MOBTC 2023

PDW Proposal

The bridge to executive education: Designing, delivering, and succeeding with executive participants

The presenters have decades of experience teaching global executives, having taught at several of the top institutions for executive development and continuing to sell, design, deliver, and assess workshops around the world (and online). What works with undergrads and MBAs may not work with seasoned executives; our aim is to illuminate how to cross this bridge. After an overview of key principles of executive program and module context, expectations, and design, including a discussion of assessment, challenges, and lessons learned, we provide a structured approach to enable participants to transform their content expertise into an exec ed module. Time permitting, we would also discuss the processes of selling your expertise, contracting, and getting repeat business.

Introduction

**So you want to teach executive education?**

At some point in their careers, faculty may be asked to teach in an executive program or for executives in a company with whom they’ve developed a relationship. One thing is certain: what works with undergrads or even MBAs may not work with seasoned executives. Executives’ expectations for relevance and value are great; they don’t accept their time being wasted with long lectures or formulaic assignments. Moreover, they expect to be able to know or do something different—and more effective—as a result of participating in the program.

Most doctoral programs in business provide minimal instruction for how to be an effective teacher[[1]](#footnote-1) and [almost?] none that we’re aware of provide guidance for how to be an effective teacher of executives. The presenters have decades of experience in some of the world’s top executive education institutions and will share their experience (good and bad) and lessons learned using an experiential, hands-on format. Our target audience is (current or aspirational) mid- to senior-career faculty with experience teaching a variety of topics and audiences.

Learning Objectives, Engagement, and Take-aways

Participants will:

* Learn key characteristics and criteria to consider in the design of effective executive education—both open-enrollment programs and custom (company-specific) programs. The order, pacing, and debriefing of programs’ contents/activities will form part of this discussion.
* Apply these learnings in the design of an executive program module (about 4 hours) of their choosing
* Discuss important elements of preparation for and evaluation of executive program modules
* Engage in conversations about the challenges in the design and delivery of executive programs and ways of overcoming them
* Time permitting, engage in discussions covering consulting (selling your expertise), contracting, and repeat business—and the important role trust plays throughout

Participants will emerge with greater confidence and competence in building and executing a module that they could use at their school for an EMBA or executive program or in their external consulting. This will be accomplished with our design (see below) that includes instruction (and frameworks), hands-on work, and report-out/feedback.

Overview of PDW/Session

We propose to structure this 75-minute session as follows:

5 min Introductions and Overview of Session

20 min The What, Why, and How of Executive Education

Key principles on the basis of published research and from our direct experience:

* Design for Purpose – What does the customer or participant need (to know, to do)?
  + Clarify individual and organizational goals that will be addressed in the program
* Go where they are – understand the customer
  + Senior executives bring their own case studies via personal experience—use these!
  + Set the stage – what they should expect (and not!)
  + Avoid making them feel at any point that they are wasting time
* Context matters as much as content. These are working professionals with actual, present challenges. Design content for:
  + Intellectual awareness – lecture (limited!), video, case presentation
  + Emotional awareness – reflective experience, e.g., “recall a time when you…”; exchange experience (successes, failures, feelings) in pairs or small groups; video/discussion; personal coaching
  + Application
* Engage – early and often; from session design to delivery to debriefing to redesign
  + Build in networking through buzz groups, dining, special events; also include C-suite executives as guest speakers and mentors as appropriate
  + Consider the relevance of networks beyond the program
* Ultimate goal: Need to answer the question “How can this be applied back at work?”
  + Action learning project
  + Peer mentoring
  + Follow on activities
* Were the objectives met?
  + How to design, obtain, and use feedback for the greatest impact

25 min Individual work assignment:

Attendees are given a description of a client, the demographic profile of the participants, and the overall structure of week-long program. They will be designing a module (typically 3.5-4 hours) on a topic such as leadership, teams, culture, innovation.

10 min Debrief (participant examples)/Report Out

15 min Additional Q&A/Typical Challenges in the Exec Ed Classroom

Challenges:

* One or more participants haven’t prepared the case or completed an instrument/assessment
* One or more participants is/are called out to deal with another work priority
* One or more participants directly challenge(s) the design/schedule after the program has started

1. Marx, R.D., Garcia, J.E., Butterfield, D.A., Kappen, J.A. & Baldwin, T.T. (2016). Isn’t it time we did something about the lack of teaching preparation in business doctoral programs? Journal of Management Education, 40(5), 489-515. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)