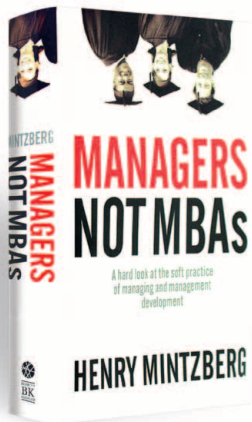


SOUNDVIEW Executive Book Summaries®

FILE: LEADERSHIP



By Henry Mintzberg

A Hard Look at the Soft Practice of Managing and Management Development

MANAGERS NOT MBAs

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Every decade almost 1 million MBAs graduate into the economy. After two years of classes they expect to manage people who have many times the amount of knowledge gained through intensive personal experience. Those without the credentials are increasingly relegated to the "slow track" and subjected to the leadership of those who do not have the legitimacy to lead. The MBA was first introduced in 1908 and went through its last serious overhaul in the late 1950s. It is time for a change. The current system ensures that the wrong people will get educated in the wrong way with the wrong consequences. There is a better way. Professor Henry Mintzberg has designed a program, the International Masters in Practicing Management, that addresses many of the problems associated with traditional programs that profess to develop managers, but instead produce analysts ready to apply one-size-fits-all techniques no matter the context. By integrating reflective, analytical, worldly, collaborative, and action mindsets, this philosophy will not only improve managers, but also their organizations and society.

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What You'll Learn In This Summary

- ✓ What is wrong with today's management education.
- ✓ What kinds of people make good managers and why they are not in business schools.
- ✓ How art, science and craft are all components of management, but business schools focus mostly on science.
- ✓ Whether MBAs are ready to perform in the boardroom once they make it in the door of an organization.
- ✓ How graduate business schools are corrupting education, managerial processes, existing organizations, and even social institutions.
- ✓ How most attempts at innovation of the managerial development process only change the delivery of the same inappropriate material.
- ✓ How an entirely new model, the International Masters in Practicing Management, teaches managerial practices instead of test-taking and knee-jerk decision making.

MANAGERS NOT MBAs

by Henry Mintzberg

— THE COMPLETE SUMMARY

Wrong People

Conventional MBA programs do not work because they pretend to create managers out of people with no experience or expressed leadership. Leadership is a natural quality, and teaching it to someone who has never managed is like teaching psychology to someone who has never met another human being.

More art than science, when management is mixed with craft or experience, it becomes a practice. Inexperienced students cannot appreciate the practice of management, so they focus on the science, or analysis, that is the basis of most MBA programs. Management is treated like a profession that can be learned without experience and then applied in every situation. Management is actually a facilitating activity that depends on the immediate context.

At Odds With Management

Though business schools require work experience from applicants, it is an average of only four years, and their experience is rarely managerial. This particular age group is typically seeking independence from family and roots, which is at odds with management that focuses on accepting responsibility, not throwing it off. Traditionally impatient, analytical and controlling people self-select to apply just so they can move up, and worse, often move out of the one area where they have developed experience. The GMAT encourages good

test-taking, not good management, and it introduces its own bias for science over art and craft.

In 1971, Sterling Livingston wrote that few people had the **will to manage** — to foster success in others over their own success. In 1932, Alfred North Whitehead labeled the **zest for business**, which is different from the zest for riches, as another important characteristic. The former is about getting the most out of *resources*, the latter about tapping the energy of *people*.

Those with the zest for business, but not the will to manage are the problem. Such people are numerous in MBA programs. They make good investment bankers, financial analysts or consultants, which is what many of them have become. Unfortunately, those who aspire to run large corporations are likely to fail in executive positions.

We need leaders with human skills, not professionals with academic credentials. In the larger organizations especially, success depends not on what managers themselves do so much as on what they help others to do. ■

Wrong Training

Once you have the wrong people, there is no right way to develop them. Business students receive a false sense of management and propagate it in organizations. The ill-conceived pedagogy becomes so entrenched that even when the right people are sent to executive MBA programs, they learn the wrong things.

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Business or Management?		Zest for Business (after Whitehead)	
		NO	YES
Will to Manage (after Livingston)	NO	Do research or whatever.	Do deals, or run your own small business.
	YES	Consider the public or social sector; get experience as a manager, then study management.	Consider big business: get experience as a manager, then study management.

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Wrong Training

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The first graduate studies in business were offered by Dartmouth in 1900, followed by the first MBA program at Harvard in 1908. As other programs grew, the business community was not enthusiastic and the focus became academic. Case studies emerged midcentury and were much more popular with students for their practicality, but business research began to flag.

In the 1950s, interest in academic research picked up again, and the focus was on business over management. Business programs taught distinct functions, such as finance, entrepreneurship and marketing, but they did not teach management. Management was finally added as “strategy,” but instead of viewing it as a synthesis of

Impressions Left By MBA Education

✓ Managers are important even though they are disconnected from making and selling. The higher up they are, the more important they are, even if they only arrived yesterday.

✓ Managing is decision making based on systematic analysis. It is more science than art, and certainly no craft.

✓ Data for decisions come from brief cases or reports. To make decisions, numbers are massaged, words are debated, and perhaps ethics are considered.

✓ Under managers, organizations are segregated into discrete functions of finance, marketing, accounting, etc., each with its own set of techniques.

✓ Managers pronounce strategies to combine the functions. Though mysterious, these strategies are understood by those who learned industry analysis and have formulated many such strategies in a classroom.

✓ The best strategies are clear, deliberate and bold like the heroic leaders of the most interesting cases.

✓ After a manager formulates a strategy, all the other people must implement it or take action. Managers must always control this process, but never engage in it.

✓ Implementation is hard because business school graduates embrace change, but most others resist it. Managers have to bash bureaucracies and empower whoever is left.

✓ To become a manager or a leader who gets to sit at the top, you must first sit still in business school for two years. That enables you to manage anything.

business knowledge and soft skills, it became another function to analyze.

Managing by analysis was narrowed to decision making, and became the norm. Much of decision making involves soft skills to identify problems, consider options, and set up holistic solutions. Professors either can't or don't want to teach soft skills, and young students aren't ready to learn them. The business school programs focus on what they can do — evaluate choices — a very narrow view of management. Students are encouraged to analyze by learning generally applicable techniques, but not by taking responsibility for specific situations.

Pedagogy of the MBA

● **Lecture.** Professors stand before the students and tell them how the real world is, but unfortunately the real world is experience.

● **Business Games.** Teams of students make decisions about pricing and production for simulated businesses on computers, but suffer no consequences if they are wrong.

● **Projects.** Students conduct fieldwork projects and consulting assignments in real companies, but without commitment or responsibilities, the projects are meaningless.

● **Case Studies.** Students read a 10- to 20-page discussion of a business situation with a protagonist at a crossroads, having to make a decision. This method promotes too much sitting around and talking — not action.

Do, See, Feel and Listen

Business school teaching methods develop leaders who think, when this world requires us to do, see, feel and listen. The programs broaden students' knowledge of business and financial analysis, but narrow their perceptions of management. ■

For additional information on case studies and their drawbacks, go to: <http://my.summary.com>

Wrong Consequences

Though it is possible for some of the right people to get educated the right way within business schools, these programs are so rarely recognized that it barely matters. The fact remains that training elitist leaders in analysis and promoting them on fast tracks undermines our educational institutions, organizations and social fabric.

Corruption of Educational Process

Though business school programs claim to teach business discipline and understanding, they often focus more on fitting in and competition. Getting into the best

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Wrong Consequences

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school and networking reign over management, while learning to increase shareholder value triumphs over customer needs and product quality. Despite expanding classes in ethics, MBA graduates are becoming less and less concerned with the topic. School gives the students confidence, but not enough competence. Graduates are arrogant enough to get to the executive suite, but are ill-equipped to handle it. Combine the suspect education with the mindless drive to market MBA degrees like action films and it is no surprise business schools can't focus on developing responsible managers, businesspeople and citizens.

Corruption of Managerial Practice

The fact that so many MBA graduates make it to senior positions means that its effect on the practice of managing is enormous. Some of the commonalities of the MBA career path are unsettling:

- **Gateway to the Real World.** MBAs typically leap directly into consulting or investment banking where they have great opportunities for analysis and techniques, but little responsibility for implementation or direct management. The MBA is a status symbol giving students money and their hiring employers a way to screen for interest in business, if not loyalty.

- **End Run Around Management.** Increasing numbers of MBAs get into managing by going around it, straight into executive positions. They never make or sell anything, just involve themselves in functions that are not industry specific. The people who get these degrees are often impatient, aggressive and self-serving. Launching them into important positions without context only encourages them to rely on this behavior.

- **Managing Out of Balance.** MBA training should be a balance of the techniques and experience of craft, the art of insights and vision, and the science of analysis and assessments. Traditionally, the training is light on craft and art, leaving science to take over and propagate a calculating and dehumanizing environment.

- **Performance of Prominent MBA CEOs.** Though they can get to high positions, MBAs cannot necessarily perform there. MBAs constitute approximately 40 percent of CEOs in Fortune 100 companies, but familiar lists of the most admired business leaders — Buffett, Kelleher, Dell, Gates, Welch and Winfrey — do not include MBAs. In fact, CEOs with MBAs tend to have poor execution and people skills, exactly where their selection and training are weakest.

Corruption of Established Organizations

There are two ways of viewing interaction with the

The Soft Underbelly of Hard Data — An MBA's Best Friend

- ✓ Hard information is often limited in scope, failing to encompass noneconomic and nonquantitative factors.
- ✓ Much hard information is too aggregated to give insight into what is really going on behind the numbers.
- ✓ Much hard information arrives too late as trends and performance become facts. Often, managers cannot wait.
- ✓ A surprising amount of hard information is unreliable. Something is always lost or subject to distortion in the process of quantification.

economy and its performance:

- **Exploitation** — Short-term improvement thriving on focused attention, precision and discipline. This is the calculating management style fostered by an MBA education. Removed from context, MBAs tend to exploit other people's experience in the absence of their own.

- **Exploration** — Experimentation that thrives on serendipity, free association, and relaxed control. It is risky, and success is neither assured nor often achieved. Exploration focuses on the creativity of the journey, while exploitation focuses on the final goal.

Businesses need both of these types, just as economies do. Without exploration, there is nothing to exploit. But two corresponding types of management have emerged — professional and entrepreneurial — and they do not necessarily mix well. MBAs tend to gravitate toward and do best in industries where they can control and fiddle with old technologies, such as marketing consumer goods. They can apply the same techniques to several products. The problem with MBAs is that they are apt to focus on one aspect — marketing, finance, or development — and throw the whole company off balance.

MBAs and Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is now being taught in business schools, but like all other disciplines, it is taught assuming that the uninvolved CEO is responsible for everything. Entrepreneurs are typically artistic and visionary, and they rarely attend MBA programs.

MBAs are not known for their success as entrepreneurs. They may start their own low-tech businesses in consulting, real estate, or financial services, but they are rarely capable of the dedication and risky behavior inherent in entrepreneurship.

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Wrong Consequences

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Often, entrepreneurs are unable to run their successful organizations properly. This is typically the time when a professional manager is brought in and introduces the bureaucracy of formalization and centralization. Though both are necessary, problems arise when managers become distant, disconnected and inflexible. MBA programs promote centralization and so do their graduates. As they spread throughout the economy, they are responsible for the rise of bureaucratic management in a time, especially in high-technology industries, when we need to nurture teamwork, collaboration and networks.

Corruption of Social Institutions

These destructive effects of an MBA degree have their most damaging effects on society at large. The members of the professional or business class are becoming the leaders of our economic entities while those they lead do not respect them or believe they have the right to lead. Society is becoming stratified into a credentialed class and an experienced class, when in fact leaders should be varied and chosen for their qualities beyond credentials and affiliation.

Society is also leaning toward a selfishness that is embodied in the corporations that ignore social responsibility in favor of narrow shareholder value, and that regard CEOs as the sole generators of economic performance. These managers and heads of business are in powerful positions to make decisions to either thwart social needs or consider them. It is unsettling to know that they have learned lessons that include the idea that everything has a price, that everything needs to be black or white, and that companies are not responsible for the quality of life of their employees.

An Insidious Belief

Additionally, there is an insidious belief that a business education, which barely teaches business management, is adequate preparation to manage in the governmental and not-for-profit sectors as well. The hierarchical, money-focused model does not work well in the social sector where people work in teams and volunteer their time. Meanwhile, turning the government into a business turns people into customers instead of citizens. ■

For Additional Information on the uncertain success of CEOs, go to: <http://my.summary.com>

New MBAs?

Given these widely recognized problems with management education, which are many, there have been many modifications and make-overs in recent years to

Masters of British Airways

The author gave a speech at the British Academy of Management at which he suggested that the innovation of MBA programs dedicated to single companies was taking innovation too far. Jonathan Gosling of Lancaster University was involved in such a program with British Airways (BA) and invited the author to visit while the students prepared their “Strategy Projects.” One involved BA sourcing in the Far East, another designed a strategy for Gatwick Airport, and the other dealt with a threat from an American airline. The author was impressed with the topics and how they combined the conceptual thinking of the university with the practical problems of the company. These were not students playing consultants in the “real world” or experienced managers discussing other people’s cases. They were managers involved in issues they were investigating and so were acutely aware of what they did not know.

create better MBA programs.

Most MBA programs offer the same program: functional courses in the first year, such as finance, quantitative analysis, and international business, and then electives that are listed under the same headings. Perhaps there is a required strategy course as well. It has been this way for decades, and programs keep developing new variations. **Executive MBAs** take practicing managers who have significant experience, and teach them a curriculum designed for people with no experience. **Modular curricula** integrate functions and intensify learning by teaching shorter, interconnected modules over the course of the semester and only giving one grade. **Internet, CD-ROMs, and video conferencing** do not change the degree so much as they make the process faster. The digitalization of information only leads to more analysis and less management. **Distance learning** mixes residential sessions, downloaded lectures, and bulletin boards. Yet another way to change the MBA is to add the words **international** and **global** to describe the students, faculty or location.

Real Innovation

Imagine someone from Ghana announcing that management practices and controls exercised in Accra would work just as well in New York. That is essentially what the United States does. Americans assume their management systems are the best. But there are innovations in business management occurring around the world. Other economies have designed their own systems of management and are successful without importing the American way.

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New MBAs?

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Japan traditionally has theoretical business departments in its universities directed at undergraduates. Japanese businesses have taken on the job of developing practicing managers themselves. MBA programs are rare, and though corporations used to sponsor some of their managers to do MBAs in the United States, they have been cutting back because the graduates had trouble fitting back into the local business culture and had an inclination to quit the company.

Germany has been successful since WWII as well, and many of its companies became famous for quality and logistics. Though MBAs are rare, German business leaders experience discipline-based training in their undergraduate programs, and many get doctorates. As in Japan, the focus of management is in the firm, not the profession itself. Unlike Japan, which moves its best recruits around to get to know different parts of the company, German companies tend to promote in a single function.

France has the equivalent of graduate business schools, but mostly the prestige goes to graduates of “*grandes ecoles*” in business, engineering, etc. that focus on the equivalent of undergraduate education. Graduates are snapped up and move fast, much like American MBAs. Graduates from the Ecole Nationale d’Administration are so influential that they tend to occupy a high proportion of France’s leadership positions — both political and business.

The **United Kingdom** ranks second in graduating MBAs after the United States. Big-name schools tend to pick up changes and trends in America and adopt them. Smaller, lesser-known schools have made developments in highly specialized MBA programs that focus on one function or industry so that the “A” in MBA stands for accounting or aerospace. Additionally, a large majority of English MBA students stay on the job, so programs are designed more for practitioners with experience. ■

For Additional Information on the meaning of international and global business education, go to: <http://my.summary.com>

Developing Managers

Despite management education’s attempt to bypass experience, most development does happen during the time a manager is actually working. There are many opportunities for organizations to develop management, and to use education more effectively to do it.

Development in Practice

Management education, management training, and management development exist on a continuum of experience.

The first is academic and rooted in general theories and concepts unrelated to the field where they will be practiced. The second involves consultants and trainers who teach a vocational version of the first, using techniques and skills to match general knowledge with practice. Management development approaches the needs rooted in practice in specific organizations. An organization draws on whatever it finds appropriate to further develop its own managers.

There are several options to consider when designing more effective management development strategies, including:

- **Sink or Swim:** This is the most typical way for new managers to arrive on the job and struggle to find some help. Although they have had managers as models, there is little specific preparation for the new role, and sinking is common. Development is seen as a personal responsibility, and it is up to the new manager to read a book, listen to a CD, or take a class.

- **Moving, Mentoring and Monitoring:** Management is a practice like any other, so it needs an apprenticeship. Some companies offer on-the-job (OTJ) training in rotation and mentoring programs. The developing manager then receives feedback.

- **Management Development Buffet Table:** These are off-the-job courses and programs offered by outside providers but available on site, on disk, on the Web, and on screen.

- **Learning in Action:** Traditionally, this is a way to get managers to work together on projects, learn about the world of work, and take time for reflection. The trouble comes if companies use it as a way to get work done, which takes the focus off of development.

- **Corporate Academies:** Organizations are creating in-house corporate universities to focus on the development of their managers and other personnel. They are intended to develop people for a particular organization, not conduct research and grant degrees to the business community at large.

These development methods all focus on different areas — experience and the job, education and the person, and results and the corporations. They should be balanced together judiciously to develop managers in practice.

Development in Management Education

Instead of starting with what untrained youths are taught in management education, we should start with what leaders and managers need to know. Conventional education impedes learning, and something more engaging and less controlling is needed to educate the right people for management in the right ways to achieve the right consequences. Here are eight propositions to fix what’s wrong in management education:

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Developing Managers

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1. Management education should be restricted to practicing managers. Instead of having students self-select into business school and then emerge onto the fast track, have organizations choose their most promising midcareer leaders who are old enough to have experience, but young enough to benefit from education.

2. The classroom should leverage the managers' experience. Managers should remain on the job while they learn in school so that their experience is as major a force in the classroom as the instructor's teaching.

3. Insightful theories help managers make sense of their experience. Education should be hands-off. Managers have to be exposed to theories so they can learn to be thoughtful and express themselves.

4. Thoughtful reflection on experience in the light of conceptual ideas is the key to managerial learning. Learning is not doing. Learning is reflecting on doing. It involves wondering, probing, synthesizing and connecting all in a struggle to do things better the next time.

5. "Sharing" their competencies raises the managers' consciousness about their practice. Competencies such as leadership or negotiating are hard to teach and therefore hard to fit into management education. They are best learned on the job. But if managers in a classroom share how they have practiced different competencies and what worked or failed, they can learn from comparing their experiences.

6. Beyond reflection in the classroom comes learning from impact on the organization. In order for management education to approach leadership, it must encourage managers to get beyond the benefit for themselves. If an organization sends an individual for education, the obligation and commitment go both ways. The learners who go away should return as management teachers.

7. All of the above should be blended into a process of "experienced reflection." The managers bring experience to the classroom, where faculty members introduce concepts, theories and models, and reflection occurs. The resulting learning is carried back to the job, where it impacts behavior, providing further experience for reflection back in the classroom.

8. The curriculum, the architecture and the faculty should be shifted from controlled designing to flexible facilitating. The idea that teaching should be divided into discrete chunks — operations, ethics, etc. — is ridiculous. Programs should weave together values and attitudes, stories and ideas, and use engaging methods of learning to hold participants responsible for reflecting together on

their experience. Instead of controlling the process, faculty members should collaborate and learn as well. ■

New Ways for Developing Managers

Along with a group of colleagues from Canada, England, France, India and Japan, the author developed a novel plan for management education to showcase the ideas in this summary. Though the attainment of knowledge and the enhancement of competencies are important, they wanted their program to help people become wiser human beings in addition to becoming more effective managers. They developed the International Masters in Practicing Management (IMPM), which is true to the eight propositions for an overhauled management education presented in the previous article. Though parts of the IMPM can be found in other programs, the whole package cannot.

Five Mindsets

The design of the IMPM program focuses on five different mindsets, each taught in a different two-week module. The modules include reflecting back over experiences since the last module, program time to consider the impact of the learning back at work, "white time" when nothing is scheduled so that people can discuss issues they have not had enough time for, and field studies where participants visit local operations of companies represented in class.

Module I: Managing Self — The Reflective Mindset. Participants develop a reflective mind by focusing on themselves, their work, their world, and how to use experience to become more constructive and discerning.

Module II: Managing Organizations — The Analytical Mindset. Instead of traditional analytical teaching, this module offers different perspectives on analysis, studies specific frames commonly applied in business, and integrates a new point of view.

Module III: Managing Context — The Worldly Mindset. This module encourages the participants to understand that the effects of the external environment — government and legal trends, social trends, international developments, etc. — affect the company.

Module IV: Managing Relationships — The Collaborative Mindset. This module focuses on creating meaning with shared space for emerging relationships.

Module V: Managing Change — The Action Mindset. This module focuses on leader-driven macro change, middle management micro change, and personal change.

For Additional Information on managerial competencies, go to: <http://my.summary.com>

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New Ways for Developing Managers

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Though a great deal can be done in the classroom, the essential philosophy of the IMPM requires that much of it happens back on the job. The participants are expected to write **Reflection Papers** to examine how the learning from the modules fits into their work experience. Groups of participants and faculty who are in the same geographical area get together between modules for **Tutoring**, so that they can provide support and links to learning. The participants do **Self-Study** to get themselves up to speed for the Analytical Module.

The Managerial Exchange pairs participants across companies and countries, who spend a week together after the second module. **Ventures** are action learning that the participants undertake to affect change in their organizations. Finally, in order to justify the degree and make participants and others take the program and its learning seriously, the participants must do a **Major Paper**. It is not quite a formal thesis, but it is a substantial assignment including review of serious literature supported by in-depth study.

Impact of the Learning

The IMPM offers a unique opportunity for the development of managers, but is it worth it? With this degree, the employers pay, but some might think they shouldn't because employees are too mobile and busy to merit the investment. However, if companies believe in developing leadership as much as they say they do, they should view the fees as an investment in operations rather than an expense from the management development budget.

The IMPM has the added benefit of developing a better organization at the same time it develops better managers, instead of as a consequence. Change occurs throughout the length of the program and the IMPM participant returns to the organization and shares his or her learning with others.

The IMPM program has been in existence for eight years, and the retention rates have been quite high. Many companies seeking a new kind of managerial development send more people back every year.

Moving Toward Broader Diffusion

Because of the benefits of the program, it is essential to move toward broader diffusion of the Masters of Practicing Management (MPM) instead of the MBA, which focuses on better decision making through training in analysis — in general rather than in a particular context. The MPM focuses on the practice of managing in context. It strives to make better managers, by making craftspeople instead of analysts.

The author and his colleagues are currently planning

to expand the concept of the MPM by increasing the number of cycles offered by the partner schools. Similarly, the practices are extended by the people who have the degree and continue teaching back at their organizations. This extension will lead to infiltration, a concerted effort to change existing programs, and then to differentiation and applying the learning of the MPM to other sectors. ■

For Additional Information on how participants reacted to the Mindsets, go to: <http://my.summary.com>

Developing True Schools Of Management

Management schools need a tuneup. They have been standardized and honed to such a degree that they weaken what they intend to create. Business schools function largely as starting schools when they should be more balanced as starting schools, developing schools, and finishing schools. There can also be specializing schools and enhancing schools. The old models of research, degrees, teaching and tenure should be swept away as new forms of learning develop.

Specialized Masters Programs in Business could be designed for specific functions and industries so students get what they need and learn it in-depth instead of getting what they do not need.

Masters Programs for Practicing Managers could be directed at midcareer managers with significant experience and junior people in their first managerial job.

Development Programs for Practicing Managers should become more innovative — not standardized, pared-down sources of easy money for universities.

Bachelors Programs to Educate should not try to train managers who have never had any experience. They should provide a liberal arts education provoking thoughtfulness.

Doctoral Programs for Adults should encourage candidates to master the research literature and methods, but also to stand on their own two feet, and break away from conventions.

More Research and Scholarship

Despite students' pleas for more practical materials, we should encourage more research and scholarship in business education. Business education should be insightful and accessible to the practicing managers who will need it, not a retread of what is taught to people with no experience. Management is everywhere in society, because so much depends on organizations. It is paramount that our leaders are equipped to helm them. ■