

EXPERIENCE FIRST, MBA LATER?

Here is a quick guide to who should do an Executive MBA. What are its pros and cons versus full-time MBAs?



Prof. R.S. Veeravalli,
Director – PGXPM,
Great Lakes Institute of Management

What is an Executive MBA really? What should it be? For who is it meant? How is it different from the full-time MBAs? Is it as good, or lesser, or better than the full-time MBA? Is the part-time MBA the same as EMBA? If not, what are the differences?

The title sets the context and gives us the crux to get going. EMBA is the MBA for Experienced Executives (managers). Thus, the title - Experience first, MBA later.

From this we also derive that the EMBA is only for Executives, while the full-time MBA is left non-denominated, implying that it could be for both experienced and fresh aspiring executives.

It also then follows that EMBA is for those who continue to work and do the program, which means that the program has to be either in the evenings, weekends or in modular periodic residencies, exploiting the emerging technologies that seamlessly and effectively deliver learning digitally as well, in tandem with the face-to-face sessions, and thus optimize the time, costs and learning, without any compromises in learning assurance.

Segments of EMBA

The term Executive means those that execute, get things "performed, carried out" - connoting the entire managerial cadre. As we know, this spans across junior, middle, senior and top managers - giving us 3 to 4 segments based on how we profile.

In addition to the segments of executives as above, we find two more segments that fit the bill. One, members of business families already playing roles similar to the executives identified above, who wish to best equip themselves to grow their business. Second, entrepreneurs who also wish to formally

equip themselves with business skills in order to grow their business. Given the above various 'customer' segments, we can now ask if the EMBA can be one, for all these segments, or more.

For junior-middle managers

The junior-middle managers (2 to 10 years' experience) need to manage different business functions across the value-chain, to deliver revenue on the demand management side, and quality of products/services within the budget on the product/service supply side, or perform the support functions like finance, accounts, human resources, engineering, research and product development. They need an EMBA that will help developing deep functional skills in their chosen functional management.



For senior managers

The senior managers (10 to 15 years' experience) on the threshold of becoming first-line leaders to head business units/profit-centers need to learn to deliver strategic profitability and growth, capable of managing value-chains serving defined set of customers, by strategic and people leadership skills.

This means a shift from tasks-centric to people-centric capabilities, of people who are internal and external stakeholders in the business ecosystem. Thus, their EMBA needs to be a General Management program, delivering strategic management skills as its focus and core, beyond functional management skills.

For top management executives

Combining and overlapping with above is the potential top management executives (15 to 20+ years) who are aspiring to become CXOs, CEOs. These positions are responsible for creating and maximizing wealth for the shareholders and other stakeholders, beyond strategic profitability and growth. These executives need to learn the ways by which socio-economic wealth is created, and acquire the skillsets to create them.

Imparting leadership skills

These skillsets are almost entirely leadership skills – the ability to envision the preferred future for the institution in the dynamic complex competitive

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environment, visualize the strategic paths of least resistance therein and make plans then to take the organization to reach the envisioned future, identify and delegate the strategic plans to the right next level executives, and steer the strategic campaigns to success. Finally, the quality and ability to celebrate the success, recognize and reward the performers and motivate/energize all people of the organization to go forward to the next goals. Hence, the EMBA for this level has to have elements that can give aforesaid transformational learning experience and exposure at global levels of businesses and governance.

EMBA templates

From the above discourse, we can see that there can be three distinct EMBA templates that will make compelling sense for the respective target executives described – the first with options to do functional specializations, the second a general management format EMBA and the last, a regional/global leadership program that can also give a formal management qualification and powerful networks.

Full-time MBAs

The full-time MBAs, on the other hand, happen at or near the beginning of one's career. In fact, some of the best B-Schools in India have got implicit or explicit upper limits in work-experience of around 6+ years, because they find the job placement sweet-spot for these full-time MBAs is around 3 to 4 years of pre-qual. Students with experience beyond this band become almost impossible to place in the current modes of bulk placement processes!

Need for EMBA

In the past decade or so, some of the fresh thinking and leading B-Schools of India like the top IIMs (ABC), SP Jain, ISB, Great Lakes, etc., have developed quality EMBA, adapting from the best of the global EMBA. But they are yet to achieve the required visibility and volumes/growth.

It would be fair to say that India is virtually a virgin land when it comes to EMBA. It is at least as large as the fulltime MBAs, if not larger, waiting to be created and taken by the first mover(s) with pedigree who does a quality job of it in earnest. ☐