



A Global Outlook

Globally focused executive education programs help professionals thrive in an international work force. By Mike Knight



Several business schools offer **study abroad programs**, allowing students to visit foreign companies and meet with professionals.

In 1995, Joe Perdew came to Target Corporation in Minneapolis, Minnesota, with a great resume and a double major from Indiana University. But he discovered he had more to learn if he wanted to move up the corporate ladder. “Someone came to me and said, if you want to grow, you need an MBA,” he says.

In 2000, Perdew enrolled in the Executive MBA program at the Opus College of Business at the University of St. Thomas. Perdew, who is vice president of Target’s Store Planning & Design division, appreciated the program’s global focus.

“We had clients all around the world,” he says. “The global thought process at St. Thomas helped me evolve and focus on other perspectives from cultures around the world.”

Perdew was ahead of the curve. “The value of a globally oriented Executive MBA has become even more apparent in light of the economic crisis,” says Christopher Erickson of UCLA’s Anderson School of Management. “If nothing else, the crisis has shown us that the economies and markets of the world are more interconnected than even the experts thought. A broad and international perspective is invaluable for any executive hoping to thrive in this emerging global economy.”

Business schools recognize that expanding global markets are creating demand for professionals with international acumen. There are plenty of great programs to help professionals understand globalization and how it applies to the business world.

Education Overseas

Along with Global Executive MBA degrees, many schools offer Executive MBA programs with a global focus and supported by overseas learning opportunities. For Erich Gerth, the dual Executive MBA offered by UCLA's Anderson School of Management and partner National University of Singapore presented a unique education that made sense for his career.

Gerth earned his two Executive MBAs in 2008. Now he's the global business development director of Aviva Investors, a \$360 billion asset management company. "What attracted me to the program was a combination of two things: One was that classes were taking place in four different countries," Gerth says. "The other was that [the program] was held in two-week blocks, which meant I could concentrate on it for a defined period of time."

Taught through six, two-week residential segments, the program takes place every three months over a 15-month period and includes sessions in Singapore, Shanghai and Bangalore. Gerth learned from professors based in foreign countries and focused on U.S. and international business practices. Plus, he had the opportunity to interact with a wide range of classmates.

"I work in a highly-matrixed organization where you have to be very collaborative," Gerth says. "There are 900 people in my office and 50 different passports. In the

UCLA-NUS program ... you work very collaboratively with a lot of different managers who operate in different cultural settings. You pick up good theory in the program, but more importantly, it forces you to think differently about how you work with other people."

Mixing It Up

Chris Dickey wanted to attend an Executive MBA program that would support his desire to combine public health with entrepreneurship. He also wanted to work with high-caliber peers and be close to his home in New York City. Then, he visited classes at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania.

"I was sold," he says. Besides its reputation as a top finance school, Wharton's education level and diversity impressed Dickey. "There were 110 students in my cohort—probably 20 different cultures represented and lots of perspectives," he says. "The quality of your classmates is the selling point of any program. What you get from them is most important."

Offered in Philadelphia and San Francisco, the program takes place over 24 months and includes a one-week international trip. It focuses on integrated learning fostered through collaborative teams—and a residential component.

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