

♦ COLUMN ♦

Reinventing management education

Reinventing management education has been the prime mission of my colleague, Professor Henry Mintzberg, over the last 15 years. His book, *Managers, not MBAs*, created quite a stir when it was published in 2005. The first half was critical of MBA education, the second half of the book talked about how a consortium of five business schools set about changing management education for practicing managers.

A little over 15 years ago, Mintzberg set out with a group of like-minded faculty at Montreal's Desautels Faculty of Management at McGill University to find other business schools with the 'guts' to challenge the orthodoxy of business education of the time. As Mintzberg and others spoke of what they hoped to do, concurring academics emerged and the International Masters Programme in Practising Management (IMPM) ensued. Lancaster University in the UK, INSEAD in France, a consortium in Japan and Korea, and the Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore (IIM-B), formed the partnership, which continues to evolve today. INSEAD and our partners in Japan and Korea have been replaced with others in China and Brazil, to reflect the new dynamics in the business world.

IIM-B and our wonderful colleagues there have served as module directors and cycle directors in the IMPM, accompanying participants to all five modules and contributing mightily to the innovative approaches that make up the International Masters in Practising Management and the programmes that have spun from it.

Let me list a few of those approaches that Indian readers will recognise, and how the spirit of India can be found in them:

♦ When you walk into the IMPM, you will be immediately struck that, rather than a standard U-shaped classroom, which focusses attention on the professor, the programme has adopted a different format. Sitting at round tables in a flat classroom, participants 'own' the space and can easily hold instant workshops, hold discussions and share their insights, unlike a traditional setting, where participants have to 'break out'. Respect for everyone's real world experience is a starting place.

♦ In another break with the traditional case-study approach, the IMPM curriculum is designed around the actual experiences and needs of the participating managers and their organisations. Throughout the program, learning takes the form of a constant exchange of ideas and insights, as executives move back and forth between management concepts and their experi-

A group of like-minded faculty sets out to challenge the orthodoxy of business education

♦

ences, reflecting upon them individually and together.

♦ We also break down the functional silos. Most management degree programs offer training in the traditional business silos of marketing, finance, strategy, HR, etc, but little in the actual practice of management. As described in the Harvard Business Review article *Five Minds of a Manager*, by J. Gosling and H. Mintzberg, the IMPM uses a unique approach structured around five managerial mindsets (reflective, analytical, worldly, collaborative, action).

♦ Unlike most MBAs which are full time, IMPM participants continue to work while they earn a masters' degree through five, nine-day modules delivered over a 16-month period at leading business schools around the world.

♦ A worldwide set of campuses: the medium is the message. Participants travel to a different campus for each module and spend time immersed in the culture of the host country. While there, they go on field studies to local companies, observe different managerial practices and learn from the diverse insights and perceptions of fellow participants.

♦ Focus on BRIC economies. Today, the IMPM module locations embrace three of the four BRIC economies: India, China and Brazil, as well as the developed economies of North America and Western Europe. Thus, the IMPM is as Asian as it is European or American, offering participants an authentically cross-cultural experience.

♦ Reflections. Reflecting does not mean musing; it means wondering, probing, analysing, synthesising – and struggling. Managers have to share their reflections, to learn from each other's ideas and experiences. Most executives are action-oriented, always doing. The IMPM is a haven, where participating managers step back from their daily pressures and reflect upon the ideas presented in the programme. Each morning, they begin by writing their thoughts silently in their 'Insight Book'. From there, they engage in discussions around their table, on a vast range of economic, ethical, business and political issues. This is followed by plenary discussion.

From the IMPM, we have developed the Global Advanced Leadership Programme with IIM-B and Lancaster, and an International Masters for Health Leadership (IMHL) at McGill. In all of these programmes, the ideas and spirit of our colleagues at IIM-B have been an integral part of the DNA of our efforts to reinvent management education. ♦



KARL MOORE

The author is professor, Desautels Faculty of Management, McGill University, & Associate Fellow, Green Templeton College, Oxford University