's a 73, you're done, you'll find some logical excuse to quit. But if your motivation is a 100, nothing can stop you from meeting your goals in school or in life.
- MBA is like a bug. If bitten, you're smitten. There is no boundary; there is no limit to what one can achieve in life. It all depends on who you really are and what you want in life. If you pursue your dreams, aspirations and ambition, chances are you will make it Big in life. A myriad of opportunities lie out there, it only takes an eye to spot them.
- Life is all about challenges and risk - that's what makes it interesting. Of course there are Pros and Cons to everything, but if one maintains a positive outlook to things, it makes it easier to face the problems and move ahead.
- Work to achieving your aspirations if you earnestly believe in them, and not because someone else wants you to pursue them.
- Do not compromise on your principles and virtues. It might be tempting to follow shortcuts en-route to glory but with the right path you will build a stronger foundation and covetable reputation that will last forever.
- Seek for the real inspiration within yourself, for the real power lies therein and nowhere outside.
- Form your business model, put into practice what you have learned.
- Be proactive & lead.
- Offer your client the best possible service you can, meet his time frame, keep to his budget & above all listen to him/her.
- Unless you're a natural start-up Entrepreneur, leverage your MBA to get a good position in your field of choice BUT work to position yourself to move into building your own business. As the saying goes, no one ever got rich working for someone else!
- Aim to develop businesses or investment opportunities that result in recurring income to best leverage your time and effort involved.
- Keep working on improving your skills and education thru post-MBA training, additional school courses, executive courses & symposium, and exposure to challenging jobs and assignments.
- Seek out opportunities to present papers, briefings, etc. In our current and future job markets, this will be increasingly important to not only those that hire but will better position you to launch your own business when the time is right.
- Be Humble: Relationships are the key to success, and people respect a humble person.

- Listen: It's amazing how much more effective discussions are when people engage in active listening. Too many people wait to talk, rehearsing what they're going to say inside their head, rather than hearing what another person is saying. Such behavior results in misunderstanding, poor collaboration, less than ideal decisions, and lower productivity.
- Be an active networker, connect with other professionals, engineers, and all types of other business people.
- Work hard, set goals and take initiative in life.
- Think and act beyond convention
- Stay Hungry Stay Foolish
- Never give up
- Believe in yourself
- Be open for different options
- Be innovative
- If you cannot be an entrepreneur, become an intrapreneur
- Take care of yourself mentally and physically
- Treat other people fairly
- Take feedback
- Know yourself and your values, and live according to them.
- Enjoy life – career is important, but it is not everything.
- Try to lead a stable life. If you notice something doesn't seem or feel right – you can always change direction.
- Build strategic alliances



## Useful links

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Master\\_of\\_Business\\_Administration](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Master_of_Business_Administration)

<http://www.haaga-helia.fi/en>

<http://www.ef.uni-lj.si/en>

<http://www.sjsu.edu/>

<http://www.aaltoee.fi/fi/aalto-ee>

<http://www.helsinki.fi/university/>

<http://munich.euruni.edu/?gclid=CMnj3ayi6LgCFaF3cAodGnYAVg>

<http://miamioh.edu/>

<http://www.essec.edu/>

<http://www.eou.edu/>

<http://www.find-mba.com/singapore>

<http://www.phoenix.edu/>

<http://www.sgu.edu/>

<http://www.bradford.ac.uk/external/>

<http://www.tiasnimbas.edu/>

<http://business.missouri.edu/news/2013/mizzous-crosby-mba-program-ranking-rises-record-highs-us-news-world-report>

<http://www.ufl.edu/>

<http://bucks.ac.uk/>

<http://www.westminster.ac.uk/>

<https://www.iusb.edu/>

<http://www.uqam.ca/>

[http://www.token.fi/In\\_English/Home.iw3](http://www.token.fi/In_English/Home.iw3)

<http://www.case.edu/>

<http://www.amu.ac.in/>

<http://www.phoenix.edu/campus-locations/tx/houston-campus/houston-campus.html>

<http://www.aiou.edu.pk/>

<http://www.nimonweb.com/contactus.html>

<http://www.sunderland.ac.uk/>

<http://www.phoenix.edu/campus-locations/ca/southern-california-campus/pasadena-learning-center.html>

<http://www.psu.edu/>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Institute\\_of\\_Management\\_Sciences,\\_Lahore](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Institute_of_Management_Sciences,_Lahore)

<http://www.imadec.eu/>

<http://www.regis.edu/>

<http://www.ggsipu.nic.in/>

<http://www.athabascau.ca/>

<http://www.kusom.edu.np/>

<http://www.ie.edu/business-school/landing-pages/mbas-and-executive-mbas/?gclid=COy3tcin6LgCFUZ8cAodB3IAbA>

<http://rankings.ft.com/businessschoolrankings/global-mba-ranking-2013>

<http://www.bolton.ac.uk/Home.aspx>

<http://www.linkedin.com/today/post/article/20130802214319-17970806-america-s-funniest-mba-videos?trk=mp-reader-card>

<http://www.linkedin.com/today/post/article/20130731021753-17970806-what-harvard-mbas-are-making-this-year?trk=mp-reader-card>

<http://www.linkedin.com/today/post/article/20130728195224-17970806-what-will-you-do-with-your-one-wild-precious-life?trk=mp-reader-card>

<http://www.linkedin.com/today/post/article/20130716230619-17970806-why-mbas-are-writing-their-own-recs?trk=mp-reader-card>

<http://www.linkedin.com/today/post/article/20130714224724-17970806-mbas-expect-a-240-pay-increase-from-degree?trk=mp-reader-card>

<http://www.linkedin.com/today/post/article/20130620051820-17970806-which-mba-ranking-is-best?trk=mp-reader-card>

<http://www.linkedin.com/today/post/article/20130404233348-17970806-what-holds-back-women-mbas-in-their-careers?trk=mp-reader-card>

<http://www.linkedin.com/today/post/article/20130405131954-8451-look-before-you-leap-into-that-mba?trk=mp-reader-card>



*“Do not be satisfied with the stories that come before you. Unfold your own myth.”*

*- Rumi*