# The Use of Digital Tools in Graduate to Career Management Impact: Examples of Key Lessons Learned through Digication and PitchVantage in MBA Classrooms

Digital tools are increasingly changing both the nature and the scope of educational impact in management and MBA classrooms. In this session, we examine how two digital tools, Digication and PitchVantage, can be utilized to potentially alter the learning process to improve career outcomes of the MBA students. Application of these tools seems to be particularly relevant in the graduate course focusing on career management and personal branding. As part of our exploration, we look at three ways that both tools can challenge earlier notions of career management and marketing applications including 1) moving beyond static representations of career skills and knowledge found in traditional resumes; 2) complementing existing LinkedIn profiles through extensive personalized networking; and 3) facilitating the emergence of authentic self via personal branding, and the role of influencer through better presentation and career narratives. As we note, the three aforementioned newer areas are key toward understanding how career alignment can happen by either fitting in and/or moving beyond job descriptions in career management toward the role of influencer.

**Introduction and Theoretical Frameworks/Traditions**

Highlighting career linkages and impact is of increasing importance in MBA classrooms. Over the past decade, professional societies such as SHRM and CERIC as well as the research scholarship on careers and marketing emphasize the need to connect conceptual material learned in MBA and higher education classrooms such as marketing and communications to practical trajectories in career management (e.g., Jackson, 2021; Gaston, 2019). This is subject to not just fitting into existing job descriptions or more static representations of accumulated experience typically found in traditional resumes and cover letters. Rather, there is a paradigm shift aimed to help MBA students, and higher education institutions, showcase skills as an on-going dynamic capability wherein, they are demanded and can become influencers through better development of career narratives and presentation of valuable personal brands from self to organizational performance (e.g., Menon & Suresh, 2030; Finch et al., 2016; Roth, 2013).

In this session, we provide an overview of how a combination of two digital tools, Digication and PitchVantage, can help facilitate this shift. Specifically, we show how MBA students may leverage both tools to help understand where and how they can move beyond traditional the use of resumes and cover letters and use the said tools to create personalized career narratives and assume a more pro-active role in career management. As part of our contributions and discussions, we outline how both tools may further aid career management planning and development of strong personal brands. More specifically, we consider student personal development perspectives emphasizing a potential fit into the following career management ladders and roles:

1. Vertical and Horizontal Careers - which tend to reinforce existing organizational roles and demands by asking students to “match” existing skills via traditional resume and cover letter; this is often called a predefined career ladders and may also encompass recent shifts into lattice career leaders but ultimately involves “matching” ongoing skills and knowledge of the individual to the organization (See Giannosa, 2019 and SHRM, 2022 for a definition of these terms)
2. Parallel Careers – which tend to value testing out careers and skills on multiple levels such as through multiple projects and gig work via various job and career networks; this type of career captures newer trajectories of how careers now are moving beyond organizational boundaries (See SHRM, 2022 for a review of this shift).
3. Autonomous Influencer – which requires that individuals move both within and beyond career management tools and ladders found under points one and two toward developing a broader understanding of authentic self and real-time presentation of self; this may be akin to the emergence of solo-entrepreneurial self in careers (See Basuthakur, 2021 and van den Groenendaal et al., 2021 for a review of sole entrepreneurs in careers). We argue that Digication and PitchVantage, when utilized together, can help reinforce this third and emerging perspective in career management.

**Learning Objectives of This Session:**

1. Review of key issues in career management and traditional career tools used in MBA classrooms.
2. Showcase how digital tools such as Digication and PitchVantage can both complement, but also usurp existing perspectives in career management
3. Summarize and identify how the above may fit and move beyond three perspectives in career management and tools

**Session Overview, Format, and Audience**

* **Time** – 30-minutes
* **Audience** – graduate students in MBA business communication and marketing courses with an emphasis on career management and personal branding; note that although our tools is focused upon MBA classrooms, they may also be applied to undergraduate seniors in similar courses
* **Format:** Review of the tools and discussion
  + ***5-7 minute*** brief overview of different challenges and perspectives with “traditional” career management tools in MBA business communication and marketing classrooms
  + ***10-minute*** review and demonstration of the Digication and PitchVantage tools including review of students’ perceptions and usage in career applications
  + ***10-minute*** review and discussion of how digital tools such as Digication and PitchVantage may help students move beyond the perspective of “fitting” into existing traditional vertical or horizontal careers toward the emergence of careers in parallel and the role of autonomous influencer
    - This discussion will include small breakouts where we will assign questions to attendees on how they might use Digication and PitchVantage, similar or different tools to challenge three perspectives in career management; we will also have attendees illuminate their own challenges and opportunities with traditional and newer emergent tools.
  + ***5-minute*** wrap-up and final Q&A

**Materials Needed**

* **We recommend that participants review and look at the Digication and PitchVantage sites in advance to this session. We provide a link to these sites below:**
* [**https://www.digication.com/**](https://www.digication.com/)
* [**https://pitchvantage.com/**](https://pitchvantage.com/)

**Application to Conference Theme and Unique Contribution to MOBTS**

This session supports the conference theme of “Bridges” by focusing on where and how to connect MBA classes that are focused on business communication, marketing, and career management toward various career perspectives and professional growth. As increasingly the digital economy has challenged MBA education to become more relevant to career management and personal development, we provide reviews as to how two potential tools, specifically Digication and PitchVantage, can challenge some traditional assumptions.

# Acknowledgements of First-Time Submission of This Work

This is the first time this proposal has been presented to MOBTC and at a conference.

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