

Global Competition and Learning Organizations: Goals and Motivations of Corporate Leaders and Employees who participate in Corporate/University Partnerships

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine executive and employee attitudes regarding benefits and difficulties accruing to employees and their corporations who participate in on-site MBA programs for 11 corporate partners. Because so many corporations embrace partnerships with colleges to advance the knowledge base of their employees, it seems reasonable to examine how corporate executives, chief learning officers and liaison officers to college programs and employee participants in an MBA program view the outcomes, benefits and difficulties that the partnership brings.

Two major questions guided this study: To what extent do corporate leaders and the employees participating in the On-Site MBA programs have similar goals and motivations? Are the expectations of the company executives aligned with those of the employees/students?

Executive responses were geared towards long-term goals. They responded that when employees are better educated, they become more valuable to the corporation. The executives did not focus their descriptions of an education on the MBA degree as much as the quality of thinking and teamwork such an education on the corporate site would develop among employees.

Graduates of the program expected to gain knowledge and use the MBA to attain higher positions. They also felt the company would benefit from and they would benefit from the additional knowledge and skills and networks they acquired. Current students stated that their expectations and goals were to gain skills, knowledge and promotions. Unlike the executives and graduates, their expectations reflected short-term goals.

Introduction

Due to increased competition and globalization, leaders of major corporations are placing more emphasis on education. Corporate collaborations with universities and colleges have become powerful businesses within the past 20 years (Dealtry, 2000). Local colleges deliver education on site, elite universities are forming alliances in the delivery of distance learning programs and non-traditional proprietary schools are expanding and seeking accreditation nationally (Clarke & Hermens, 2001). This paper reports the findings of a case study of a college in the northeast that provides on site MBA programs for 11 corporate partners. Although studies have been conducted regarding collaboration of corporations and education, the need for “Strategic education is seen by a growing

number of organizations as a necessary major investment and prerequisite for sustaining and developing competitive advantage”.¹

Several companies have established positions of Chief Learning Officers (CLO) to be responsible for the education of the employees. The position of Chief Learning Officer has grown from only a few in the late 1990s to a few hundred currently (Caudron, 2003). Many fortune 500 companies have created these positions, but not all are committed to the theory of learning to improve the bottom line. Chief Learning Officers must continually prove themselves for the position to be secure. “In order to understand what results are necessary, successful Chief Learning Officers have learned how vitally important it is to replace the language of training with the language of business”.²

Companies such as Goldman Sachs, Coca Cola and General Electric, among others, employ Chief Learning Officers. They are responsible for carrying out the organizational vision and developing procedures for aligning education programs with the culture of the organization. The goal of the leaders is for all of the employees to understand and carry out the mission of the organizations (Willetts, 1996). Chief Learning Officers are the change agents for the companies. They design training and education programs for the employees of the organizations. They also provide training and education for suppliers and customers. According to Willet’s research (1996) learning is not just structured training or education; it is constant and is the heart of the organization. For example, the Chief Learning Officer of Goldman Sachs explains that “Goldman Sachs is becoming a larger, more global firm, and those changes require a

¹ S. Prince and J. Stewart, *Journal of Management Development*. 19(3), 2000, 209.

² S. Caudron, *Training and Development*, 57(2), 2003, February, CLO Accountability, 38.

change in the skills and leadership of the workforce”.³ Chief Learning Officers understand it is important to be proactive and initiate change before it is forced upon an organization.

Positions of Chief Knowledge Officers (CKO) have been created for organizations to “manage their knowledge resources and knowledge workers better”.⁴ Unlike Chief Learning Officers, Chief Knowledge Officers locate knowledge within a company and “find ways to capture distribute and create more of it”.⁵ The accounting firm of Ernst and Young named one of its partners the first CKO of the company. He was responsible for “organizing, capturing and cataloging the firm’s collective knowledge”.⁶

According to Bonner (2000):

As never before, senior managers are realizing that the success factors for aggressive business growth in today’s highly competitive marketplace are what their employees know and how capable they are at learning the newest solutions and technologies. In this knowledge era, an organization’s intangible assets—employees’ collective intelligence of skills, experience, and work ethic- - is crucial to business advantage and accelerated growth.⁷

The American Management Association and the Conference Board have documented that up to 72 percent of overseas companies and at least 50 percent of American companies are planning knowledge initiatives (Bonner, 2000).

³ S. Gandel, *Crain’s New York Business*, Goldman hirings educate execs to keep the lead, 17(23), 35.

⁴D. Bonner, *Training and Development*, 54(2), 2000, February, Enter the chief knowledge officer,36.

⁵ D. Bonner, *Training and Development*, 54(2), 2000, February, Enter the chief knowledge officer,37.

⁶ J. Stuller, *Training*, 35(4), 1998, April, Chief of corporate smarts, 28.

⁷D. Bonner, *Training and Development*, 54(2), 2000, February, Enter the chief knowledge officer, 38.

⁷D. Bonner, *Training and Development*, 54(2), 2000, February, Enter the chief knowledge officer, 38.

As corporations expand partnerships with colleges to advance the knowledge base of their employees, it is important to examine how corporate executives, chief learning officers and liaison officers to college programs and employee participants in an MBA program view the outcomes, benefits and difficulties that the partnership brings.

Research Design and Methodology

This study examined executive and employee expectations regarding benefits and difficulties accruing to employees and their corporations who participated in the Dowling College, on-site MBA programs with 11 corporate partners.

Two major questions guided this study: (1) To what extent did corporate leaders and the employees participating in the on-site Dowling MBA programs have similar goals and motivations? (2) Were the expectations of the company executives aligned with those of the employees/students?

In order to develop an interview protocol that would reveal important similarities between executives and employees in the Dowling College Corporate on-site program, a focus group was used. A focus group of seven executives participated in a discussion around critical themes such as expectations of corporate on-site MBA programs, incentives, barriers, future career paths, and benefits to the organization. An analysis of their comments led to the development of six open ended questions that were designed to explore the benefits and barriers in the Dowling College corporate on-site MBA program. (1)What are the expectations of the executives and employees for the on-site MBA program? (2)How do executives and employees describe the positive incentives that motivate employees to participate? (3)What barriers exist within the organizations that discourage employees from participating in the MBA program? (4)What do executives

and employees perceive to be outcomes of the on-site MBA program? (5) According to the executives and employees who participate in the Dowling MBA, what have their organizations gained from the Dowling College MBA program? (6) What do executives and employees perceive the college has gained from on-site MBA program?

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, pattern and discrepancy analysis of respondents' statements in interviews, and open-ended survey questions. The questionnaire was sent to the executives, graduates, and MBA students

Selection of Subjects

Eleven companies were invited to participate in this study: ADP, Estee Lauder, Federal Express, Horizon Blue Cross/Blue Shield, General Semiconductor, Keyspan, Long Island Rail Road, New Jersey Transit Authority, Northrop Grumman Corporation, Telephonics Corporation, and State Farm Insurance Company.

The population of this study consisted of corporate coordinators to the Dowling on-site MBA program, 12 senior executives responsible for encouraging the on-site MBA program, 43 MBA employee graduates, and 52 participants with 24 earned credits.

Figure 3.1: *Participants in the Dowling on-site MBA Programs*

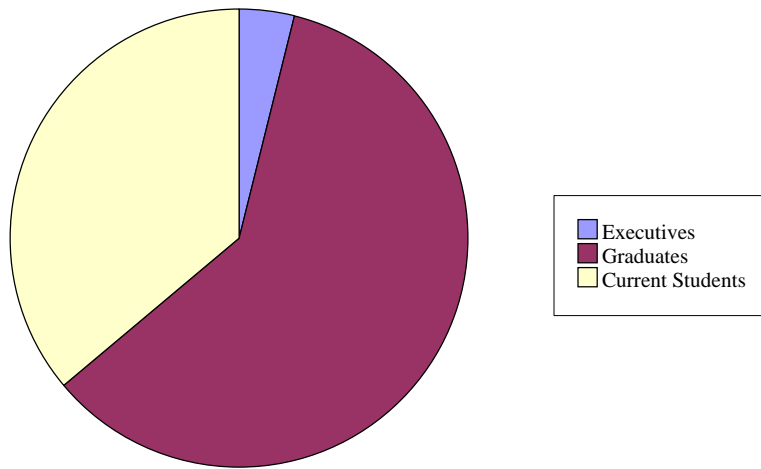


Table 3.1: *Participants Responding*

Data Analysis And Findings

What do you expect to gain from the Dowling College on-site MBA program?

The majority of the executives expected the employees to gain an education and knowledge of the workings of the organizations. They also expressed a need for employees to work together in teams. One executive responded that he expected the program to produce “a more open-minded, proactive, forward thinking employee who builds a true synergistic camaraderie and cross-functional understanding through participation in programs like this with colleagues from work.” Another executive stated that, “the biggest gain is a highly trained and motivated workforce in the current business environment. Most of the feedback I get is very positive. The students love the fact that the company goes out of their way to provide this service. It’s a win/win for the

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company and Dowling.” These responses support Prince’s (2000) findings that leaders place importance on educating staff and applying the educational experience to the workplace.

Another memorable quote by an executive was “expectations: increased employee morale; the ability (based on convenience) for a greater number of associates to pursue higher education; and the ability to provide a valuable employee benefit that could have an impact on recruitment and retention.”

Responses from graduates were more focused on personal gains in knowledge for job success than those of the executives. When asked about expectations, one graduate stated “knowledge to ameliorate lifting me to my highest potential. Understanding how all the components of the business operates, thereby enabling me to become more valuable to the company.” Along with knowledge, opportunities for growth were mentioned in responses to expectations. Another graduate stated:

A better understanding of how business gets done. Also a deeper insight into corporate financials and the inner workings of them. When I started the on-site program, I had been out of college for two decades, so part of my expectations was to become current in business issues and practices. My other expectations included a need to keep my mind active in a structured environment. Leadership skills, a better understanding of how each department operates at campus, valuable business contacts and overall picture of how business, government, and society inter-relate.

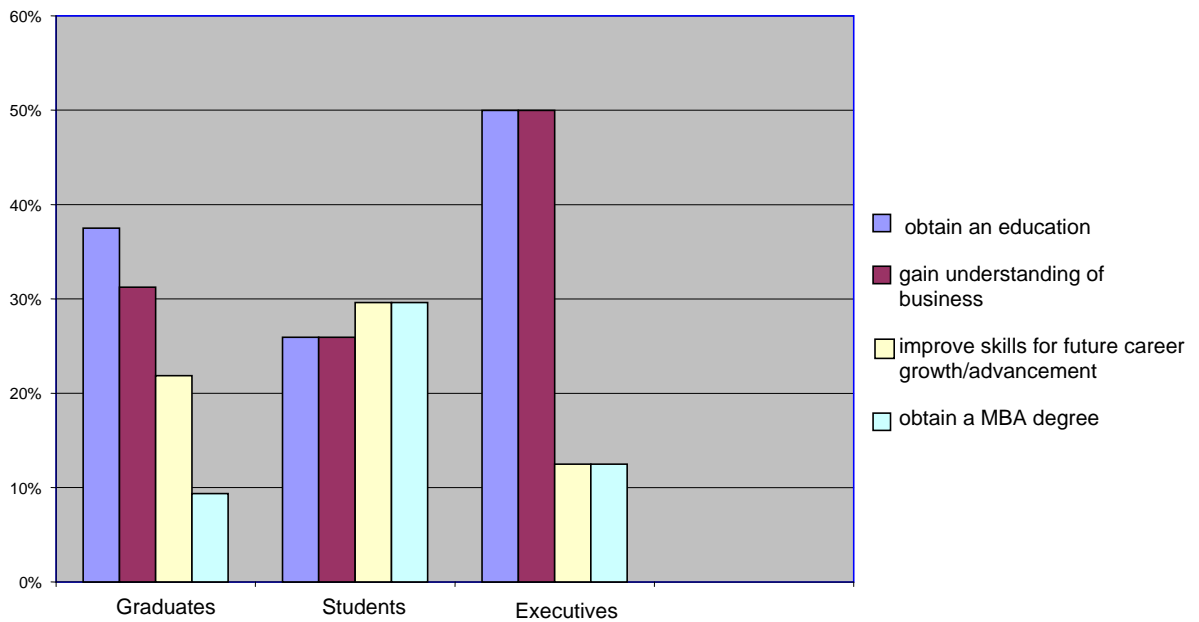
Current students focused on operational and financial skills. They were more interested in education for personal advancement. One student stated, “I expect to gain an understanding of how business operates, what is important to business managers and to know the language used in business.” Another student was more interested in the financial aspects of business. That student responded by saying that he expected to gain “an understanding of the basic and advanced principles, theories and applications of

Finance. This would include a study of United States and European accounting standards, the United States banking system, and the currency, stock, bond and commodity markets.” An engineer with one of the corporations responded, “having graduated with an engineering degree, I wanted a better understanding of corporate business to further enhance my ability to contribute in a corporate environment.”

The following graph demonstrates the emerging themes resulting from the responses to the first research question:

Figure 4.1: Emerging Theme of Research Question One

What do you expect to gain from the Dowling College on-site MBA Program?



It is interesting to note that executives want their employees to become more forward thinking and to operate as team players to help create a learning environment (Table 4.1). Executives saw the big picture in the education and graduates and current students saw immediate gains (obtain an education, gain an understanding of business, improve skills for future career growth and advancement, and obtain an MBA degree).

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Executives wanted motivated employees who were forward thinkers and wanted to gain an understanding of business, to succeed in their job. Current students wanted to improve skills for future career growth, obtain an MBA degree to add to their value, and to get a promotion.

The following table summarizes specific responses within these themes by each participant group:

Table 4.1: Emerging Theme of Research Question One

Summary response within theme of Research Question One

EXECUTIVES	GRADUATES	CURRENT STUDENTS
Forward Thinker	Knowledge	Promotion
Motivation	Succeed in job	Knowledge of Finance
Learning environment	Be more valuable	Understand business Practice
Teamwork	Networking	Skills
Recruitment	Enhance career	
Retention	Promotion	
Corporate University	Marketability	

As evidenced, the executives stated their expectations through a vision for the organization. They expected to gain employees who were forward thinkers, motivated, and able to work in teams. They also expected the organization to become a corporate university embracing the learning environment. The executives also expected to use the corporate on-site MBA program as a recruitment and retention tool.

The graduates and current students exhibited similarities in their expectations for the corporate on-site MBA program to gain more knowledge and to gain a promotion.

The graduates showed more interest in succeeding on the job, becoming more valuable within the company, and enhancing their careers and marketability. The current

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students were more focused on specific knowledge of finance, understanding the business practice and learning new skills. The discrepancy between the statements of graduates and current students was that the current students were looking for short-term gains and the graduates seemed more focused on long-term gains.

What incentives are available to employees who participate in the Dowling College on-site MBA program?

Some executives felt that the incentives were tuition reimbursement. One executive responded, “our company provided tuition assistance of up to \$3500/year.” Others felt that there were no incentives available to the employees. One executive replied, “most specifically, they speak to the convenience of classes being on-site, affordable tuition, and ease of the registration process.”

Other executives felt that there were several incentives for employees who participated in the on-site MBA program. One executive stated,

The program is offered on-site, the campus advisors, the books, the professors are all brought on-site. Rather than reimbursing for the course as we traditionally do, the billing is handled directly with Dowling and that simplifies the process. The employee does not have to drive from work to college and then home. In our workplace, while participation in and completion of a degree does not in and of itself guarantee a promotion, in fact, participating and completing the program is certainly strongly considered.

Another executive stated, “I would not call it an incentive. I sell it as part of our culture. Education and business supporting one another to add value. The institution has an opportunity to help those who enter this program to take on a larger role once completed.”

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Graduates of the program responded that the biggest incentive was convenience in scheduling and avoidance of a commute. There were several interesting comments. A graduate of company 1 responded that an incentive was

A classroom environment, which breaks down managerial barriers. Job titles, lines of authority, and management levels have no bearing; this enables employees to learn about all facets of their company. It encourages teamwork and builds relationships between departments within an organization.

A major incentive according to all respondents was convenience and scheduling.

One graduate articulated this by saying,

probably the biggest incentive to me personally was the convenience of the on-site location. Actually, the deferred payment system was a big incentive too. Although no specific monetary incentive was provided as a result of completing the program, I did receive a promotion right around the time I graduated. I don't think that an MBA was the only reason I got the job, but it certainly didn't hurt!

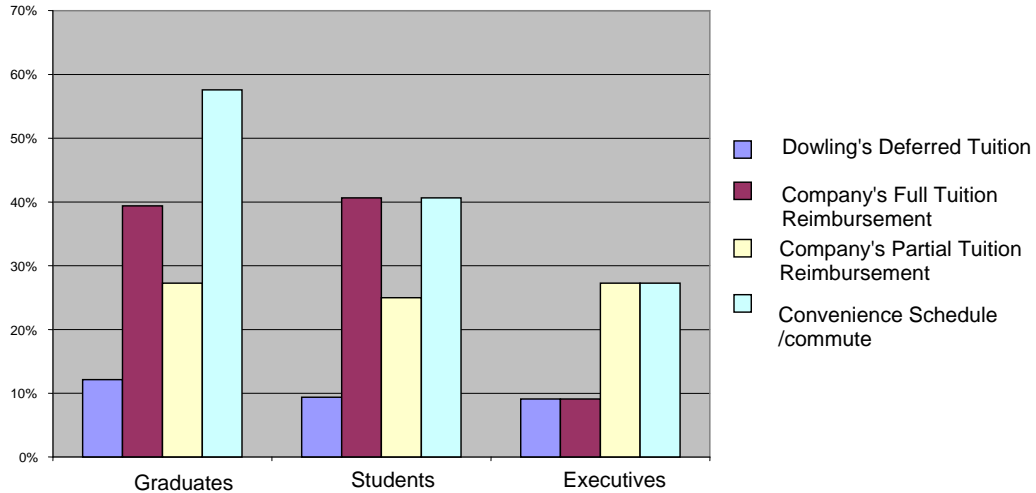
Keeping with the theme of a great incentive being convenience and scheduling, one student responded,

"My Corporation pays for approximately four classes a year and books. The best incentive is that they bring the teachers to our work place, so we don't have to travel after work and we are able to take classes with many people we know." Another student recognized that the greatest incentive is personal gratification. The student responded, "I cannot say there are company incentives. The program is convenient; tuition is reimbursed; textbooks are provided. Incentive is to self –personal enrichment/achievement."

The responses were similar across all groups regarding the tuition support as an incentive and the connection of the MBA to opportunities for promotion. The greatest incentives available to employees who participate in the on-site MBA program are the convenience of schedule and commute.

Figure 4.2: Emerging Theme of Research Question Two

What Incentives are available to employees who participate in the Dowling College on-site MBA program?



The least important incentive was the Dowling College deferred tuition plan. Interestingly, both graduates and current students mentioned the opportunity to network with colleagues from different parts of the company as an incentive. One student named three advantages of the on-site MBA and noted the only incentive was personal growth. This was the only comment that represented an internal motivator. Convenience of scheduling classes was extremely important to all the respondents. Graduates and current students cited that more opportunities for future growth exist as a result of completing the on-site MBA program.

The following table summarizes specific responses within these themes by group:

Table 4.2: Emerging Theme of Research Question Two

Summary response in theme of Research Question Two

EXECUTIVES	GRADUATES	CURRENT STUDENTS
Tuition	Convenience	Convenience
Convenience	Teamwork	Promotion
Promotability	Networking	Networking
	Tuition	Tuition
	Promotion	Incentives not recognized by one discrepancy

As evidenced by the above table, all three groups felt that convenience, tuition, and opportunities for promotion were the greatest incentives for participation in the on-site corporate MBA program.

What barriers, if any, exist within the organization regarding employee participation in the program?

There were only three executives who noticed minor barriers to the on-site MBA program. One executive responded, “I felt the company was totally supportive. I have heard, however, of other locations in the company where there is resistance to the program (on-site classes) due to security concerns.”

Most of the graduates did not feel barriers existed within the organization regarding on-site MBA programs. However, some did express concerns that it was limited to non-union employees.

In company 4, one graduate stated “I don’t know of any organizational barriers *per se*, but I imagine there may be some barriers within individual departments, depending on the manager or director in the area, who is allowed to approve or deny the

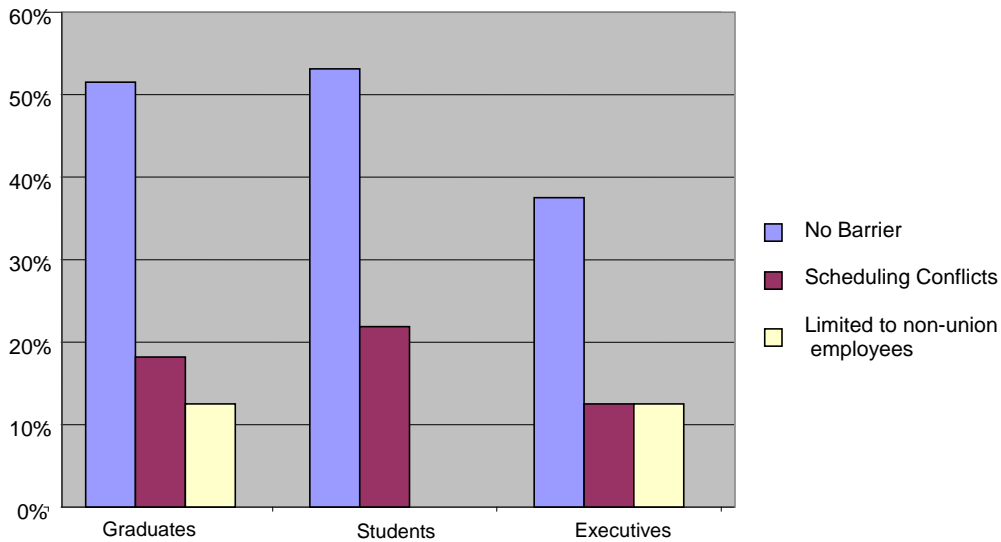
request for tuition reimbursement.”

Current students also agreed that there are no barriers in their corporations regarding pursuing an MBA on-site.

The following graph demonstrates the emerging themes resulting from the responses to the third research question.

Figure 4.3: Emerging Theme of Research Question Three

What barriers, if any exist within the organization regarding employee participation in the program?



The emerging theme for the question was that most of the employees and executives did not believe there are barriers within the organization regarding employee participation in the on-site MBA program. Several students and a few executives felt that time constraints and scheduling conflicts might occur when managers extend work hours that conflict with class. Some graduates and executives worked at corporations where the on-site MBA was only available to non-union members. The following table summarizes specific responses within these themes by each participant group:

Table 4.3: Emerging Theme within Research Question Three

Summary response within theme of Research Question Three

EXECUTIVE	GRADUATES	CURRENT STUDENTS
Reimbursement Security concerns	Non-union employees only Limit success	No rewards to finish Time and workload that extend beyond class
Resistance	Manager approves tuition support	
Family needs Limited tuition support		

There were few similarities in responses between the three groups. Executives noted more barriers than the graduates and current students. The executives responded limited tuition reimbursement, security concerns, resistance by some managers and family needs can be barriers for participation in the program.

What do you anticipate as future career paths for employees who complete the Dowling college on-site MBA program?

At company 11, the executive stated,

When looking for upward growth within the company or outside the company, a candidate’s experience, skills and credentials are critical. Obtaining an MBA from Dowling opens doors which simply put would not be open to these employees seeking senior management positions within this or other organizations.

One executive believes that it is up to the individual and responded, “I would hope that it involves promotion or advancement for those who have completed the MBA program. The education received is only valuable if the student applies it. In my experience, the majority of students is motivated and want to succeed.”

A graduate student from company 4 said, “it opens new worlds in terms of employment internally and externally now that one is armed with more knowledge and

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experience. One's skill is honed to advance in the business world, it gives one some self-confidence that it can be done." At company 6, a graduate responded,

Specific career paths are varied, however, employees who complete the program have a distinct advantage when seeking advancement within company 6, as they are perceived as motivated, goal oriented and well versed in the concepts of Total Quality Management.

Another graduate felt "There are certainly opportunities within the company for graduates of the Dowling program; there are also numerous outside opportunities. I know of several classmates who left the company for better jobs after completing the program. One thing I was surprised by – our company did not require a commitment to the company in exchange for tuition reimbursement. It would be interesting to know how many individuals who complete the program are still employed with the company.

For a student at a different company, a very unique situation was explained.

the month after receiving my MBA, company 5 gave a severance package after 32 years of loyalty. Sounds like a fitting reward. The best news, I have two great job offers with colleges. Apparently with my skill set, the colleges have been looking for faculty coordinators for the past 8 months and I'm their number one choice. Position requires MBA and an automotive degree.

A current student from company 9 expressed,

for me at company 9, I see now a career path. Advancement would be achieved outside the corporation." At company 5 a student stated, "There is no guarantee in job promotion after completion of the program. It all depends on the individual and how he/she is going to apply what he/she learned into the job. Personally speaking, in my current job I have used what I learned in financial management, specifically on unit costing analysis and projections. Because of this, I was given a higher rating in my job evaluation. I feel more confident in using that knowledge in my job."

One unusual response from a student worth noting is

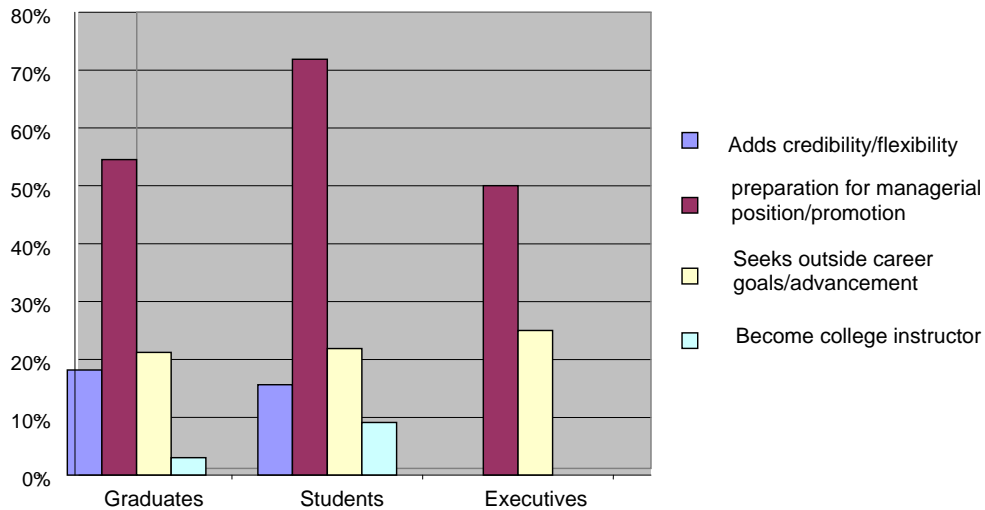
usually it is very difficult to complete the program and be accepted by your employer as someone who has a masters degree. The employer feels

as if they paid for it and that's why you have it. One very realistic career path would be to become an adjunct. A door opens wide for you to teach once the masters is complete.

The following graph demonstrates the emerging themes resulting from the responses to the fourth research question:

Figure 4.4: Emerging Theme of Research Question Four

What do you anticipate as future career paths for employees who complete the Dowling College on-site MBA program?



An emerging theme for the question was that the MBA program was a preparation for management positions and promotions. Another emerging theme for all three groups was that the MBA program enables the employees to seek career goals and advancement outside the organization.

The following table summarizes specific responses within these themes by each participant group:

Table 4.4: Emerging Theme of Research Question Four

Summary response within theme of Research Question Four

EXECUTIVES	GRADUATES	CURRENT STUDENTS
Promotion within New managerial opportunities Outside opportunities	Promotion within or outside Self confidence Advantage for promotion Versatile degree New position Change career	Advancement outside More confident and higher rating New opportunities inside More competitive for advancement Teach others

As evidenced from the responses in all three categories, the subjects agreed that more opportunities from promotion within the organization as well as outside were available to graduates of corporate on-site MBA graduates. The executives only focused on the advancement opportunities. The graduates also responded that the degree offered versatility and some actually spoke about career changes. The graduates and current students agreed that the education also served to increase self-confidence for the employees participating in the program.

What do you believe your organization has gained from the Dowling College on-site MBA program?

According to many executives, the organization improved morale and gained more productive and knowledgeable employees. One executive stated that the company gained “a highly trained and educated workforce that can meet the demands in a global market.”

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Graduates also stressed how important the increase in knowledge base was to the organization. A graduate of company 6 responded that the gains for the company were

a well rounded, better educated and suited employee who will reap the rewards of their degree both personally and professionally. Obtaining a degree is a milestone that gives an individual an incredible feeling of personal achievement. In short, these feelings carry over into everyday activities and create a more productive workplace with employees who have more to offer.

A graduate at company 4 responded from the point of view of the retention. His response reflected a view of the employer's ability to retain and was gracefully stated as,

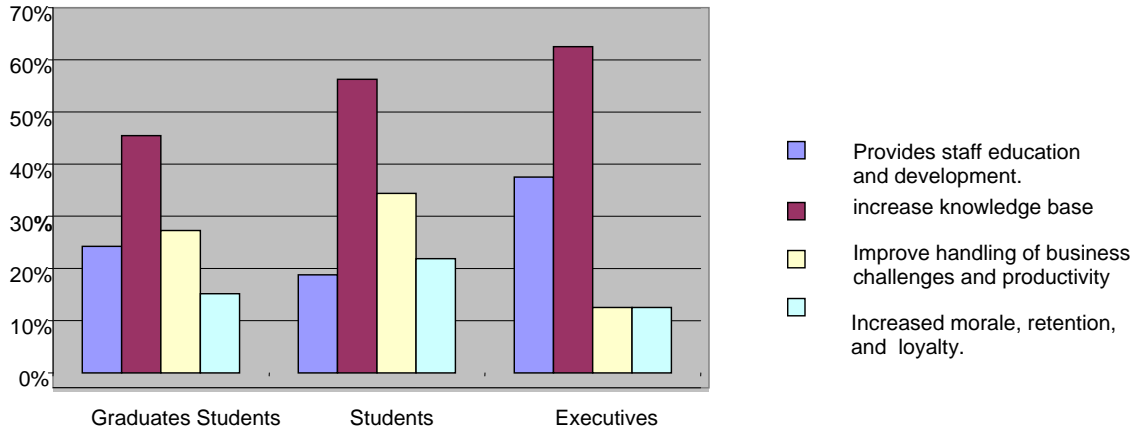
I think our organization uses programs of this type to meet our enterprise strategy of employee satisfaction and retention. Training new employees is extremely costly, more so if the employee leaves the company before the company has had a chance to recoup the costs incurred in training! The type of employees who chose to participate in programs of this type-motivated, hardworking – are also the kind of employees that organizations are most interested in keeping.

An employee with company 5 stated, “my employer has gained employees who can more easily communicate on business matters and can more effectively evaluate business opportunities according to consistent analytical processes.” An employee of company 8, who is currently in the program, observed that the organization enjoys a different type of benefit. The student suggested, “it has greatly increased the interest in higher education, it has also made the corporation one of the most highly educated companies in our industry.”

The following graph demonstrates the emerging themes resulting from the Responses to the fifth research question:

Figure 4.5: Emerging Theme of Research Question Five

What do you believe your organization has gained from the Dowling College on-site MBA program?



Executives and employees agreed that the biggest gain to the organization was an increase in the knowledge base of the organization. Many of the respondents wrote about the improvement of handling business challenges and corporate productivity. Executives and graduates noted there was an increase in morale, retention and loyalty to the company. The employees became involved in informal teams and were excited that the company would provide this educational opportunity.

Table 4.5 summarizes specific responses within the themes by each group:

Table 4.5: Emerging Theme to Research Question Five

Summary response within theme of Research Question Five

EXECUTIVES	GRADUATES	CURRENT STUDENTS
Improved morale Productive and knowledgeable workers	Increased knowledge base Future thinking	Better equipped employee Better evaluators
New relationships and networks	More productive worker after personal achievement Employee satisfaction and retention	More interest in education

The executives responded how the company would be affected by the employees' education. They wrote about improved morale, productivity, and knowledgeable workers. They also noted the positive aspects of relationship building and networking for the company.

Graduates responded along the same lines but they answered from the employee point of view. They felt that the company gained more by the increased knowledge base, future thinking employees, and employee satisfaction and retention. They also remarked that employees would be more confident and become more productive. The employees would feel that they are contributing to the company by utilizing their new skills.

The current students felt that the employees would become better-equipped and better evaluators. The employees would be more education oriented.

What benefits do you perceive the college has gained from participation with the corporation?

There were numerous perceived benefits to the college as a result of the on-site MBA program. An interesting observation from an executive at company 11 was

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I believe the faculty gain significant real-life experience and stories from each company with which they interact, strengthening their own knowledge base. Additionally, relationships between the business world and the academic world, which we must all vigilantly work toward strengthening, are deepened and enriched. The company is able to call upon the college for assistance and programs outside the scope of the MBA, and the college can look to the company for leads and as a solid reference to other companies considering at-work programs.

Consistent with the emerging themes, a graduate from company 6 said that the college experiences can “increase in student body which should translate into increased profit and wealth of hands-on business experience shared by top notch executives and conscientious employees.” A graduate from company 4 stated, “diversity is one of the benefits.” At company 1, a graduate responded “a hands on experience with what a manager in a *Fortune 500* company really manages.”

Dowling College is gaining a national reputation because this program. According to a graduate from a national company,

As a major corporation in Memphis, Dowling’s participation promotes its brand name in Memphis and its neighboring cities at a much lower cost. The ability to lower course’s fee due to no building lease or marketing cost, entices any other major corporation in Memphis and its neighboring cities to offer similar program for their employees.

A current student at company 9 stated

I believe the college has gained another avenue of revenue. One of the biggest deterrents to going back to college is working all day then having to drive/commute to a college and walk to class, etc. On-site MBA is the answer. Students don’t have to rush anywhere, which on Long Island is a hassle in itself. Employers aren’t missing productivity from those students because they don’t have to leave or stay around longer for class. Dowling wins because while they give the corporation a discounted rate they also get free space, free electric and free supplies to hold classes.

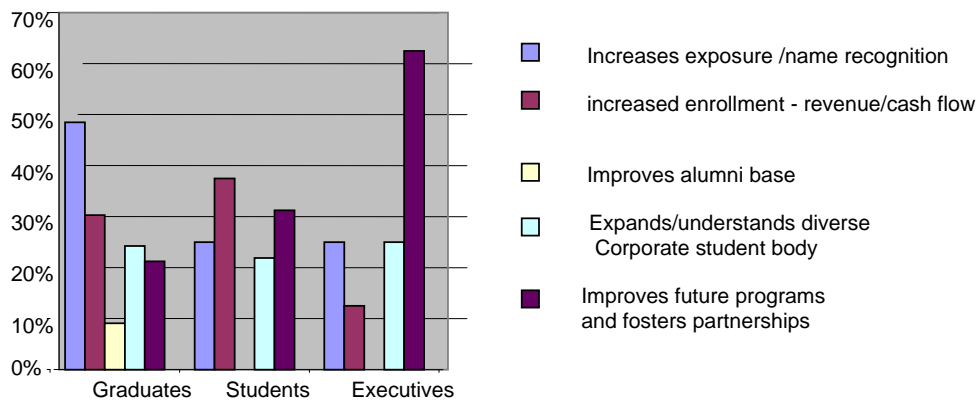
Another response by a current student that was not a part of the emerging theme came from a student in company 5. The student suggested “Having a large corporate

client base can provide feedback into the program as to what the industry is looking for in terms of skill sets from their employees. This information can be utilized by Dowling to determine how to structure specific programs. Add or replace courses as needed to cater to specific needs.”

The following graph demonstrates the emerging themes resulting from responses to the sixth research question:

Figure 4.6 Emerging Theme of Research Question Six

What benefits do you perceive the college has gained from participation with the corporation?



The executives felt that the biggest benefit to the college is that the on-site MBA program improves future programs and fosters partnerships. The graduates felt that increased exposure and name recognition were most beneficial to the college. The current students noted increased enrollment and revenue as benefits. They suggested feedback from the field could help improve courses as the business world changes. Only graduates mentioned how the college benefits from an improved alumni base and the ability to promote its brand name, the Dowling College MBA. The external degree

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program was viewed as an opportunity for the college to reduce its investment in facilities and operational costs.

The following table summarizes specific responses within these themes by each participant group:

Table 4.6: Emerging Theme of Research Question Six

Summary response within theme of Research Question Six

EXECUTIVES	GRADUATES	CURRENT STUDENTS
Exposure to different corporate cultures Real-life experience	Hands-on business experience Status of graduates going to the college	Financial stable "market" New revenue
Leads for future students	Promotes brand name -Dowling College Lower costs for facilities	Facilities/cost reduction Feedback from the field to improve MBA

The responses from executives regarding the benefits to the college revolved around the future and long-term benefits. They responded that this enables the college staff to be exposed to different corporate cultures and real life experiences. They also stated that the college would gain leads for future enrollment of students.

Graduates agreed that exposure to the business experience was a benefit for the college. The status of having graduate students from the corporation attend the college was a benefit. Graduates saw this as promoting a brand name for Dowling College.

Current students and graduates noted that the lower cost of facilities was a major benefit to the college. The current students focused on the revenue and financially stable market. They also stated that the college would benefit from feedback from industry to improve the MBA.

Summary, Conclusions And Recommendation

Summary

Expectations from the Dowling College on-site MBA program Obtain an Education

Most of the executives responded that they expect the employees to obtain insights, an ability to think about the future, new skills, and to gain a better understanding of the way the business works. They felt that when employees are better educated, they become more valuable to the corporation. The executives did not focus their descriptions of an education on the MBA degree as much as on the quality of thinking and teamwork such an education on the corporate site would develop among employees.

The response most frequently given by the graduates was that they expected to gain new knowledge. Many believed that they wanted to use the MBA to reach higher positions. They also felt that the company would benefit and they would benefit from the additional knowledge, skills, and networks acquired.

Current students also frequently stated that their expectations and goals were to gain skills, knowledge and promotions. Unlike the executives and graduates, their expectations reflected short-term goals.

program.

Colleges and employers need to understand that if not enough people continue with the program, the current students should not be penalized. A concern of concluding the program should enrollment drop needs to be addressed before a program is started.

Executives should create a process in order that individual managers cannot create time barriers for the employees participating in the program. When executives truly

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believe that there should be an educated work force, that philosophy needs to be communicated at all levels.

Faculty teaching at companies and working with adult students need to be sensitive to scheduling conflicts. They should encourage these students to speak to them if a problem occurs through work or family.

Future Career Paths for Participants in on-site MBA Program

Adds credibility and Flexibility

Only the students responded that the MBA program adds credibility and flexibility. Some of the students felt that they would be able to work in various areas of the organization using the knowledge gained in the MBA. Several students felt that they gained more respect because of the credential. Some students stated that although they planned to continue working in their current job, they would also seek employment as adjunct professors at colleges. There were some graduates who were teaching for Dowling College and other colleges as adjunct professors.

Preparation for Managerial Position/Promotion

The most frequent response from respondents in the three groups noted that the MBA was the preparation for managerial positions and promotions. There were some students who attributed their promotions to the program. Executives firmly believed that the employees who utilized what they had learned in the MBA within their organizations would gain recognition. There were opportunities for advancement within some of the companies and the executives felt that employees who combined good work with the MBA would find opportunities for promotion.

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Graduates expressed their opinions that there were opportunities to advance with the added credential. Some of the graduates stated that they have been promoted. Many graduates stated that they were given more responsibilities and were able to prove that they could become managers.

The current students believed that completing the MBA would be a way for them to advance.

Summary

Expectations of executives and employees regarding participating in on-site MBA programs differed in that executives tended to see the long range benefits and graduates and current students were more focused on immediate benefits. The participants in the study attended classes or graduated during a time where many companies were downsizing. As a result, many students were interested in immediate personal opportunities. The responses were mostly positive. However, there were some graduates who lost their jobs after completing the program. It is possible that the short-term goals expressed by students and graduates reflected the external environment the past three years.

The executives tended to focus on the future and retention. They focused on the benefits of education to the company rather than to the individual. They also realized that education is a great benefit to employees and would attract a good workforce.

As the college markets the on-site corporate MBA programs, it would be important to address the perspective of both executives and future students. Commitment to education is of great benefit to employees as well as to executives. Based on this study, internal barriers to education were limited to scheduling conflicts and some

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managers' work related priorities. Employees and executives expected to gain knowledge and a better understanding of the way the corporation works.

Throughout the study, a recurring theme was the importance of gaining knowledge and how it could be applied to the organization. The employees' responses reflected their commitment to the organizations and they were very excited about utilizing their education to benefit their companies. Several employees stated that the MBA program changed processes and procedures within their department. Others stated they were promoted and were able to utilize their management skills in their new positions.

Executives felt that the knowledge gained by the employees was used for the benefit of the corporation. Although they stated that there were not always opportunities for promotions, they still believed that the employees were able to grow within their jobs.

Executives felt a significant gain for the companies was the ability to use the corporate MBA program to recruit and to retain employees. Executives believed that the MBA opportunity improved morale among participants.

A few of the companies experienced recent downsizing. The result was that even newly graduated employees lost their positions. The employees who earned their degree or took several credits towards the MBA reported an advantage in seeking new employment. A few employees reported that whether they were given a severance package or took an early buy-out, they were able to find another job. A graduate of the program, who lost his position, was offered two teaching positions at local colleges. The position required a master's degree.

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Corporations and colleges benefit from partnering in the delivery of on-site MBA programs. The benefits to the corporation are more knowledgeable employees able to tackle business challenges and to improve corporate productivity. One executive reported that the educated work force also is important for investors. A company that is publicly traded may indicate the education level of the employees in the annual report.

The short-term benefits to the college are increased enrollment, revenue and savings for facilities and their operational costs. Long-term benefits to the college are name recognition, improved alumni base, and working with a more diverse population of students. The college needs successful alumni to support the endowment fund. Having a strong relationship with corporations can lead to major fund raising and grants.

The college and corporations benefit from the MBA partnership and exchange improved reputations within the work force as well as the industries they serve.

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