



Truly global

To cope with the changing environment, B-schools should be mindful of the need for global perspectives in their research, curricula and programmatic offerings

MBA programmes teach the tools and impart the perspectives young people must know in order to excel in managing and leading organisations. Few organisations in which MBA graduates will forge their careers are exclusively local operations. Virtually all businesses must depend on, interact with, and often compete against counterparts around the world. The recent financial crises have only served to underscore the interconnectivity of global economies. Simply put, today, business is global. It follows that today's management education must be global as well.

Many business schools – the Yale School of Management among them – have already taken this insight to heart. In the US, it would be hard not to, given the simple fact that in many American MBA programmes, close to a third – and sometimes more – of their respective student bodies are international students. Inside the classroom, this international cohort provides a variety of perspectives and experiences from which other students can learn. For example, at Yale, during a class where we teach a case on toys manufactured in China that were found to have unsafe levels of lead in them, many of our Chinese students, who have worked previously either in the Chinese government or in Chinese commercial enterprises, are able to offer first-hand insights of the challenges China faces. Outside the classroom, every year, our international MBA students organise an entire month of extracurricular programmes and educational events devoted to the rich diversity of backgrounds and nationalities we are fortunate to have here. For over a decade, these International Month events have been quite popular.

When Yale overhauled its academic programme and launched its innovative integrated MBA curriculum in 2006, we introduced a mandatory faculty-led International Experience trip for all first-year students. Yale was among the first MBA programmes to include international experience as a requirement for graduation, because our faculty understood that most MBAs today will work in positions that will require them to work cross-culturally. The International Experience trips are specifically designed to expose students to a country or area of the world in which they have not lived or worked before – they have been very well received.

Other courses with an international component are also very popular. Citing just two examples, for a number of years, the student-organised 'Global Social Enterprise'

course has travelled to destinations like Madagascar and Columbia to provide *pro-bono* consulting services. Another course, 'Understanding Global Financial Centres', focussed on the financial capitals of the world and incorporated a class trip to London, Dubai and Hong Kong.

And we continue to add globally focussed courses to the Yale *pro-bono* programme. In 2008, we launched the Yale SOM Global Programme for Social Entrepreneurs, which offers training and resources to a select group of social entrepreneurs. Our initial programme focussed on social enterprises in India, but we hope to broaden this 'two-way educational street' to organisations in China, Africa and Latin America.

In the coming year, we will add a new course, 'The Global Macroeconomy', to our core curriculum. This course was specifically developed to provide students with a framework for understanding the causes and consequences of macroeconomic events in real time, and will draw examples from current events.

This global focus expands beyond courses themselves to include our students' education and career plans. In response to student demand, the Yale School of Management recently established exchange programmes with four institutions: the London School of Economics and Political Science; IESE Business School in Barcelona; the Indian Institute of Management in Bangalore; and Tsinghua University School of Economics and Management in Beijing. The students who have participated report

that the exchange experience has provided an additional level of knowledge and perspective that will be invaluable in their future careers. Also, in response to student interest, Yale has recently added a staff member to its Career Development Office, who principally concentrates on international career opportunities for our students.

While for many years, US-based MBA programmes were viewed as the 'gold standard' for graduate management education, we are beginning to see many accomplished students decide to remain in their home countries to pursue an MBA.

Just as contemporary business has become global in scope and scale, MBA students are embracing global opportunities in their choices of schools and courses, and in their career preferences. In this changing environment, it is incumbent on all business schools to be mindful of the need for consistent global perspectives in their research, curricula and programmatic offerings. ♦



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