TAILOR MADE

The Eller College of Management at the University of Arizona has a customized executive education program that targets highly skilled professionals with advanced degrees in the industries of medicine, bioscience and engineering, and who are called upon to lead key divisions within the company.

These leaders frequently have had little or no formal training in essential business concepts and strategies. This "gap" between technical expertise and business training is widely recognized by the executives affected. Customized executive education can be designed to successfully bridge this gap, and specifically target an organization's unique learning goals and performance objectives. The Eller College business of medicine, business of bioscience, and business of technology programs present topics and address issues specific to the client organization.

All executive education certificate programs are categorized as non-degree. Many Eller College business of medicine programs qualify for Category 1 Continuing Medical Education (CME) credit for physicians, in partnership with University of Arizona Health Sciences.

STEP 1: EXPLORATORY MEETINGS

The director of executive education meets with the organization's executives and key stakeholders to review the company's strategic goals and objectives. A preliminary needs assessment facilitates a better understanding of the company's challenges, which leads to the identification of specific learning objectives. Based on the outcome of these meetings, a proposal outlining the suggested curriculum is presented for discussion and review. Once the proposal has been refined and the contract executed, the project moves into the development phase.

STEP 2: PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

The proposed curriculum is fleshed out in detail using Eller's 3-Cs of customized executive education development: content, context and critical mass. The content of each session, or module, must be results-driven, i.e. what action, behavioral change or deliverable is the ultimate goal? Next, how can the material be given context through embedding unique/specific corporate data, projects or activities into the module design? The third C is critical mass. The college believes that in order to effect behavioral change, or create momentum strong enough to enhance and influence actions beyond the classroom, there must be sufficient participation to create consensus, as well as critical mass within that organization.

Eller executive education programs are designed for a minimum of 15 participants and a maximum of 50. Faculty and industry experts are selected based on their formal areas of expertise, as well as specific industry knowledge or experience particularly relevant to the audience. The client's key stakeholders or planning team collaborates with the executive education team and UA faculty in developing the curriculum. Optimal results are achieved when instructors have ready access to key personnel within the organization during the development process for purposes of discussion and feedback. Also needed is access to pertinent data and internal reports relevant to the topics covered, and the overall learning objectives of the company. To ensure confidentiality, a non-disclosure agreement is put in place at the beginning of the development process.

STEP 3: PROGRAM DELIVERY

Custom programs are a minimum of one day in length and may be considerably longer based on the needs of the organization. Typical programs consist of multiple sessions or modules, each module being one-and-a-half days to two days in length. Classes are dynamic and participatory; attendees engage in inter-session activities and exercises designed to transfer knowledge back into the organization after formal sessions are concluded. Participants are expected to complete advance readings prior to each session, and may be asked to complete specific activities following the module or between (multiple) modules. Classes may be conducted at either of the Eller College locations in Scottsdale or Tucson, or at a client-designated facility.

STEP 4: PROGRAM FEEDBACK, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

Following the conclusion of each module, program participants and other key stakeholders are asked to complete an evaluation designed to rate the process, instructors, content and deliverables. All evaluations and feedback, both formal and informal, are jointly reviewed by the Eller executive education team and the company's management team. Specific activities or follow-up sessions are frequently assigned at the conclusion of each module to reinforce content, action items and deliverables.

Executive education as an investment

Customized executive education is an investment in a company's single most important asset, its people. Every company is faced with the challenge of successfully developing, motivating and retaining top employees. This applies equally to current executives and high-potential individuals who are key to the company's future success. An investment in executive education can pay significant dividends in many different ways, whether it is adding value that visibly impacts the bottom line or one that substantively enhances a company culture that believes in promoting excellence through continuous professional development. AB

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