



ROI on Executive Education

Revisiting the Past and Looking to the Future

Pat Cataldo, Bob Stilliard, and Peter Topping



UNICON Research Report

November 16, 2018

UNICON POSITIONING STATEMENT

UNICON – The International University Consortium for Executive Education

UNICON is a global consortium of business-school-based executive education organizations. Its primary activities include conferences, research, benchmarking, sharing of best practices, staff development, recruitment/job postings, information-sharing, and extensive networking among members, all centered on the business and practice of business-school-based executive education. UNICON is a diverse organization, with representation from over 100 schools. In addition to size and geography, schools are diversified by the expertise, reputation, and strength of their faculty, the types and size of their customers, and increasing the breadth and depth of their executive education portfolios. The ability to represent many perspectives in executive education is a great strength of UNICON and a source of continued learning and vitality in the field. This diversity of views and interests also means that there is no single “UNICON perspective” on its commissioned research topics, including no single perspective on the future of business education – an area which this report ably addresses. The interpretations and perspectives expressed in this report are those of the researchers, professionals who are deeply familiar with the business education field and the needs and objectives of its stakeholders.

The UNICON Research Committee

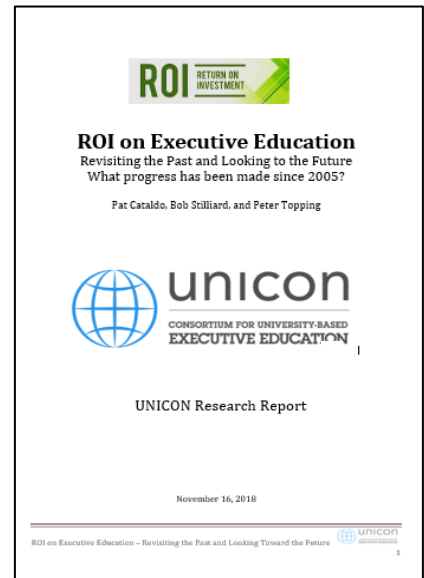
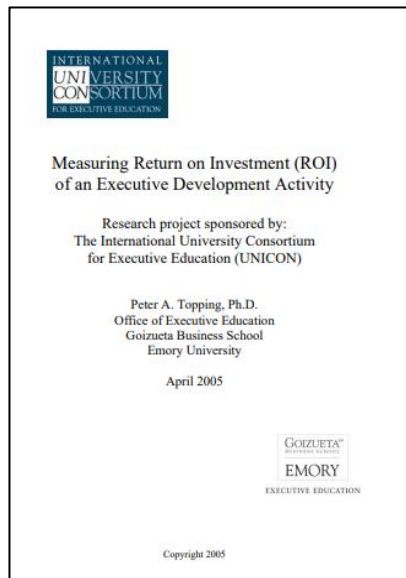
The UNICON Research Committee advises the UNICON Board of Directors on research priorities, cultivates a network of research resources and manages the overall research pipeline and projects. The Research Committee is made up of volunteers from UNICON’s member organizations.

UNICON Research Report: *ROI on Executive Education - Revisiting the Past and Looking to the Future* sponsored this research initiative that was conducted by Pat Cataldo, Bob Stilliard, and Peter Topping. The result is extensive, updated research on the topic of evaluation and Return on Investment (ROI) for executive education investments. It provides new members to the industry a good background on the ROI of executive education investments topic. For more experienced sponsors, clients, and university providers, it enhances their information and understanding of recent developments.

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Executive Summary

Background

This report responds to the continued interest within the executive education community, both university-based business schools and their clients, on the topic of evaluation and Return on Investment (ROI) from executive education programs. Within UNICON, the topic was reviewed in 2005 when two research reports addressed the subject from two perspectives. This report identifies how the landscape of executive education and the views of clients and providers have changed over the last 13 years since those reports were published.

Purpose

The research paper provides new members to the industry with a good background on the important topic of ROI. For more experienced clients and providers of executive education, it enriches their understanding of recent developments. In doing so, conversations between organizations and business schools can be more productive and result in better outcomes both from an individual and an organizational perspective.

The research questions addressed are:

- 1) How have university-based executive education units used the lessons learned from the past research to provide evidence to clients on program impact or ROI?
- 2) Have client firms developed meaningful methods to determine impact or ROI for their leadership development initiatives?
- 3) What quantitative and qualitative progress has been made by organizations to link executive education investments to their overall strategy for example - growth, increased profitability, retention of key talent, promotions, change management, etc.?
- 4) Are sponsors and Human Resource Development (HRD) still feeling any financial pressure to prove the worth of leadership development investments or is it not a current concern?

Research Method

After discussions with the UNICON Research Committee and an Advisory Group of UNICON members, a literature search was undertaken. Data on current practices in evaluation and ROI were then gathered using a combination of questionnaire surveys, discussion groups, and one-on-one interviews.

Results and Conclusions

Over the years, progress has been made by university executive education organizations along with some significant practitioner activity to link executive education to key performance indicators. While there hasn't yet been what might be termed a "breakthrough" in measuring investment returns from executive education programs, clients and UNICON members continue to predict that the issue of evaluation will become even more critical in the future.

The implications from our study for executive education providers are clear:

- Build your internal expertise in measuring "impact" of programs and other initiatives.
- Develop the capability to act in an effective research partnership with client organizations.
- Ensure that evaluation begins at the initial design phase and continues throughout the initiative and for a period beyond.
- Work in collaboration with sponsors, participants, and HR partners to integrate an understanding of "impact."

Adhering to these objectives will achieve evaluation at Kirkpatrick's Level 4 and, wherever reasonable, reach a genuine ROI measurement. The report provides greater detail on how this may be achieved. Finally, with the continued interest in determining ROI and impact from executive education investments by both sponsors/clients and UNICON executive education members, we should expect to see even more advances in the future.



Introduction

The topic of Return on Investment (ROI) in executive education has been of interest to client organizations, business schools and other providers for many years. Along with the provision of other intangible services, such as advertising, the quest for effective methodologies to evaluate the returns from spending has taken on something of a search for the Holy Grail. Over the last decade, significant progress has been made in other disciplines. The current project attempts to address whether the same could be said for executive education.

In researching this topic, it soon becomes apparent that practitioners in the field have many different things on their mind when talking about ROI. For some, it means the strict application of financial disciplines for investments on executive education. Tools like ROI (profit as a percentage of the amount invested), and DCF (discounted cash flow), which might more often be applied to spending on physical assets have been used. For others, it is the impact on the organization, as expressed by a range of performance indicators such as retention rates or through measures tracked by employee attitude surveys. For yet another group, it is the impact at an individual level looking at how an employee has changed as a result of a development initiative.

The question of ROI had featured regularly in UNICON meetings and conferences, and as a consequence, it sponsored two pieces of research in 2005. The first was an appraisal of whether the financial benefits of a specific customized development program could be established and what learning could be gained on evaluation in the process.

[UNICON _ Measuring ROI _April 2005](#) - Dr. Peter Topping, Emory University.

The second was a large-scale survey of client organizations' views on ROI on the basis that the voice of clients had been under-represented in the debate to date.

[ROI_Report_Final_May_2005](#) "Executive Education: Evaluating the Return on Investment. Bringing the Client Voice into the Debate." Ashridge.

Both of these reports had implications for what could be expected to happen in this field in the years following 2005. As a result, and also because the topic continues to be contentious, we presented a proposal to the UNICON Research Committee to retest the conclusions and implications reported in those studies. Also, our plan included gathering feedback from UNICON member schools on the subject which had not been done in the past. Our research project aimed at addressing four key questions.

The Research Questions

- How have university-based executive education units used the lessons learned from the past research to provide evidence to clients on program impact or ROI?
- Have client firms developed meaningful methods to determine impact or ROI for their leadership development initiatives?
- What quantitative and qualitative progress has been made by organizations to link executive education investments to their overall strategy for example; growth, increased profitability, retention of key talent, promotions, change management, etc.?
- Are sponsors and Human Resource Development (HRD) still feeling any financial pressure to prove the worth of leadership development investments or is it not a current concern?

The 2005 Research

The benchmark against which the research questions are being tested are the findings from the 2005 research reports. The highlights from the Conclusions and Implications sections of the 2005 papers on ROI are as follows.

UNICON _ MEASURING ROI _ APRIL 2005

Conclusions

“Did the Home Depot get a good return on the direct investment of \$600,000? Absolutely. Adding up the self-reported financial gains resulting from the participants’ experiences gives a figure easily in the tens of millions. Even if the ALP were responsible for just 10% of those financial gains, it would provide an exceptional ROI—in excess of 100%.”

Implications

“ROI is a misleading concept for evaluating executive development activities. It is more meaningful to measure “impact” on the organization.”

“The best single source of data to evaluate “impact” is in-depth interviews with participants and their managers/subordinates.”

“One of the primary benefits of attempting to measure impact is that it enhances the clarity of objectives and focus of the executive development activity if considered at the front end. Conducting a comprehensive ROI analysis is labor intensive and certainly not appropriate for all executive development activities.”

“The impact of major executive development activity is optimally determined over time within the organization. Therefore, longitudinal data collection is important even though it adds to the cost of the analysis as well as to its complexity.”

“The ability to document impact in a systematic, objective way is highly rewarding and worthwhile to both the sponsoring organization as well as to the provider.”

UNICON “EXECUTIVE EDUCATION: EVALUATING THE RETURN ON INVESTMENT. BRINGING THE CLIENT VOICE INTO THE DEBATE.” MAY, 2005.

Conclusions

“The survey suggests that the way clients evaluate executive education is on the brink of change. There are also considerable aspirations for the future and a desire to understand the returns gained from executive education.”

“Many respondents report that they are about to start working in new ways and plan to use financially-oriented methodologies. Has this been a ‘verge-of-a-breakthrough’ subject for some time? Or, are we about to witness a revolution in how executive education is measured and valued?”

“There would appear to be a segment within our market that views the assessment of the financial ROI from executive education as a difficult, but ultimately achievable, worthwhile goal. Some made a start on trying to find ways of assessing ROI, but research suggests this may be an emerging market with swelling demands but inadequate supplies.”

“The most popular ‘technology’ for evaluation, the ‘happy sheet’ is one that has been in use for decades, and the limitations of which have been known for almost as long. HR professionals feel that pressure to justify the costs of executive education is going to increase.”

“When we look at research in the future, sponsors are also less oriented towards financial ROI than HRD professionals: sponsors are more interested in understanding what happens inside their organization that influences how well executives can use their learning.”

“University executive education departments would have much to gain from a ‘proof’ of their value. In particular, there is perhaps a role for business schools in working with clients to understand more fully what their organizations want from customized executive education. There is a need to understand clients’ expectations of business schools concerning evaluation better – but there is no problem with dissatisfied customers at present. HRD people believe evaluation is the business school’s responsibility rather than the client’s responsibility suggesting this is an area that could prove more challenging for business schools in the future.”

Implications

“Most importantly, and most strikingly given the emphasis that has been placed to date on measurement, there is a clear appetite for research. This will help to develop an understanding of how to maximize return on investment. What the business school has done is used and applied back where it counts, in the workplace. What happens inside our client organizations impacts performance.”

“These findings seem to be consistent with other views being expressed at the Spring 2005 Conference where this research was presented. The clear message from those clients who were present was that business schools need to get closer to their clients and be willing to engage in broad partnerships, and develop deeper relationships.”

“Closer relationships with clients would open up more opportunities for business schools to encourage the kind of conversations within organizations that would help regarding the kind of return they want from executive education.”

“A willingness to engage in a true partnership would enable business schools to work with clients in new ways to help them create the kind of climate in which they can obtain the best possible value from their investment in executive education.”

Use and Relevance of this Research

As a topic of continuing interest, we anticipate significant interest in the findings of our research. However, its use will differ among the various parts of the executive education world. Our discussions on our proposal details, with an Advisory Group of senior professionals from UNICON member schools, revealed that there were three main areas of motivation for this research.

- 1) Members who have been with UNICON since 2005 suggested that there may not be any new developments regarding executive education ROI. However, they were willing to have this view confirmed or if there was something new or some changes had taken place,

they wanted to know about them. They also believed that this was a relevant topic with their sponsors/clients and that it was helpful to revisit and look at it again.

- 2) Many newer members of UNICON thought it was a very worthwhile topic and were anxious to learn more about it, what steps were being taken on the university side, and what the sponsor and the client side was doing to measure it.
- 3) For those asking about ROI, it was helpful to have the very latest information on the subject – why was it still significant, changes that have occurred over the past number of years, and thoughts about the importance of measurement in the next three years.

From a sponsor and client perspective, we were hoping to be able to test whether the continued growth of customized programs as a proportion of client’s executive education activity has influenced their views and practices on ROI. We were also hoping to learn whether the locus of action on ROI has shifted further towards the organization and whether they are now acting more independently from their business school provider.

Literature Review

One segment of our methodology was to understand the existing written information that was already available on measuring the return on investment (ROI) made in executive education. In order to pursue this, a thorough literature search was conducted.

The literature review was both a horizontal and vertical look into what was written on ROI specifically targeted to executive education programs provided by universities. Various topics areas were pursued in searching the internet for books, articles, studies, surveys, and blogs. Horizontally, titles like “ROI in Executive Education,” “Return on investment for attending executive education programs,” “Is an investment in executive education worth the money,” and “Measuring executive education impact” were sourced and read. Similar titles were also applied to executive development, management development, and leadership development. Also, derivative titles in the vertical area of training, rather than executive education, were also pursued. This was to determine whether there might be other relevant materials about measuring executive education program impact.

Overall, the most helpful sources were cited that related closest to the research title: *ROI on Executive Education – Revisiting the Past and Looking to the Future - what progress has been made since 2005?* Excerpts from a number of the most interesting pieces of literature in the bibliography have been provided in Appendix 1. These represent a cross-section of comments from both sponsors/clients and university executive education departments. They point to the fact that while there is still interest at some senior executive levels in the payback from

university executive education investments, a significant percentage still do not measure ROI in any consistent or sophisticated fashion. Some articles support measurement as being possible and suggest ways it can be done. Others question the effort, difficulty, and energy involved in pulling various data together, over time, to conclusively prove that executive education was a critical factor in either individual or organizational improvement.

Research Methodology

Introduction

The title of our Research Project makes specific reference to revisiting the past and looking to the future with a reference point of 2005 from which to base findings. The primary study, carried out in 2005 under UNICON sponsorship, into attitudes among business school clients towards Return on Investment in Executive Education was used as input in our work. Firstly, it is the benchmark against which the findings from our current research are to be compared. Secondly, it helped shape some of the content of our questionnaires to sponsors/clients and business schools.

In addition to the previous study, an Advisory Group from interested UNICON member schools was formed, an updated literature search into the topic was undertaken, data on client and business school opinion through questionnaires were gathered, and follow-up interviews with sponsors/clients were conducted. The data were then analyzed, and the research team formed their findings, conclusions, and implications.

The Advisory Group

Invitations were extended to selected members of UNICON schools (some being on the Research Committee) to form a group to act as a sounding board for the research team's project plans. Since access to clients was likely to be via the UNICON membership, the team felt it necessary to involve them in the design of the research. Discussions were held with the group about their own experience with ROI initiatives and how their attitudes had changed in recent years. Also, advice was sought from the group on how best to maximize the response rate from clients, what topics should be covered in the questionnaire, and who within the sponsor/client organization should be targeted. Finally, the research team investigated what ambitions the group held for the results in terms of making improvements to their executive education practice.

Literature Review

We carried out a web search for articles and references to "ROI" and "Executive Education."

Over 30 articles were reviewed. The Literature Reviews from the 2005 research reports were used as a comparative mainly to find out whether there was a significant increase in information published on the topic from sponsors/clients, universities, or other researchers.

Data Collection – Questionnaires

The research team identified two constituencies for the survey: firstly, sponsors/clients of business schools and secondly, the executive education unit within business schools.

Sponsor/Client Questionnaires

The sponsors and clients surveyed were selected by the business schools taking part in the research. This was recommended for many reasons:

- the school could maintain control over the contact with organizations. This was particularly sensitive during a period when other client surveys, such as the annual FT Survey, were being carried out and “survey fatigue” from clients could be a factor
- a direct approach from the school would be more likely to result in a higher response

An invitation was sent to all of UNICON member schools to select between 5 - 10 clients to be approached directly to participate for the client ROI survey. Approximately 30% of the member schools took up the invitation resulting in 150 – 200 clients receiving the questionnaire. Schools were not asked to target a specific demographic group from their client base but rather those whom they felt more likely to respond. As a result, the majority of respondents were Talent/Learning/Development professionals or HR along with line managers and senior executives. We judged that those identified would be better able to respond to the detailed questions on evaluation practice presented in the questionnaire.

In order to maintain a good base for comparison with the 2005 study, a select number of the same questions were used for the client survey. However, the language used in the study was tailored to create two versions; one in British English for the UK/European respondents and another in American English for the US and other International respondents.

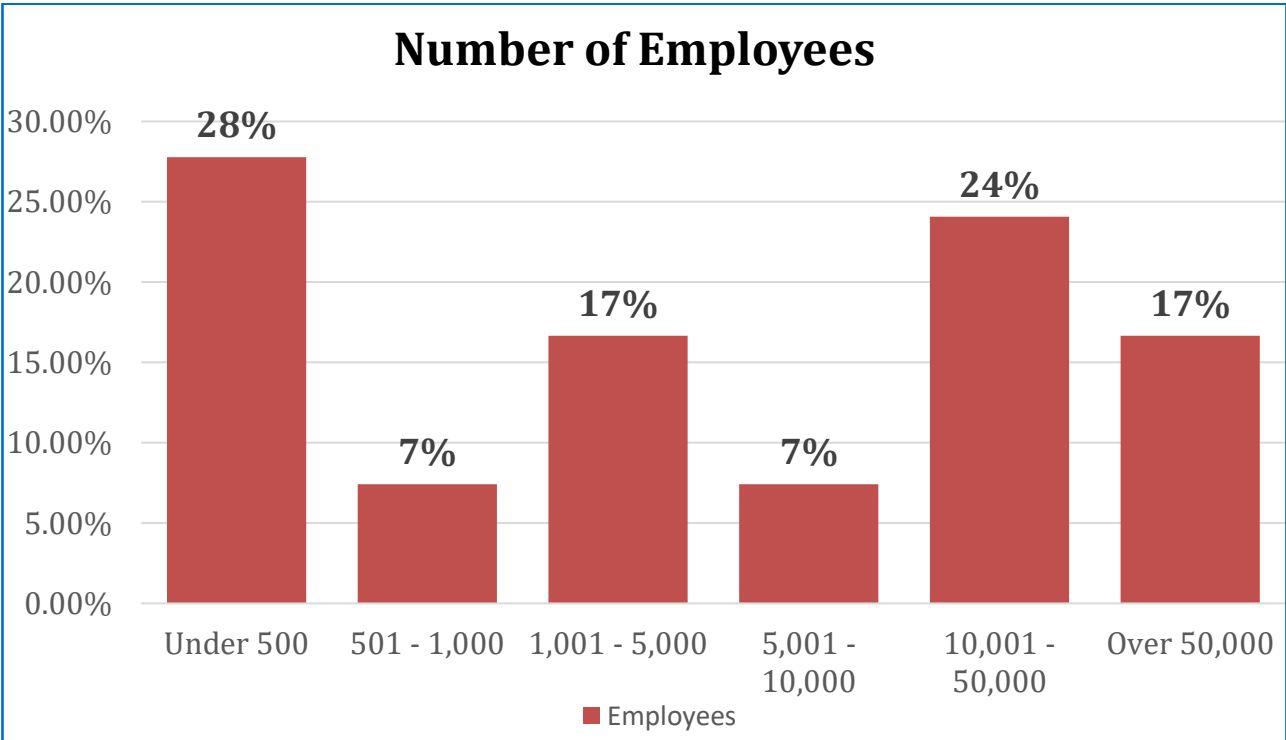
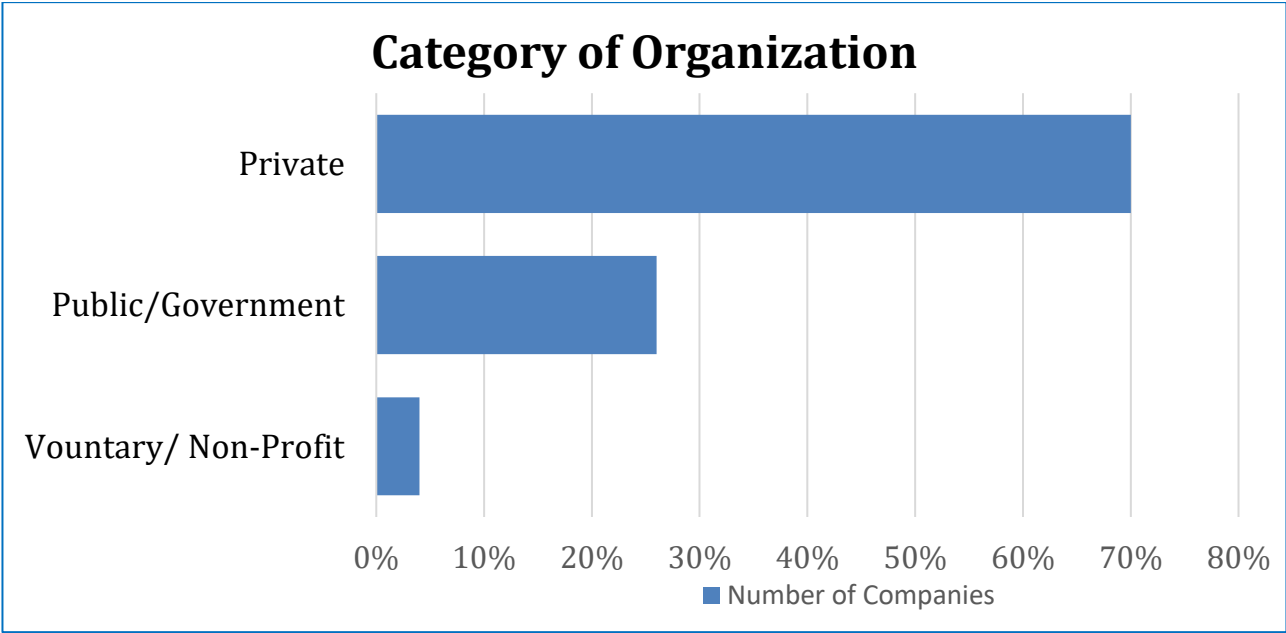
Business School Questionnaires

We asked the UNICON Primary Representatives to complete a questionnaire on behalf of their own school's response to ROI and the evaluation of executive education. Questions were a mixture of some of those which were contained in the sponsor/client questionnaire and others which were specific to the school perspective. In particular, we were aiming to gain insights into our first research question on how schools have learned lessons from past research to

Results – Sponsor/Client Questionnaire

In this section, we will present the key findings from the questionnaire survey.

The demographics for the responses received are detailed below:



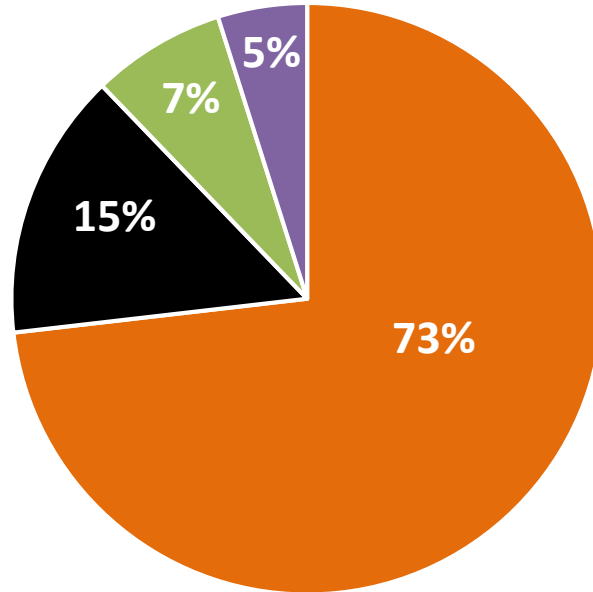
Companies/Organizations Responding to the Client Questionnaire

Aecon Group Inc.	Liberty Mutual Group
AES	Liberty Mutual Surety™
APB	MIT Lincoln Labs
Arup	Nissan North America
Assurant	Nokia
BANCARIBE	Northcoast Behavioral Healthcare
Banque Misr	Orange Spain
BP	Oslo University Hospital
CaixaBank	PWC
Cardinal Health	Regions Financial
Chubb	REPSOL
Civil Service Bureau, Hong Kong – Spec. Adm.	Ricigliano Network
Colgate	Royal Bank of Canada
Dotmedia	Saudi Aramco
Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland	Seminarium Internacional
Fundação Dom Cabral	SEUR
GB Auto	Solenis LLC
GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare, S.A.	Sterling Capital Management
Goodyear Tire & Rubber	Tecnica Administrativa BAL, S.A.
GRUPO NACIONAL PROVINCIAL S. A. B.	The Agronomy Company of Canada
Havas Sports	Total Wine & More
HCA Healthcare	Toyota Motor North America
IBERDROLA MEXICO	Union Group
Joanna Doolan Advisory Board Services	Upsurge Advisors
KSS	VEPICA
Lanxess	Zurich Compania De Seguros



What executive education programs are used?

- Both open and custom
- Custom programs only
- Open enrollment programs only
- Not sure/Don't know



Responses from the questionnaires received from sponsors/clients were categorized and reported in eight topic areas:

1. Organizational evaluation frequency
2. Evaluation method satisfaction
3. Current or planned uses of evaluation approaches
4. Research interests in partnership with business schools
5. Evaluating Impact of executive education
6. Results sought from investment in executive education
7. Views on measurement and ROI over the past 5-years
8. Over the next 3 years, how attitudes towards evaluation will change?

From the outset of the research, it was a challenge to determine the number of UNICON members that had been with the organization since the 2005 period when the first ROI was published. Of those the researchers spoke with, some were aware of the previous research papers, and others were not. One Research Committee member pulled copies of the published papers to review and shared them with others who were unaware or did not remember the past findings. Therefore, the process broke down into:

- Those members that read the work done in 2005 and those that did not
- Having been aware of the findings, some took action regarding the suggestions
- Others took little to no action regarding the 2005 findings

As with other research papers that have been published previously, if it is a current university issue, executive education organizations pay more attention to it and take appropriate action. If not, they may read it and retain the information for future use. From the current research, there was no indication, even from senior UNICON members, that the topic was a burning issue at the time and that effort and resources were invested in providing more focus on measuring returns from attending university executive education programs. It was clear that some universities from the study reported that they did have processes now in place to discuss returns from either open enrollment participants or custom programs where project outcomes could be positively determined. It was unclear, however, when and why these were put in place and how regularly they were being used.

Organization Evaluation Frequency

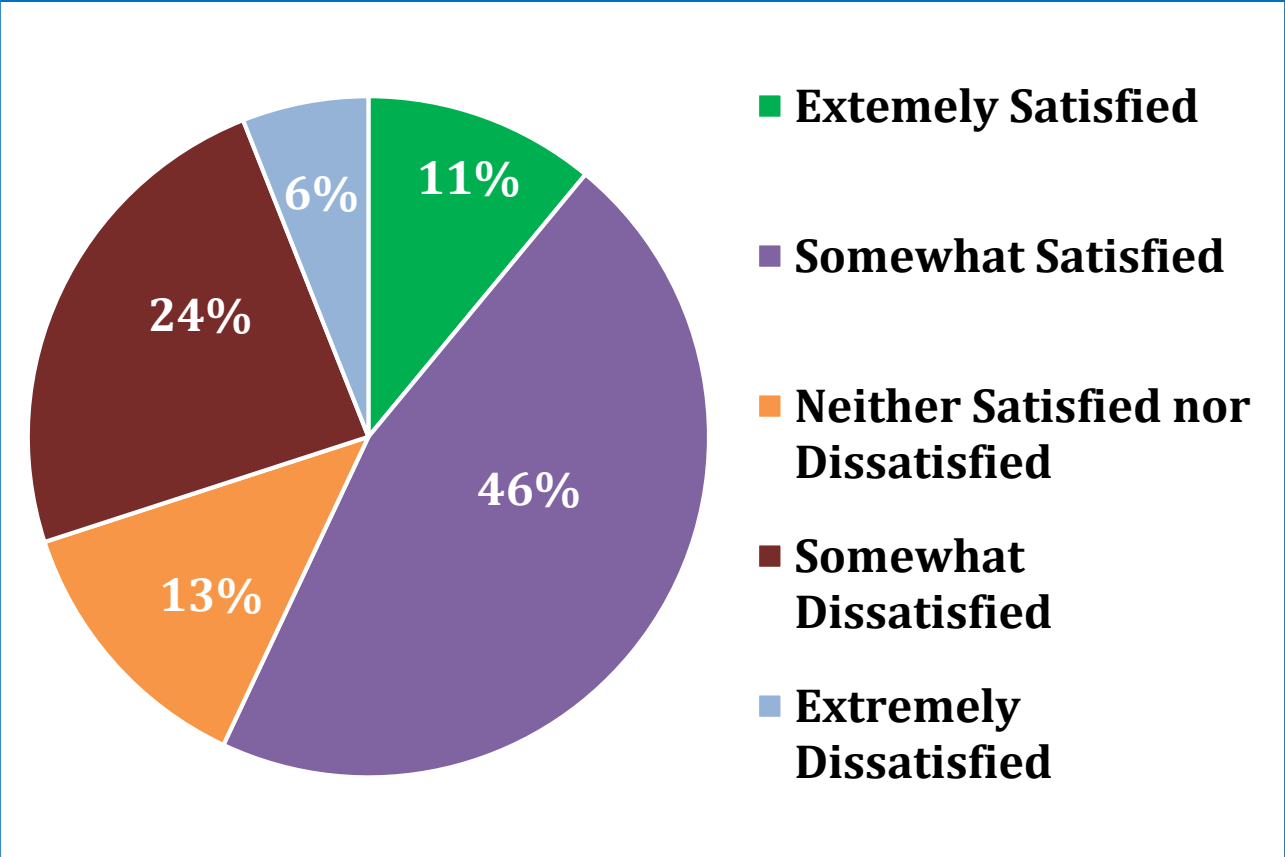
Please indicate how often your organization carries out different levels of evaluation of executive education programs.	Regularly	Occasionally	Never
Participant’s Reactions: immediate post-program	81%	15%	4%
Acquisition of Learning by participants	52%	43%	5%
Application of new skills or behaviors by participants	41%	44%	15%
Results at the organizational level	41%	37%	22%
Financial ROI (Return on Investment)	6%	48%	46%

It is clear from the responses that the Kirkpatrick Level 1 model with an end-of-course evaluation, post-program, is still the primary vehicle for 96% of clients who regularly or occasionally use this to indicate satisfaction results from executive education programs.

The research conducted indicated that 48% of the clients reported they only occasionally review ROI and another 46% never review ROI. This was a clear indication that in the course of identifying, attending, and completing either an open or custom university executive education program, the primary client motivation is not a financial justification but rather other factors that may or may not be measured by ROI. In follow-up interviews with clients willing to be further involved in the research, some cited that returns for any investment were essential to their company or organization. They said they had developed, or were in the process of developing, ways they could determine payback and return from their investment.

The respondents that were able to speak to meaningful methods to determine impact or ROI for their leadership development initiatives were in the minority. During the interviews, clients were probed further with the question “If you are not doing ROI now, what would have to happen to get you to do this?” It was directly stated that if senior level management is not requesting it, training and education professionals do not put effort into gathering it.

Evaluation Method Satisfaction



While 57% of the respondents are either extremely or somewhat satisfied with how their organization evaluates the results of investments in executive education, there are over 25% or a quarter of those who provided feedback, that was dissatisfied. While the extreme dissatisfaction expressed was only 6%, there is a relatively large group of respondents who (24%) who were “somewhat dissatisfied” with the evaluation results to date. In follow-up interviews with many sponsors, disappointment with their organization’s ability to produce more tangible investment results was expressed. The reasons stated were not having the tools available to do the measurement in a systematic manner or their inability to find them. The other frustration expressed was the measurement time frame being a longer-term effort possibly covering multiple years.

Where Business Schools and Sponsors/Clients Might Partner on Research

<p>Below is a list of areas where business schools, working with clients, might carry out research. Which one would be most useful to you?</p>	
<p>Establishing generic links between the development of individuals' competencies and organizational performance</p>	<p>16%</p>
<p>Developing methodologies to attempt to calculate the financial ROI of specific executive education activities</p>	<p>42%</p>
<p>Understand the factors in the organizational climate that influence how well participants can apply and transfer learning from executive programs</p>	<p>42%</p>

A noteworthy outcome of this ROI study was in the client – university partnership area. There were indications of research interests in partnership with university executive education departments in business schools to:

- develop methodologies to attempt to calculate financial ROI on specific activities
- understand factors in the organizational climate that influence the application and transfer of learning

This represents an opportunity for organization sponsors, along with executive education professionals, to engage in conversation on how to work better together on forms of measurements. Whether the client initiates the discussion or the university does, the important thing is that it occurs and gives rise to what additionally can be done to measure the investment in executive education.



Agreement/Disagreement with Statements about Evaluating Impact

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about evaluating the impact of executive education.	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
Evaluation is the client organization's responsibility, not the business school's	26%	35%	39%
Evaluation will only be effective if it is built in from the very start of a development initiative	61%	31%	8%
HR professionals will have to get better at proving the worth of executive education in the future	84%	10%	6%
When evaluating, it is more important to learn how the program can be improved than to try to justify the expenditure	55%	27%	18%
Calculating the financial return on investment in executive education is so difficult that it is rarely worth doing	35%	30%	35%
Executive education forms such an important part of strategic change initiatives; it is vital to evaluate its effectiveness	82%	12%	6%
Evaluation is becoming more important because purchasing professionals are playing a bigger role within our organization	57%	14%	29%
Other functions have proved that 'intangible' benefits can be measured, so the same should be true for executive education	65%	25%	10%
My organization recognizes training and development is essential, and so it does not expect a detailed justification of expenditures	35%	35%	30%
No worthwhile evaluation of leadership development can take place until participants have been back at work for at least three months	33%	39%	28%
It is often not possible to calculate objective measures of the return on investment in executive education	45%	31%	24%

Regarding the agreement/disagreement with elements of program evaluation, the respondents indicated that:

- 61% agreed that evaluation should be built in from the start of the program to be effective. This feedback indicates that there are many factors necessary to bring the ROI question to the client's forefront. Many stated in follow-up interviews that when measurement criteria were discussed before the custom program design, there was an increased possibility that post-program results could be determined.
- There were 84% of the respondents indicating that HR must do more in the future in the value area and that it was a vital piece of strategic change initiatives.
- There was an equal split (35%) on agreement/disagreement with the statement that calculating ROI is rarely worth doing.
- 82% agreed that evaluating the effectiveness of executive education is a vital piece of strategic change initiatives.
- 57% believed the increasingly important role the purchasing organization plays in overall vendor expenditures was an additional factor on why evaluating investments in executive education may become more critical.
- 65% of those responding agreed that evaluating intangible benefits (job satisfaction, better strategic and management skills, developing a longer-term vision, an organization's investment in high potential resources, etc.) can be measured.
- Moreover, there was a split on the statement that it is often not possible to calculate objective measures of ROI (45% agreed, 31% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 24% disagreed)
- There is no clear answer to the question of whether it is possible to calculate objective measures of ROI, with 45% saying yes, 24% saying no and the remaining 31% being unsure.

When it comes to business executive education, learning is not enough. It is about returning to work prepared to make an **IMPACT**. That is the true measure of **SUCCESS**

Why Executive Education? - Isil Tabak - Top Global Education, 2013

Results Sought from Investment in Executive Education

Which of the following most closely matches the kind of results you seek from your investment in executive education programs?	
Want the organization to be in better shape to deliver our strategy	30%
Want individual leaders in the organization to be better able to perform effectively	38%
Want to create an effective network of leaders across the organization through the program experience	24%
Want a clear financial benefit, where the monetary gains attributable to the program exceed the costs of the program	8%

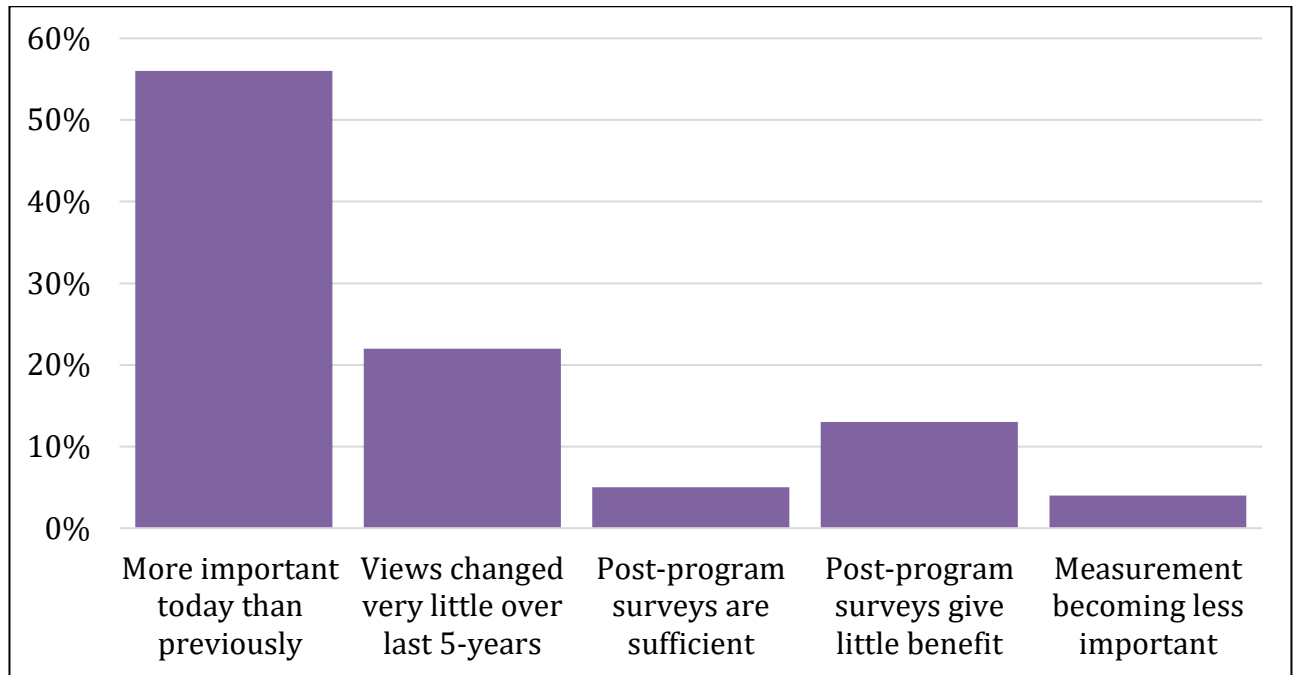
The results most often sought by the organization from executive education investments:

- 38% want improved organizational performance
- 30% want organizations to be better positioned to execute strategy
- 24% want a stronger network of leaders
- Only 8% wanted a clear financial benefit, with a positive return, against the costs of the program

This feedback is significant as it again points to the fact that most clients are not deeply invested in providing a financial benefit for executive education offerings. This can be a result of company/organizations not discussing or requesting it, universities not discussing or providing it, resources or money not available to support it, or believing there are too many factors other than just executive education that can affect the results. Also, while most executive programs are focused on longer-term strategic thinking skills, the program content may or may not be immediately implemented upon the participants return to the workplace.



Views on Measurement and ROI over The Past 5 Years



Looking at a past 5-year view of ROI for executive education programs, 56% feel it is more critical today than in previous years while 22% indicate there was no real change in their views about measurement and ROI. Only 5% believed that post-program surveys were sufficient measures. There were 13% who indicated that post-program surveys provided little benefit in evaluating executive education programs. Finally, there were only 4% of the returns which stated that measurement is becoming less important than it was in the past.

In the Next 3 Years, How Attitudes Toward Impact Will Change

Looking forward to the next 3 years, how do you think attitudes towards evaluating the impact of executive education will change in your organization?	
Evaluating impact will become more important than it is today.	83%
There will be no change in evaluating the impact of executive education programs.	15%
Evaluating impact will become less important than it is today.	2%

Looking to the future, over the next 3-years on evaluating impact: 83% indicated it would become more important while only 2% state that it will become less important than today.

Current/Planned Use of Evaluation Approaches

Listed below are tools, techniques, and data sources that can be used in evaluating executive education. Please indicate those you have used or plan to use.	Have used and will use again	Plan to use in the future	Have used but will not use again	No plans to use
End-of-Program Evaluation - participant feedback immediately after the program	92%	6%	0%	2%
Automated online reaction questionnaires	57%	25%	0%	18%
Follow-up interviews or questionnaires with participants after the program	55%	29%	2%	14%
Follow-up interviews or questionnaires with participants' line managers	43%	33%	0%	24%
Repeat 360 feedback and compare results	35%	22%	2%	41%
Follow Career tracking, (monitoring promotions)	49%	33%	0%	18%
Specific questions in employee surveys	55%	25%	2%	18%
Specific questions in customer surveys	26%	29%	0%	45%
Financial value of learning projects implemented	22%	39%	6%	33%
Financial value of business changes implemented post-program	22%	43%	4%	31%

It is clear that the Kirkpatrick Level 1 model with an end-of-course evaluation, post-program, is still the primary vehicle for both clients and universities to indicate satisfaction results from executive education programs.

Some clients, HR departments, and talent development managers do take this a step further by looking at other company or organization measurements like questions on employee surveys (80% current or planning to use), questions on customer surveys, (55% current or planning to use), pre-post use of 360 assessments (35% current; 41% no plan to use), and monitoring promotions (49% current; 33% planning to use). However, there was no significant indication that client organizations did much in linking education investments to their overall strategy for example revenue growth, increased profitability, retention of key talent, promotions, change management, etc. Again, while some have developed more systematic methods in attaching measurement factors to executive education learning, this was more a result of the internal operations and processes of the organization rather than a need to single out and prove the worth of continual educational improvement.

Results – UNICON Members Questionnaire

Responses for the questionnaires received from UNICON member schools are reported in ten topic areas:

1. Is measurement or ROI part of a program request?
2. Has your university provided evidence to clients on impact or ROI?
3. Have clients made progress to connect executive education investments to strategy?
4. Have clients developed meaningful methods to determine impact or ROI?
5. Are sponsors or HRD feeling financial pressure to prove the exec. ed. worth
6. Where business schools and clients might partner on research?
7. Results you believe clients should seek from investments in executive education?
8. Current use/plan of program evaluation approaches
9. Agreement/disagreement with statements about evaluating the impact
10. Over the next three years, how attitudes towards evaluation will change?

MEMBER SCHOOL COUNTRIES REPRESENTED	MEMBER SCHOOL JOB TITLES REPRESENTED	
Brazil	Assistant Dean (6)	Director, Ctr. for Exec. Ed.
Canada	Assoc. Director, Bus. Apps.	Executive Director (6)
Chile	CEO, Executive Education	Executive Vice President
China	Chief Exec. Educ. Officer	Head of Corp. Relations
Costa Rica	Chief Rep., Americas	Head of Exec. Ed. (3)
Egypt	COO	Head, Custom Programs
Hong Kong	Dean (2)	Key Accounts Manager
Ireland	Director (5)	Managing Director
Mexico	Director - Custom Programs	Portfolio Director
Norway	Director of Bus. Development	Program Manager
Pakistan	Director of Marketing	Senior Associate Dean
Portugal	Director of Open Enrollment	Senior Director
Singapore	Director, Healthcare Programs	Unit Director
Spain	Director, Short Programs	Vice Dean
Sweden		
Switzerland		
United Kingdom		
United States		



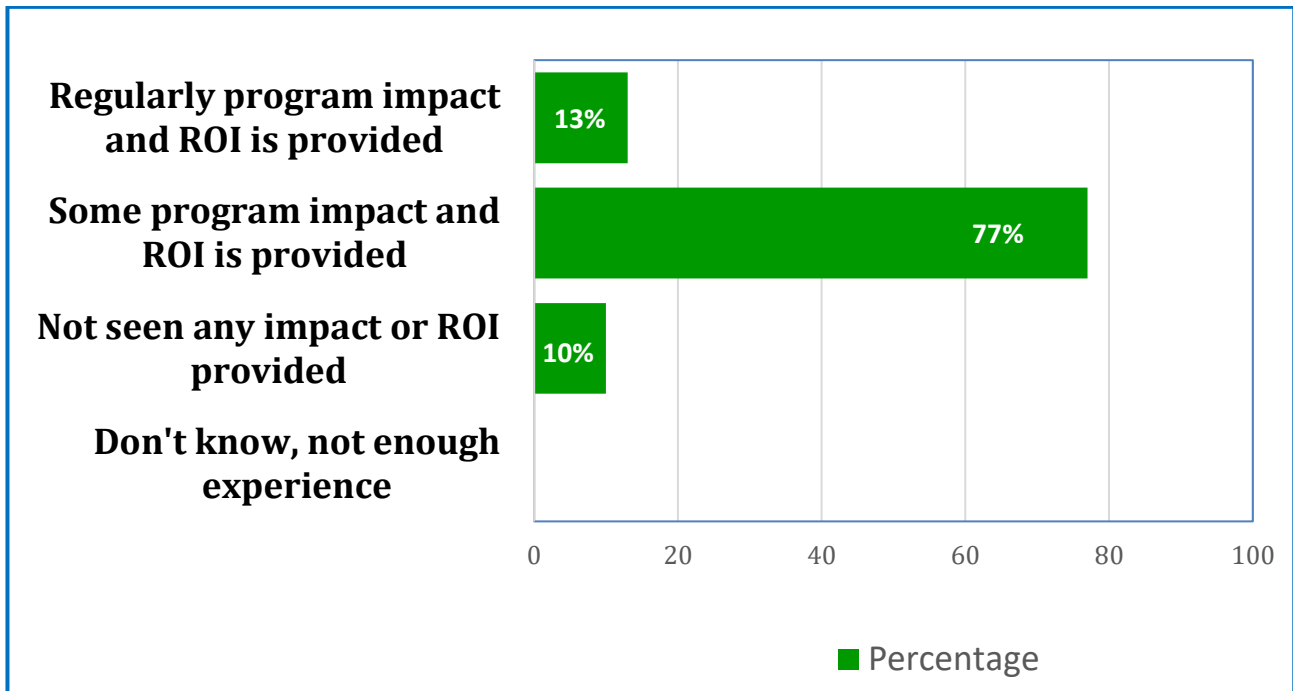
Alliance Manchester Business School	MIT
American University in Cairo, School of Bus.	Nova School of Business and Economics
American University in Cairo, SOB Exec. Ed.	NUS
Arizona State University - Thunderbird	Penn State, Smeal College of Business
Babson College	Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile
BI Norwegian Business School	Rice University Jones Grad. School of Bus.
Carlson School of Management	Santa Clara University
Case Western Reserve University	SMU Cox School of Business
CEIBS	Stockholm School of Economics
Cheung Kong Graduate School of Business	UBC Sauder School of Business
Darden School Foundation	UC Berkeley Center for Exec. Ed.
ESIC Business & Marketing School	UCD Smurfit Executive Development
Fundação Dom Cabral	University of Cambridge Judge Bus.School
Georgetown University	University fo Chicago
Goizueta Business School	University of Georgia Terry College of Bus.
HBS	University of Maryland
Henley Business School	University of Michigan Ross School of Bus.
HKUST Business School	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
IE Business School	University of Notre Dame
IESA	University of Southern California (USC)
IESE	University of St. Gallen
INCAE	University of Washington Foster SOB
ITAM	UW Center for Prof. & Exec. Development
Ivey/ Western University	Vanderbilt University
LUMS	Yale School of Management

Is Measurement or ROI Part of a Program Request?

In business development dealings with clients, is the subject of program measurement or ROI (Return on Investment) a part of their program request or come up in the discussion?	
Yes, it comes up on a regular basis in custom or open programs	22%
Yes, it comes up sometimes in custom or open programs	63%
No, it rarely comes up in custom or open programs	15%
It never comes up as a topic of conversation in custom or open programs	0%

This response from members points to the fact that measurement or ROI still is only discussed in less than 25% of the time with sponsors or clients seeking an open enrollment or custom program. In pre-questionnaire discussions with UNICON members, while 15% indicated that the topic never comes in conversation, it was anticipated that this percentage might have been a lot higher. Many members in early discussions stated that it just wasn't an issue that clients were concerned about when making the executive education selection. In retrospect, after further considering the question and thinking about it, they thought of instances where it came up more than initially thought. Therefore, "sometimes it comes up" was selected as a more appropriate answer.

Executive Education Unit Provided Evidence on Program Impact or ROI



The vast majority of the answers (77%) stated that they had seen some impact or ROI provided to executive education clients. This is encouraging since prior research suggested some universities were providing positive proof points as a result of the learning received. Discussing impact and ROI before a program can help ensure that further steps are taken after the program to evaluate outcomes and results.

A follow-on question encouraged members to comment further on evidence to support program impact and ROI. There were 23 separate confirmations of how and where UNICON schools were providing clients with impact and ROI results. Selected statements from various U.S. and International members are below:

“ROI is measured in terms of action-learning sets that form components of our open and custom programs. We raise the issue of ROI at the design point and set out to determine tangible measures through these action-learning sets. ROI is not always measured in financial terms and is specific to the strategic priorities of each client.”

“We offer Post-Program follow-up in selected programs that give us the opportunity to measure either the application of knowledge (by measuring the quality of action-learning projects) or competencies development (by doing one-to-one coaching and the follow-up of an individual development plan).

“We have used Applied Learning Projects in many custom programs to demonstrate ROI as new company initiatives stem from these projects. The new initiatives are a mix of increased revenue as well as cost savings.”

“With some of our clients, we introduce the element of projects to our business solutions programs. The projects are all related to the client's business. Executive Education ensures that the projects directly relate to offered program content and that the plans of implementation are of sound business background. This way clients can see tangible outcomes of their investment in training.”

“We often point to action learning projects with real metrics/ dollars attached, internal cohort/ network builds and promotion/ retention metrics.”

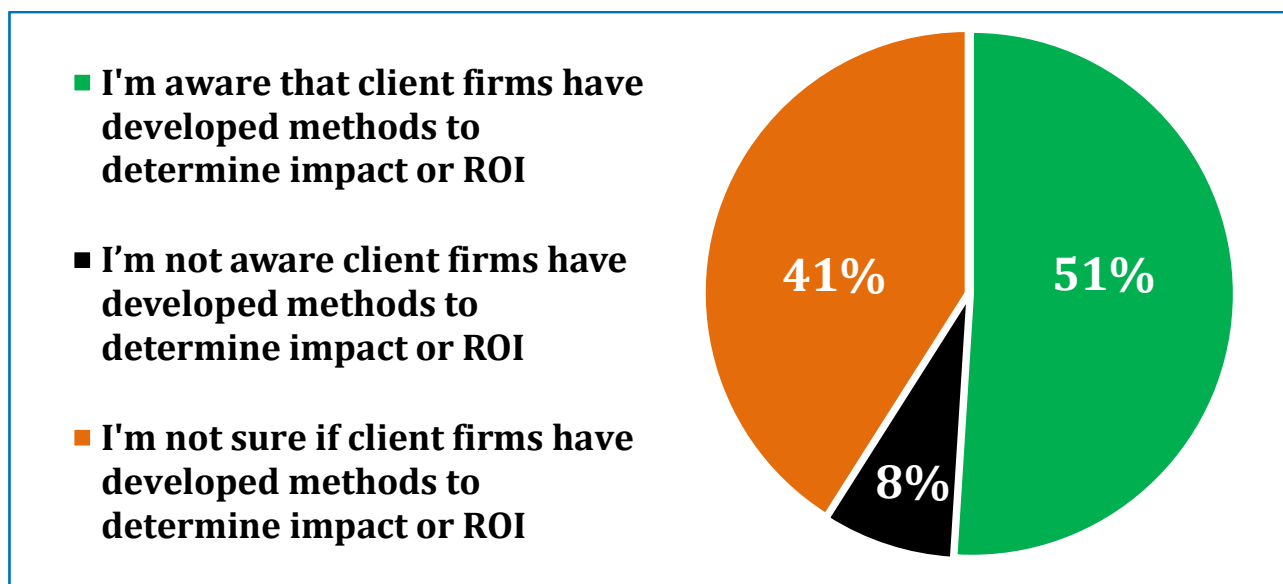
“We used to have someone on staff who did the Phillips ROI reports. We had limited success with that approach. What works best for us is if we can get data from our clients about what changes they experienced from our program: increased revenue, productivity, job satisfaction, better processes, more investment in innovation, etc. This requires a collaborative relationship with the client.”

Progress Clients Made to Connect Investments to Overall Strategy

What progress have client organizations made to connect executive education investments to their overall strategy? (For example, growth, increased profitability, retention of key talent, promotions, change management, etc.)	
Client organizations always connect executive education investments to their overall strategy	12%
Client organizations usually connect executive education investments to their overall strategy	60%
Client organizations rarely connect executive education investments to their overall strategy	18%
I'm not sure if client organizations connect executive education investments to their overall strategy	10%

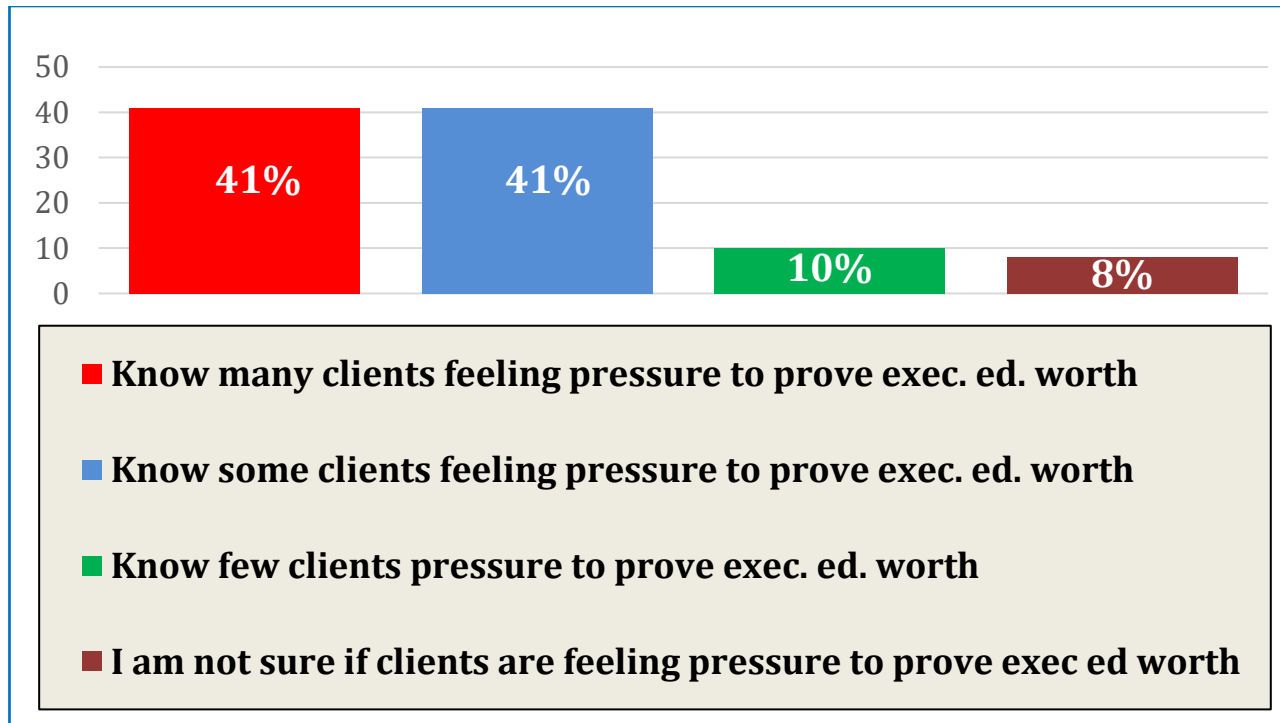
Almost 28% of those who provided feedback suggested that connecting executive education investments to the organization's overall strategy rarely or may never occur. Responses from 72% said that investments in furthering executives' or organizations' development always and usually are connected to overall strategy growth. This is a strong endorsement for growing a talent pipeline for continued business performance.

Have Clients Developed Methods to Determine Impact or ROI?



While only 8% of the respondents indicated that they were not aware that clients had developed methods to determine impact or ROI, it was interesting to note that 51% indicated awareness from clients while 41% were not sure if they had developed methods or not.

Are Sponsors or HRD feeling Financial Pressure to Prove Worth?



With a total of 82% saying that sponsors or HRD are feeling some or more pressure to prove executive educations worth, one would expect that the investment measurement and ROI discussion would be a natural factor for consideration in client and university discussions.

Where Business Schools and Sponsors/Clients Might Partner on Research

Below is a list of areas where business schools, working with clients, might carry out research. Which one would be most useful to you?	
Establishing generic links between the development of individuals' competencies and organizational performance	29%
Developing methodologies to attempt to calculate the financial ROI of specific executive education activities	34%
Understanding the factors in the organizational climate that influence how well participants can apply and transfer learning from executive programs	37%

Members indicated that what would be most useful would be factors in organizational climate (37%) that affect the application and learning derived from executive programs. Developing methodologies was a close second with 34% followed by links between competencies and organizational performance (29%). With a split of approximately a third, a third, and a third,

universities have signaled that any interaction with clients along research lines would be beneficial as it promotes even more communication and possibly some joint funding opportunities for mutually advantageous outcomes.

Results You Believe Clients Should Seek from Exec. Ed. Investments

Which of the following most closely matches the kind of results you believe clients should seek from their investment in executive education programs?	
Want the organization to be in better shape to deliver on its strategy	43%
Want individual leaders in the organization to be better able to perform effectively	50%
Want a clear financial benefit, where the monetary gains attributable to the program exceed the costs of the program	7%

From the university perspective, there is little belief (only 7%) that clients should seek a clear financial benefit for their investment where monetary gains can be attributable to executive education programs. Instead, this is a strong confirmation that the education benefits, being derived from executive attendance at open or custom programs, are either at the individual or organizational performance level.



Current Use/Plan of Program Evaluation Approaches

Listed below are some tools, techniques, and data sources that can be used in evaluating executive education. Please indicate those you have used or plan to use.	Have used and will use again	Plan to use in the future	Have used but will not use again	No plans to use
End-of-Program Evaluation - participant feedback immediately after the program	98%	0%	2%	0%
Automated online reaction questionnaires	65%	16%	8%	11%
Follow-up interviews or questionnaires with participants after the program	73%	20%	2%	5%
Follow-up interviews or questionnaires with participants' line managers	43%	35%	2%	20%
Repeat 360 feedback and compare results	35%	28%	8%	29%
Follow Career tracking, (monitoring promotions)	24%	24%	3%	49%
Specific questions in employee surveys	33%	16%	4%	47%
Specific questions in customer surveys	39%	16%	4%	41%
Financial value of learning projects implemented	51%	22%	3%	24%
Financial value of business changes implemented post-program	37%	22%	4%	37%

Again, these results show that Kirkpatrick's Level 1 measurement of end-of-program evaluation continues to be used and will no doubt continue to be used in the future. Some of the literature has referred to this form of feedback as "smile sheets." The authors disagree with this categorization and believe that those holding this view are putting too much weight on the numerical ratings and not nearly enough importance of the comments received relating to new learnings, faculty and participant interactions, and statements relating to the most significant "take-aways" from the program.

The responses also show that 93% have used and will use again or plan to use in the future follow-up surveys/interviews with participants and to a lesser percentage with participants' line managers. This continues to be an excellent way to stay in touch with the company. It also opens up a communication avenue with line managers who may be called upon in the future for possible participants for the same or different executive offering.

Regarding the financial value of learning projects, 73% currently use or plan to use the results of programs implemented. While 59% currently use or plan to use a financial value of business changes post-program, 41% have no plans to use any impact or ROI post-program.

Agreement/Disagreement with Statements about Evaluating Impact

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about evaluating the impact of executive education.	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
Evaluation is the client organization's responsibility, not the business school's	18%	31%	51%
Evaluation will only be effective if it is built in from the very start of a development initiative	67%	20%	13%
HR professionals will have to get better at proving the worth of executive education in the future	80%	18%	2%
When evaluating, it is more important to learn how the program can be improved than to try to justify the expenditure	57%	31%	12%
Executive education forms such an important part of strategic change initiatives; it is vital to evaluate its effectiveness	82%	14%	4%
Evaluation is becoming more important because purchasing professionals are playing a bigger role within our organization	53%	35%	12%
Other functions have proved that 'intangible' benefits can be measured, so the same should be true for executive education	59%	37%	4%
It is difficult to evaluate leadership development program impacts until participants have been back at work for at least three months	65%	24%	11%
It is often not possible to calculate objective measures of the return on investment in executive education	52%	24%	24%

Just over half of the UNICON members disagreed that evaluation is the client organization's responsibility and not that of the business school. This is a full acknowledgment that the executive education unit does have a role to play in evaluation and that it is a university's responsibility along with that of the client. Other comments said that determining the benefits of the investment is best accomplished in partnership with clients. As a result of this discussion and interaction, the school has the opportunity to test how much interest there is in addressing the subject especially before a custom program is designed. Again, discussing outcomes at the beginning of an executive education engagement (67%) will allow for better measurement opportunities at the end.

There was a solid response (82%) that executive education forms such an essential part of strategic change initiatives; it is vital to evaluate its effectiveness. This leaves the real question of who measures it (executive education alone, the client measures it post-program, or it is a collaboration that is built into the program and looked at over a 6 to 12-month period).

Knowing the subject matter content incorporated into open and custom programs is most often focused on long-term implementation timeframes, it is understandable that 65% of the member schools believe it is difficult to evaluate leadership development program impacts until participants have been back at work for at least three months. Some may even argue that this is too short a period and a 6 -12-month review would even be better.

Finally, while 52% agree that it is often not possible to calculate ROI, there were 24% of the members that disagreed with that statement.

In the Next 3 Years, How Attitudes Toward Impact Will Change

Looking forward to the next 3 years, how do you think attitudes towards evaluating impact of executive education will change in your organization?	
Evaluating impact will become more important than it is today.	86%
There will be no change in evaluating the impact of executive education programs.	12%
Evaluation impact will become less important than it is today.	2%

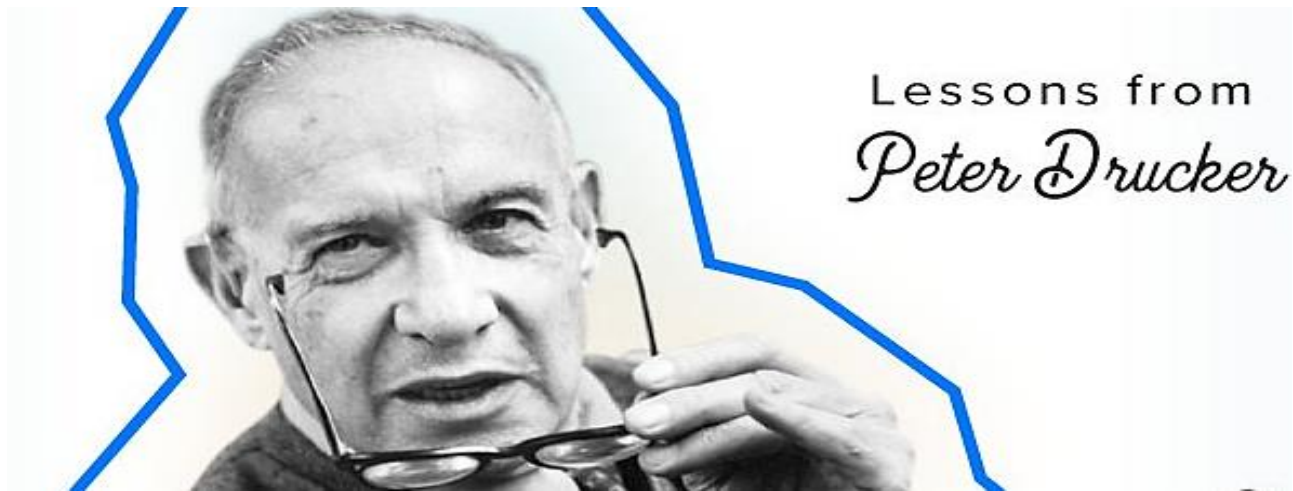
Projecting ahead three more years, 86% of the school representatives expect that evaluating the impact of executive education will become even more critical than it is today. If that is the case, then investing in partnership collaborations with clients to develop forms of quantitative and qualitative investment measures represents a fertile area to be pursued.



Discussion/Conclusion

Discussion of the Results

The brilliant Peter Drucker was often quoted as saying that “you can't manage what you can't measure.” The emphasis on performance metrics was a major focus of the TQM and Six Sigma waves. Some organizations went as far as adopting the mantra of “if you can't measure it, it isn't worth doing.” Executive education has not been driven by that philosophy, at least not yet. However, the construct of Drucker's statement has been, and continues to be, relevant to the executive education industry – “you can't know whether or not you are successful unless success is defined and tracked.” The critical variable is what defines success.



Ultimately, that is what the three UNICON research studies on Return on Investment addressed. While there is no clear consensus across organizations and executive education providers, there does appear to be congruence that success is more defined by “impact” than by the financial return on invested capital.

The research from sponsors/clients and UNICON member schools produced interesting results. Some overall responses were surprising while others might be placed in the “to be expected” category. The working hypothesis was to confirm or reject the conclusion that little progress had been made on the impetus to measure ROI of executive education programs (null hypothesis). Given the mixed results from the surveys, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected – meaning that little progress has been made on this topic. However, some progress was documented, particularly in the approaches to determining the impact on individual and organizational performance.

There is continued interest and emphasis on doing a better job in identifying ways to evaluate executive education program benefits. Surprisingly, when clients were asked what might have

to change to get more focus on financial returns from programs, the following quote sums up a motivator to further action: *“If the Executive Committee is worried about it, and my Boss is worried about it, then I am worried about it.”* This highlights the fact that if there were more financial evaluation concerns voiced from the C-suite or senior HR officer, more time, effort, and energy would be spent on ROI analysis.

In contrast, measuring “impact” of these investments in leadership growth comes in many different forms. There is a range of qualitative factors that can be considered to offer sufficient evidence of benefits. This may contribute to why there is general satisfaction with the results of executive education and no groundswell of activity to determine financial payback and return. While the following may be considered by some to be “softer” measures, they are ones that executives and organizations consider.

- 1) Senior executives believe that they must invest in growing their talent for the future and going back ‘to a university executive education program’ is one way of helping to achieve this goal.
- 2) Universities provide the ability to learn new skills and update existing skills. “What Got You Here Won’t Get You There” is not only a book title but a way of acknowledging that continual learning and change is required for successful career progression.
- 3) Executive education cohorts (groups from different companies in the same program) or open programs provide the opportunity to grow and expand a professional network. This is not only good for the executive attending but organizationally as it often leads to global connections/friendships in other industries. Also, custom programs provide for more internal organizational networking with line and staff groups that may rarely work together.
- 4) A week or two, and more, at a great university is challenging, refreshing and energizing. Participants are generally hi-potential talent within an organization, and so attendees are surrounded with smart, highly successful people from either the same or other functions. While not explicitly designed as a competitive experience, participants get a first-hand look at where they stand against some of the best public or private performers both domestically and internationally. It is an opportunity to see how they “measure up” in preparation, presentation, and performance.
- 5) Finally, many university programs ask participants to bring a “real challenge into the course.” It may be a functional, strategic, or leadership issue in the workplace but it is a problem worthy of more attention. An executive education environment allows a week or more to focus on the challenge with the assistance of professors, other faculty, and other executive classmates from different disciplines, industries, and backgrounds. This platform for engagement brings real value to the participants as well as their organizations.

We detected what may best be described as cognitive dissonance from the survey results. Looking at whether sponsors or clients were satisfied with the way their organizations currently evaluate the results from its investment in executive education, 47% were extremely or somewhat satisfied while 30% that were either somewhat or extremely dissatisfied. In the comments section that followed, 55% demonstrated various ways in which they were financially evaluating their returns. A number mentioned the frustration of it being challenging, very hard, in-process, or difficult to accurately isolate the actual financial return only from executive education programs. When we asked what results they seek from their executive education investment, only 8% indicated that they wanted a clear financial benefit where the monetary gains exceeded the costs of the program.

Why might that be the case? One sponsor put it this way: *“Where there is a meaningful investment for executive education, the senior-level executives in the organization have thought about the problem, considered alternatives, the areas of focus required, who needs to attend, estimated costs, etc., and expected outcomes. After doing all this, there is an implied level of expectation, given the university name and reputation, that positive results will follow.”*

From the UNICON members’ perspective, when asked whether university-based executive education units provide evidence to clients on program impact or ROI for either open enrollment or custom programs, 89% responded that they had seen regular or some impact provided to organizations. Supporting this feedback were 22 separate statements detailing the process used or feedback provided to sponsors or clients. The majority of the feedback noted was via client specific projects and the results that had been attained.

Members were forthcoming with their comments regarding the kind of results they believed clients should seek for individual or organizational performance from their investment in executive education programs. The results indicated that they believed only 8% of sponsors and clients wanted a clear financial benefit, where the monetary gains attributable to the program exceed the costs of the program. Interestingly, sponsors and clients gave this same statement the exact 8% rating provided by that of the UNICON members.

Results Related to Previous Research

The findings from this 2018 ROI on Executive Education report shows both some striking similarities and some dramatic differences compared to the 2005 UNICON research reports.

A significant number of senior executives in 2005, where no effort was expended on financial evaluation and justification, viewed Exec-Ed as an “act of faith.” Rather than this explanation, senior-executives could be described as more satisfied with the “impact” derived from executive education investments and the “softer” measures they had observed in their organizations.

The results for evaluation practices were almost identical as 13 years ago with Kirkpatrick’s

Level 1, end-of-program evaluation survey, still dominating. In 2005, there was some ambition to extend and deepen the measurement practices beyond Level 1. With more than 40% of organizations planning to do more, there would be significant activity in developing ROI evaluation practice in the period following the study. Our research indicates that this proposed activity never materialized.

“Almost all organizations in 2005 believed that ROI/evaluation would only be effective if built into a development initiative from the beginning.” Consistent sentiments were expressed in 2018 which stated that discussions must be held upfront to determine outcomes desired for measurements after the program. Regarding whether responsibility resides with the university executive education or sponsors/clients, “years ago there were a significant number of organizations that believed evaluation was the responsibility of the business school providing the development experience.” Of the 2018 sponsors and clients surveyed, 39% of sponsors along 51% of the UNICON members disagreed with the above statement. Both groups saw evaluation as more of a joint responsibility and not being placed on one side or the other.

Finally, when the first two UNICON ROI research studies were done, “two out of three people believed that the purpose of an evaluation is to learn how things can be improved rather than to try to justify the expenditure.” In 2018, 8 of 10 people believed that the purpose of an evaluation is to learn how things can be improved rather than to try to justify the expenditure.

Implications

The results attained from this study might best be described as a “continuing work in progress” for impact and ROI from those results released in 2005. While some progress has been made, our investigation indicated this has primarily been more on the “impact” side of measurement rather than to identify financial benefits derived from executive education investments more clearly. In 2005, there was a firm indication from the research that over 75% of the respondents believed that attitudes would change on measurement over the next three years, but that has not materialized to the degree one might have expected. The 2005 research conclusions state:

“Many of our respondents report that they are about to start working in new ways. Many of them say they plan to use financially-oriented methodologies that are used by only a tiny minority of people at present.”

Responses from sponsors/clients (83%) and UNICON members (86%), continue to predict again that attitudes on the impact of executive education will become more critical over the next three years. So, the same 2005 question that was asked can be posed again in 2018:

“Has this been a ‘verge-of-a-breakthrough’ subject for some time, or are we really about to witness a revolution in the way that the contribution of executive education is measured and valued?”

If there is to be change as predicted, the implication for UNICON members is to develop the capacity to offer clients services to measure "impact" for both custom and open enrollment programs. For UNICON sponsors/clients, the suggestion is to partner with a provider to conduct comprehensive program evaluations for significant endeavors - sharing the cost and expertise of such efforts. It is up to the sponsor or client to determine the scope and depth of program evaluation. The provider should be prepared to engage in any evaluation initiative with both resources and expertise.

Following Drucker's construct, optimally an effective evaluation effort begins at the start (program design) and ends at least six months post-program - even better if it is a year. Follow-up interviews generate additional useful data and should include participants, managers, and HR partners. The ultimate measurement is going to Kirkpatrick's Level 4 and, wherever possible, identifying tangible financial returns directly from program investments.

Kirkpatrick's Four-Level Training Evaluation Model

"The Four Levels represent a sequence of ways to evaluate (training) programs.... As you move from one level to the next, the process becomes more difficult and time-consuming, but it also provides more valuable information."

Donald Kirkpatrick



The data strongly suggest that all organizations and their expectation for outcomes on measurement can be different. UNICON members should, therefore, determine early and upfront what desire or need the sponsor/client has for a financial measurement to prove the investment's worth. In doing so, they can determine a course of action that will meet the customer's expectation. They may also find a way to develop a collaborative partnership for mutual benefit on how this can be best accomplished. At the very least, this conversation will prompt initial thinking on what might be attained and how to determine the time frame for results.

Appendix 1 – Literature Review – Additional Information

The following are a series of excerpts from various articles on measuring the impact and ROI on executive education investments. They provide a meaningful overview of materials that have been published with selections from different points of views. The survey of the research literature showed that, while some progress has been made, there has not been any significant breakthrough in this field. Improvements have been limited to incremental gains in the range and depth of performance indicators used; an example is linking spending on development programs to the level of staff attrition. The reasons for this relative lack of progress are worth considering. One hypothesis could be that the topic of making progress on ROI on executive education is analogous to a person making progress on achieving weight loss. While the aspiration is high, the clear imperative is not present. As a result, there is little stimulus for action.

While there continues to be discussion on the client side concerning the worth of an executive education program investment, there is still no universally agreed way to measure it. A number of the sources stated processes and procedures followed to determine payback and return. However, all take very different approaches depending on the outcomes desired. Most mentioned that in order to have any credible measure, the objectives for the education for the participants must be agreed before program design, and built into the content.

Some of the most interesting information from the references cited is highlighted below. These selected extracts represent a cross-section of both client as well as university executive education comments. They point to the fact that while there is still interest from some senior executive levels in the payback from university executive education investments, a higher percentage still do not measure ROI in any consistent fashion. Some articles say that measurement is possible and demonstrate ways it can be done. Others question the effort, difficulty, and energy involved pulling various measurements together, over a period of time, to conclusively prove education was a critical factor in either individual or organizational improvement.



Factors that Drive Positive Impact & ROI for Executive Leadership Programs

By Damian D. "Skipper" Pitts – Fast Company

This is a very extensive article that addresses the measurement of investment in executive education programs. The interesting conclusion notes that the factors driving ROI lie in the hands of the participants and their response to the instruction back in the workplace.

“A very high number of people “Rarely” or “Never” calculate the ROI on executive development (take a look at the table below, from market study Leadership Development: Challenges & Best Practices).

The following information explains the results from the question relating to organizations that attempt to calculate ROI on executive development:

- 10% – Always: Each program is evaluated independently,
- 7% – Frequently: Most of our programs are evaluated,
- 15% – Sometimes: As appropriate, we will evaluate some of our programs,
- 21% – Rarely: Only a small number of programs are evaluated, and
- 46% – Never: We never measure ROI for leadership development.

Given the above, the business world has quickly realized that their very best people, leaders, and organizational specialists are their greatest asset. Taking that potential and developing it is highly desirable.”

The article concludes with: “The factors that drive positive impact & ROI for executive style leadership programs lie in the hands of the participants going through it and their response to the instruction upon entering back into the workplace.

So, measuring ROI begins in the decision and selection process of the individuals chosen to attend. Everything else is a culmination of everyone doing their part to ensure successful outcomes within the desired effects in the end.”



CABS Report on the Impact of Executive Education

The report makes a compelling argument for why a survey after the completion of an executive education program is of limited value while a post-six-month would get a better sense of impact

INDIVIDUAL AND CORPORATE IMPACT

“How does executive education impact individual participants and their employers.”

“Almost all schools (93%) conduct an assessment of impact immediately upon completion of a programme; 40% also do so six months after completion of a course. Surveys are the most popular form of impact assessment. However, just over half (53%) assess the impact on the volume of repeat business, while just under half (47%) use KPIs agreed in advance with clients. The difficulty of surveying a participant immediately upon completion of a programme is that they can have little sense of how their studies will impact them on return to the workplace. Such instant surveys may be able to assess the quality of course delivery, the facilities used to deliver a programme, and the content of a programme. A survey may be able to measure delivery against expectations and even a sense of feeling about the potential impact on a participant – do they expect to be able to do their job more effectively, do they believe they will be more confident at work, etc.? However, as a measure of impact, such an instant survey is of limited value. Schools are also likely to use different questions, different measures and different values, making a comparison between institutions difficult at best.”

“Those surveyed six months after completion of a programme are likely to get a better sense of impact. A student will have had sufficient time back in the workplace to consider carefully how valuable their studies have been. However, whether they can isolate the impact of their studies compared with other factors that may have changed and thus impacted on their effectiveness – a new boss, a promotion, a salary increase, changed working practices or some other factor – is again open to question.

One potential approach might be to simply consider a net promoter score. In their financial statements, London Business School in 2015/16 indicates an increase in the net promoter score for their open programmes from +64 to +69 and a decrease in the score for custom programmes from +79 to +74. At the same time, the corporate client net promoter score for custom programmes increased from +73 to +78. Among those using KPIs to measure impact, 90% develop them in collaboration with organizational purchasers, although half use KPIs based on previous delivery.”



What companies want from you (and your executive education)

By Laura Montgomery *The Economist*

The article provides insights from the *2015 Corporate Learning Priorities Survey* from Henley Business School and reinforces there is no single accepted exec-ed ROI measure.

“5. No single yardstick for exec-ed ROI.”

“While cost-consciousness and return on investment are recognised as more important than ever, there is no real consensus on how to measure the ROI of professional development efforts. While one organisation may be monitoring the impact of training on the KPIs of executives and their teams, another may put more stock in 360-degree feedback reviews. The key is to figure out how your boss and your organisation define a successful executive-education venture and make sure those objectives are at the forefront of everyone’s mind before, during and after the training.”

How to Get the Most Out of Your Executive

By Michael Schrage - *Harvard Business Review*

The piece identifies some key intangible benefits that an executive education program provides that are all difficult to quantify and measure. However, in item #6, it points to the measurement of doing something different and poses questions on doing that.

- 1) **“Organizational impact matters as much as professional development.** At mid-career, if you receive any kind of professional development, it has to have an immediate impact on your organization. The course content and curricula need to clearly connect with what matters to your colleagues, clients, and customers. A better view from 30 thousand feet or a firmer grasp of technology may exhilarate but will that translate to meaningful organizational influence within 100 days?”
- 2) **“Keener introspection facilitates greater external influence.** I am no longer surprised when students email or share that the session forced them to become more self-aware. Being able to do more pushes people to re-evaluate what they really want to do. In my class, people revisited what kind of innovators they wanted to be and what kind of innovation they wanted to encourage. The surer their insight into their own innovation priorities, the more clearly, they could communicate and motivate. Whether you spend time in a classroom or not, the message here is to look for opportunities to rethink not just *what* you can do, but what you *want* to do. As you increase capability in one domain, look for adjacencies and complements.”

- 3) **“Rethink, repurpose and renew what we’re already doing.** Revolution and new paradigms weren’t a top priority for my mid-career students. The primary opportunity was revisiting the fundamentals of everyday projects and processes. Instead of starting from scratch, my students sought innovative ways to leverage what their organizations were already doing. For example, their company already prototyped. How might simple changes in the prototyping process yield disproportionately greater value? In the same way, you should be looking for similar opportunities where small tweaks result in creating and capturing new value. Don’t make “reinvention” the focus.”
- 4) **“See something differently.** The classroom thrust was empowering students to individually and collectively “see” innovation in a different way. Students wanted novel perspectives and points of view that let them observe or appreciate something in a potentially valuable new way. Just as a microscope or MRI scanner offers new eyes, a different framework similarly invites a new vision. However, seeing different is not enough; that vision has to be communicated. This is where social media can play an important role. How will you share not just a vision but a visualization?”
- 5) **“Do something different.** Effective leaders and managers can’t simply be visionaries and voyeurs. Actions speak louder than words. The cultivation of capability means that “seeing differently” has to be translated into tangible actions. In our class, that meant collaboratively designing simple models, prototypes and experiments. Turning a novel “point of view” into a testable innovation hypothesis represented a different way of exploring value creation. But, that “do something different” has to be made accessible and understandable. Simple exercise: Is there an “app” or “calc” that could have an impact?”
- 6) **“Measure the difference.** Seeing and doing something different is the essence of new capability creation. But those differences need to be credibly measured. How do those differences make us more efficient or effective? How might our customers or clients experience that difference? It’s one thing to claim a new capability; it’s quite another to measure it rigorously. Serious executive education students are always looking for new ways to measure impact, influence, and improvement. Similarly, whether you’ve learned in a classroom or on the job, what is the metrics conversation you want to facilitate? What gets measured gets managed. Incentives don’t follow too far behind.”
- 7) **“Build an arc.** What’s next for high impact professional development? How often are you asking yourself, or your boss, that question?”



Measuring Program Impact - Survey Results

By: Michelle Massa - Tuck Executive education at Dartmouth College

This article discusses the results of a survey by a university executive education provider to determine what methods are being used to evaluate executive education effectiveness.

“In our survey, we asked what methods are being used for evaluating the effectiveness of executive education programs, and here’s what respondents said (multiple answers allowed):

85% use program evaluations completed by the participant

70% use post-program follow-up surveys

35% conduct post-program interviews

30% track business impact of an action-learning project”

“When asked what other methods are being used, respondents gave a range of answers including:

Participant behavioral changes as reported by their manager

Even more in-depth feedback with a 180 or 360 review

Net Promoter Score in Level 1 surveys

Measure lagging indicators”

“As you might recall from Donald Kirkpatrick’s classic four levels of measurement, the higher up the ladder we go, the more challenging and resource-intensive it is to isolate and measure the impact of learning.”

“Not surprisingly, the vast majority of respondents are using program evaluations completed by the participant and post-program surveys - level 1 measurement. A few respondents cited level 3 and 4 measurement tactics, such as asking for feedback on behavioral change by a manager and 360 reviews. One method that some of our custom clients use is measuring the business impact of action-learning projects that are embedded into the program during the design process. It is a great way to promote the application of learning. When organizations measure the impact of these specific projects, it often reveals a strong ROI on the learning initiative. The point here is that planning for strong outcomes is often embedded in the program design, which happens on the front end. This is key to the work that the custom team does with its partners to co-create learning initiatives that drive business impact.”



Impact and ROI of Learning: Worth Pursuing or Not?

Higher levels of learning evaluation are more difficult and subjective, but they are also the most important.

by David Vance – Chief Learning Officer Publication

This article discusses the results of a survey by a university executive education provider to determine what methods are being used to evaluate executive education effectiveness.

“Several articles in the past month have suggested the profession should step back from trying to isolate the impact of learning and the resulting return on investment. The authors argue that it is difficult or impossible to isolate the impact of learning from other factors and no one will believe the results anyway, so why bother. Instead, they call for showing the alignment of learning to business goals, focusing on easier-to-measure participant reaction, amount learned and application (levels 1, 2 and 3, respectively, of the Kirkpatrick Model/Phillips ROI Methodology) and finally focusing on employee engagement with learning (consumption of learning and completion rates). Aligning learning to business goals and measuring levels 1 through 3 are always good ideas, so no disagreement there. And depending on your goals for learning and the type of learning, measuring average consumption and completion rates may also make sense. However, for certain types of learning there is still a need to measure impact and ROI (levels 4 and 5 of the ROI Methodology).”

How to Measure ROI for your Leadership Development Programs

by Joe LiVigni – CAPSIM

While this was written as more of a marketing piece for Capsim Management Simulations, it offers four ways for measuring investments in executive education.

“Typically, Leadership Development programs are smaller in nature as not everyone in the organization is targeted as high potential to be placed in the program. With this smaller population size, you would first have to look for the increase in the metric (business outcome), then through a survey or interview with the participants, learn what they were doing differently (behavior changes) that led to their change having the direct impact on the metric. The follow-up survey may need to take place at multiple intervals, 3 months, 6 months, 1 year, and 2 years. The reason for the multiple intervals is that participants may be promoted to impact positions at different times. So how can you demonstrate that the leadership program is having an impact on the business in the shorter term.”

“Here are 4 metrics you can use to help show ROI:

With the talent pool in place ready to assume roles, **what was the time to fill vacant**

managerial roles compared to before the programs began? Translate that into a profit improvement by demonstrating less expense by filling roles faster.

How many got promoted who went through programs? Demonstrating the content of the program made an impact by filling the leadership pipeline with more prepared candidates.

How long did they stay at the company vs. an average employee? Improvement in Retention Rates can lead to improvement in profits.

How many of their direct reports were promoted? Once promoted, strong leaders should foster growth on their teams by prepping their team members for future roles.”

Measuring the ROI of Leadership Development: 5 Tips

by Darleen DeRosa

Written by a Managing Partner of OnPoint Consulting, a very solid measurement premise is presented on connecting development with leader behavior and department performance.

“Demonstrating the connection between participating in training and development initiatives and improvement in leader behavior or department performance requires creative information gathering by HR or talent managers, but it is not impossible.

One of the most credible and widely used systems for measuring the ROI of leadership development is called the Kirkpatrick/Phillips Model which consists of four levels. Based on this model, these guidelines are offered for measuring the impact of leadership development programs.

A Pre- and Post- Assessment

Ask trainees to complete a knowledge test before and soon after the program and compare results to determine what they have learned. Additional follow-up leadership evaluation programs can be conducted six months to a year after to determine how well the participant has retained the information. Assessment tools like tests, role-playing, skill practices, or simulations to grade trainees on new knowledge and skill acquisition. We offer a wide range of these assessments in addition to the leadership development programs we have fine-tuned over more than two decades.

Collect 360 Feedback

Post-training assessment does not have to be limited to what you can measure from trainees. One of the most significant ways to measure the effectiveness of leadership training is to seek feedback from many others who work with the trainees, including their direct

supervisors. Gathering this feedback takes the post-assessment a step further, offering even more substantial data. If possible, have a control group of people who take post-training assessments but have not attended the program. This might be a group of people who are next in line in the organization.

Evaluate Leadership Execution

Determine to what extent new leadership skills and knowledge are impacting business. First, a team needs to identify performance measures that could be impacted by leader behavior as well as the competencies or skills required. Determine what you want to measure and look at benchmarks. For instance, what was the rate of employee turnover over the past five years? Has it increased or decreased? Have sales numbers increased? Is there an improvement in customer satisfaction? The goal is to identify real indications that operations are improving.

Appraise Retention

On average, it costs four times as much to recruit and hire a new leader than it does to retain one. HR managers should also calculate how many executives have remained with the company after a set period. Assess the total dollar value of those personnel costs, including benefits, and multiply those costs depending on the level of the employee. What is the total cost of recruiting, onboarding and training a replacement for that employee? This number can be used to determine how much the company has saved in costs otherwise spent recruiting and training new hires.

Assess Succession

HR managers should track how many program participants were eventually promoted to a higher leadership position. Some companies look at the rate of promotion from high-potential programs compared to the rate of promotion of those who did not participate in the program. Also, consider the strength of the company's reserve talent. In other words, how many promising internal candidates exist per key position?"



Appendix 2 – Comparative Questions - Sponsors/Clients and Members

Listed below are some tools, techniques, and data sources that can be used in evaluating executive education. Please indicate those you have used or plan to use.

Question	Sponsors/Clients				UNICON Members			
	Have used and will use again	Plan to use in the future	Have used but will not use again	No plans to use	Have used and will use again	Plan to use in the future	Have used but will not use again	No plans to use
End-of-Program Evaluation - participant feedback immediately after the program	92%	6%	0%	2%	98%	0%	2%	0%
Automated online reaction questionnaires	57%	25%	0%	18%	65%	16%	8%	11%
Follow-up interviews or questionnaires with participants after the program	55%	29%	2%	14%	73%	20%	2%	5%
Follow-up interviews or questionnaires with participants' line managers	43%	33%	0%	24%	43%	35%	2%	20%
Repeat 360 feedback and compare results	35%	22%	2%	41%	35%	28%	8%	29%
Follow Career tracking, (monitoring promotions)	49%	33%	0%	18%	24%	24%	3%	49%
Specific questions in employee surveys	55%	25%	2%	18%	33%	16%	4%	47%
Specific questions in customer surveys	26%	29%	0%	45%	39%	16%	4%	41%
Financial value of learning projects implemented	22%	39%	6%	33%	51%	22%	3%	24%
Financial value of business changes implemented post-program	22%	43%	4%	31%	37%	22%	4%	37%

Comparative Analysis

Both sides were not aligned on Career Tracking (49% vs. 24%), Questions on Employee Surveys (55% vs. 33%), Financial Value of Learning Projects (22% vs. 51%), and to a lesser degree Financial Value of Business Changes Implemented Post-program (22% vs. 37%).

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about evaluating the impact of executive education.

Question	Sponsors/Clients			UNICON Members		
	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
Evaluation is the client organization's responsibility, not the business school's	26%	35%	39%	18%	31%	51%
Evaluation will only be effective if it is built in from the very start of a development initiative	61%	31%	8%	67%	20%	13%
HR professionals will have to get better at proving the worth of executive education in the future	84%	10%	6%	80%	18%	2%
When evaluating, it is more important to learn how the program can be improved than to try to justify the expenditure	55%	27%	18%	57%	31%	12%
Executive education forms such an important part of strategic change initiatives; it is vital to evaluate its effectiveness	35%	30%	35%	82%	14%	4%
Evaluation is becoming more important because purchasing professionals are playing a bigger role within our organization	82%	12%	6%	53%	35%	12%
Other functions have proved that 'intangible' benefits can be measured, so the same should be true for executive education	57%	14%	29%	59%	37%	4%
It is difficult to evaluate leadership development program impacts until participants have been back at work for at least three months	65%	25%	10%	65%	24%	11%
It is often not possible to calculate objective measures of the return on investment in executive education	35%	35%	30%	53%	24%	24%

Comparative Analysis

There are 3 major areas of difference between Sponsors/Clients and UNICON Members. It's vital to evaluate education due to the importance of strategic change (35% vs. 82%). Evaluation becoming more important (82% vs. 53%) because of purchasing's role. And disagreement (29% vs. 4%) that other functions have measurements so the same should be true of executive education.

Below is a list of areas where business schools, working with clients, might carry out research. Which one would be most useful to you?

	Sponsors/Clients	UNICON Members
Which research would be most useful to you?		
Establishing generic links between the development of individuals' competencies and organizational performance	16%	29%
Developing methodologies to attempt to calculate the financial ROI of specific executive education activities	42%	34%
Understand the factors in the organizational climate that influence how well participants can apply and transfer learning from executive programs	42%	37%

Comparative Analysis

UNICON Members feel stronger on establishing generic links (29% vs. 16%) while Sponsors/Clients give equal weight (42%) to methodologies to calculate financial ROI and factors in a climate that influences the transfer of executive education learning.

Looking forward to the next 3 years, how do you think attitudes towards evaluating the impact of executive education will change in your organization?

	Sponsors/Clients	UNICON Members
How will attitudes towards impact change?		
Evaluating impact will become more important than it is today.	83%	86%
There will be no change in evaluating impact of executive education programs.	15%	12%
Evaluation impact will become less important than it is today.	2%	2%

Comparative Analysis

Both sides agree (83% and 86%) that evaluating impact will become more over the next 3 years.

Both sides agree (15% and 12%) there will be no change in evaluating impact by 2021.

Both sides agree (2%, 2%) evaluating impact will be less important from 2019 – 2021.

Which of the following most closely matches the kind of results you seek from your investment in executive education programs?

	Sponsors/Clients	UNICON Members
What results do you seek from your investment?		
Want the organization to be in better shape to deliver our strategy	30%	43%
Want individual leaders in the organization to be better able to perform effectively	38%	50%
Want to create an effective network of leaders across the organization through the program experience	24%	-
Want a clear financial benefit, where the monetary gains attributable to the program exceed the costs of the program	8%	8%

Comparative Analysis

While the statements in the two surveys were not all identical, the constructs are similar so the following observation can be made:

Both sides put the objective of seeking a “clear financial benefit” as far less important than the other options presented (both at 8%).

Both sides agree that the primary objectives should be to enhance performance to execute more effectively on the organizational strategy (combined statements) – 68% clients; 93% members.

Clients also see the value of using executive education programs to create a stronger network of leaders across the firm (24%).

Appendix 3 – Follow-up Sponsor and Client Interviews

After the sponsor and client questionnaires were collected, many individual respondents indicated they would be interested in taking part in further research in this area. Each of the twenty-six individuals was personally contacted, and nine follow-on interviews were conducted. This telephone or SKYPE conversation provided more insight into a selected number of questions and other topics the interviewees wished to discuss further.

The follow-up interview format was to pursue a standard set of 5 questions:

UNICON ROI Sponsor/Client Questionnaire – Interview Questions

- 1) Has your company invested in meaningful methods to determine impact or ROI for their leadership development investments? If so, WHY? If not, WHY NOT?
- 2) If you have not invested in methods to evaluate your investments in executive education programs, what might change within the company to cause you to do this analysis?
- 3) Early results indicate the need to evaluate executive education is more important today than it was 5-years ago. If you believe this is the case, what have you done about it?
- 4) If the majority of respondents believe that evaluating executive education impact will become more important in the next three years than it is today, why do you think that is? What might be driving that belief?
- 5) Your personal thoughts on whether it is necessary to financially measure executive education and the real possibility of doing this?

We were fortunate to hear directly from those people who were knowledgeable, engaged, and well versed on the executive education process in their organizations and with universities. They were from international companies and their titles were Senior Executive Education Analyst, VP Leadership & Organizational Development, Talent Management Analyst, Program Director, Program Development Partner, Former Chief Executive Officer, and Corporate Manager of Training and Education.



A summary of the information received from the interviews was as follows:

Question 1 – Have you invested in meaningful methods to determine impact or ROI?

The most common answer was “No, we do not measure financial impact or ROI.” There was one organization who said they are working on it and one who said they were and both gave specific information on exactly what they were doing.

“Yes, measure impact and ROI from executive education in many ways. For university programs, we do Level 1 and nothing else in Levels 2-3-4. We use an external vendor to do the transfer of the learning piece. For Level 3, we use anecdotes that showed what participants applied, what they learned, and also through 360s that are done. For Level 4 – we collect data on retention, promotion rates, and sometimes do a correlation from participation in our programs as well as engagement. Finally, we use a capstone project incorporating total program content which includes the university executive education materials.”

If they did not invest in meaningful methods, we asked why not? The answers were all unique:

“I think there’s a question on what would be the correct measurement of executive education? We have had the discussion a number of times at senior levels. Is it the improvement of the individual or do we look at key performance indicators (KPIs) of the business? Both are very hard to determine as to what it is and then how you would measure it?”

“It would take a lot of time and more resources and money than we have in our budget currently to do something like this.”

“We have to start because there’s a concern around budget and making sure that our programs are aligned with the leadership needs that we are seeing both now and, into the future, to provide continuous investments.”

“ROI is hard to measure – do not have the ability to do it the way the business model is set up.”

“Financial ROI – we don’t do that. Compare it to a cell phone – does anyone ever do an ROI on a cell phone - might be looked at as the same as a financial measurement on exec. ed. It would be a very soft measurement at best.”

“Was there ever a point when we specifically set up a targeted financial measurement to be derived from the executive education required? We never got to the point of spelling it out. We had a burning platform to do it; we hired a reputable, professional institution as a partner to look at the costs as well as the cost of building it ourselves. We quickly realized that for the return on a near-term investment, the university education was the only choice we had.”

Question 2 - What might change to cause you to impact or ROI measurement?

The overwhelming answer to this question is “No one in my company is asking for this analysis of executive education investments.”

“The boss could request us to do it. He has not done that at this point since there really has not been a compelling reason to do it. When times are hard, we do get more pressure to justify what we are spending and why.”

“There has recently been pressure by the CEO, CFO, or COO on the money that we are spending to see the return on it from executive education programs. If they stopped asking, there would be less urgency even though we have a culture in our team that we want to add and prove value from what we do in executive education.”

“No one has ever asked about a specific return on the program.”

“Probably would have to come from the COO to give a business rationale for our programs.”

“In our company, senior-level executives question the investment in executive education all the time. They are always looking for ways to improve returns and always looking for ways to cut costs and improve margins. Debate every year – SG&A always gets questioned where the budget for executive education lies. The winners are the ones who know they have a business problem, quantify it internally, and then realize it can be solved by external education.”

Question 3 - If evaluation is more important today than it was 5-years ago, what have you done about it?

While the answers from sponsors and clients have espoused that it is more urgent now than 5-years ago, very little has been done about it. This can be a result of senior executives not asking for it, the difficulty of measuring it, and the time and resources required to do it. There were not strong opinions offered on why more has not been done about evaluation.

“Haven’t done enough on ROI.”



“We have been doing more in the last 5-years due to growth – the factor causing this has been concern about our leadership pipeline and having enough people who are ready to take on more responsibility.”

“We have put more emphasis on learning transfer from an ROI perspective.”

“Still, think it is important but don’t see anything that will change in the future about doing ROI for executive education.”

Question 4 - If the majority believe evaluating impact will become more important in the next 3 years, why do you think that is?

The feedback on this question was mixed. Some agreed it would be more crucial and some said things would be the same and not change.

For agreement on its importance in the future, the following comments were offered:

“With our company focused on costs and spending more money in this area to educate people to a change; it is going to be more important for us. Bigger investment = more focus on investment return.”

“Looking to the future, we need to have replacements or promotable leaders in place as the business grows and changes. If the Executive Committee is worried about it and my Boss is worried about it, then I am worried about it.”

For no change in evaluating impact in the next 3 years, the following was offered:

“We do not think there will be much change in impact or ROI measurements in executive education. It’s what we have time and resources for and this is not a high priority versus other items that are much more important.”

Question 5 - Your personal thoughts on whether it is necessary to financially measure executive education and the real possibility of doing this?

Interviewees were very vocal about the need to measure executive education financially and came at the question from different perspectives. There was general agreement that any form of impact or ROI was difficult, if not impossible, to measure given the numerous factors and variables that would need to be considered in quantifying results.

While some elected not to answer some questions, everyone offered comments on this one:

“Exposure, experience, and education is what we are doing now. We have more focus on exposure and experience rather than on a classroom executive education experience. While we include education as one facet, it is not the only thing we do to develop our team members.”

“We do not believe that executive education can be financially measured. There are too many factors involved to measure the leadership part of the executive education from other conditions.”

“It is very tough to measure. I am not sure it is impossible. There are so many variables to consider. How do you or how would you know that it was only the executive education program a participant attended that made the difference in performance?”

The time we hear from universities about impact or ROI is when there is a project involved. They express the cost savings as the projects completed in the program. We pushed back against that as a measure of effectiveness. We would never take that to our leadership as proof of success for the program. The metric does not show any real level of performance improvement.”

“If we could actually show that ROI for executive education was a powerful measurement tool, people may pay more attention to it and think ROI was important.”

“I do believe it can be done as we are doing some of it already. If a university is interested in measuring executive education and learning transfer, then I am interested and would like to talk with them about it. We have learned that it is much more efficient to measure impact and ROI if you can build it in on the front-end against what you want to achieve.”

“Evaluating is going to be more important. Evaluating impact is going to be even more important though than evaluating dollars.”

And one interviewee offered the following point:

“My experience has been where there is a significant investment for an organization in university executive education, senior-level executives have thought about the problem, what areas need to be addressed, who will attend, etc. After doing all this, there is an implied level of comfort given the university name and reputation that we should plan it in the budget and proceed with the education.”

“It is a challenging and complicated to measure ROI with all the aspects involved. While we do look at it, we don’t invest lots of money to determine the ROI from executive education programs. It’s like investing in an ERP system. In order to measure it, you’d have to look at all the areas of the business. Therefore, it’s almost impossible to identify and isolate which aspects lead to the business performance improvements being achieved.”

Appendix 4 – UNICON Sponsor/Client ROI Questionnaire



ROI RESEARCH PROJECT – CLIENT QUESTIONNAIRE

HOW DO WE KNOW IF EXECUTIVE EDUCATION MAKES ANY DIFFERENCE?

Please tell us in which country you are based for your work

Name

Email address

Job title

Company/Organization

Is your organization categorized as?

- Public/Government
- Private
- Voluntary/Non-profit

How many people are employed in your organization?

- Under 500
- 501 - 1,000
- 1,001 - 5,000
- 5,001 - 10000
- 10,001 - 50,000
- Over 50,000

Does your organization send or sponsor employees to attend executive education programs?

- Open enrollment programs only (participants come from different companies)
- Custom programs only (participants come from the same organization)
- Both open and custom programs
- Not sure/Don't know

What types of executive development programs has your organization conducted over the past three years? (Please check all that apply)

- Yes, we have run a program with a university business school
- Yes, we have used other external providers to run a program
- Yes, we run an in-house leadership program
- No, we have not run any programs
- Don't know

12) Please indicate how often your organization carries out different levels of evaluation of executive education programs.

	<i>Regularly</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Never</i>
Participants' Reactions : immediate post-program	()	()	()
Acquisition of Learning by participants	()	()	()
Application of new skills or behaviors by participants	()	()	()
Results at the organizational level	()	()	()
Financial ROI (Return on Investment)	()	()	()

13) How satisfied are you with the way your organization currently evaluates the results from its investment in executive education? (Please check one)

- Extremely satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neither stratified or dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Extremely dissatisfied

14) Any additional information you can provide to explain your answer would be very helpful:

15) Listed below are some tools, techniques, and data sources that can be used in evaluating executive education. Please indicate those you have used or plan to use.

	<u>Have used and will use again</u>	<u>Plan to use in the future</u>	<u>Have used but will not use again</u>	<u>No plans to use</u>
End-of-Program Evaluation - participant feedback immediately after the program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Automated online reaction questionnaires	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Follow-up interviews or questionnaires with participants after the program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Follow-up questionnaires or interviews with participants' line managers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Repeat 360 feedback and compare results	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Follow Career tracking, (monitoring promotions)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specific questions in employee surveys	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specific questions in customer surveys	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial value of learning projects implemented	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial value of business changes implemented post-program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

16) Below is a list of areas where business schools, working with clients, might carry out research. Which one would be most useful to you?

- Establishing generic links between the development of individuals' competencies and organizational performance
- Developing methodologies to attempt to calculate the financial ROI of specific executive education activities
- Understanding the factors in the organizational climate that influence how well participants can apply and transfer learning from executive programs

17) Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about evaluating the impact of executive education.

	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>
<i>(Please check one box for each statement)</i>			
Evaluation is the client organization's responsibility, not the business school's	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluation will only be effective if it is built in from the very start of a development initiative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HR professionals will have to get better at proving the worth of executive education in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When evaluating, it is more important to learn how the program can be improved than to try to justify an expenditure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Calculating the financial return on investment in executive education is so difficult that it is rarely worth doing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Executive education forms such an important part of strategic change initiatives; it is vital to evaluate its effectiveness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluation is becoming more important because purchasing professionals are playing a bigger role within our organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other functions have proved that 'intangible' benefits can be measured, so the same should be true for executive education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My organization recognizes training, and development is essential, and so it does not expect a detailed justification of expenditures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No worthwhile evaluation of leadership development can take place until participants have been back at work for at least three months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is often not possible to calculate objective measures of the return on investment in executive education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

18) Which of the following most closely matches the kind of results you seek from your investment in executive education programs?

- Want the organization to be in better shape to deliver our strategy
- Want individual leaders in the organization to be better able to perform effectively
- Want to create an effective network of leaders across the organization through the program experience
- Want a clear financial benefit, where the monetary gains attributable to the program exceed the costs of the program

19) Any additional information you can provide to explain your answer would be very helpful:

20) What best describes the change in your views about measurement and ROI for executive education programs over the past 5 years? (Please check all that apply.)

- I feel that it is even more important today than it was in previous years
- My views have changed very little
- Post-program surveys give us sufficient evaluation and feedback
- Carrying out post-program surveys gives us little additional benefit
- I now believe measurement is becoming less important than it was in the past

21) Looking forward over the next three years, how do you think attitudes towards evaluating the impact of executive education will change in your organization?

- Evaluating impact will become more important than it is today
- There will be no change in evaluating impact of executive education programs
- Evaluating impact will become less important than it is today

22) Would you be interested in taking part in further research in this area?

- Yes
- No

Please know that all responses and information collected will be treated in strictest confidence

Appendix 5 – UNICON Sponsor/Client ROI Questionnaire - UK/EUROPE



ROI RESEARCH PROJECT – CLIENT QUESTIONNAIRE

HOW DO WE KNOW IF EXECUTIVE EDUCATION MAKES ANY DIFFERENCE?

Please tell us in which country you are based for your work

Name

Email address

Job title

Company/Organization

Is your organization categorized as?

- Public/Government
- Private
- Voluntary/Non-profit

How many people are employed in your organization?

- Under 500
- 501 - 1,000
- 1,001 - 5,000
- 5,001 - 10000
- 10,001 - 50,000
- Over 50,000

Does your organization send or sponsor employees to attend executive education programmes?

- Open enrolment programmes only (participants come from different companies)
- Custom programmes only (participants come from the same organization)
- Both open and custom programmes
- Not sure/Don't know

What types of executive development has your organization conducted over the past three years? (Please check all that apply)

- Yes, we have run a program with a university business school
- Yes, we have used other external providers to run a program
- Yes, we run an in-house leadership program
- No, we have not run any programmes
- Don't know

12) Please indicate how often your organization carries out different levels of evaluation of executive education programmes.

	<i>Regularly</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Never</i>
Participants' Reactions : immediate post-program	()	()	()
Acquisition of Learning by participants	()	()	()
Application of new skills or behaviours by participants	()	()	()
Results at the organizational level	()	()	()
Financial ROI (Return on Investment)	()	()	()

13) How satisfied are you with the way your organization currently evaluates the results from its investment in executive education? (Please check one)

- Extremely satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neither stratified or dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Extremely dissatisfied

14) Any additional information you can provide to explain your answer would be very helpful:

15) Listed below are some tools, techniques, and data sources that can be used in evaluating executive education. Please indicate those you have used or plan to use.

	<u>Have used and will use again</u>	<u>Plan to use in the future</u>	<u>Have used but will not use again</u>	<u>No plans to use</u>
End-of-Program Evaluation - participant feedback immediately after the program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Automated online reaction questionnaires	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Follow-up interviews or questionnaires with participants after the program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Follow-up questionnaires or interviews with participants' line managers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Repeat 360 feedback and compare results	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Follow Career tracking, (monitoring promotions)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specific questions in employee surveys	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specific questions in customer surveys	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial value of learning projects implemented	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial value of business changes implemented post-program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

16) Below is a list of areas where business schools, working with clients, might carry out research. Which one would be most useful to you?

- Establishing generic links between the development of individuals' competencies and organizational performance
- Developing methodologies to attempt to calculate the financial ROI of specific executive education activities
- Understanding the factors in the organizational climate that influence how well participants can apply and transfer learning from executive programmes

17) Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about evaluating the impact of executive education.

	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>
<i>(Please check one box for each statement)</i>			
Evaluation is the client organization's responsibility, not the business school's	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluation will only be effective if it is built in from the very start of a development initiative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HR professionals will have to get better at proving the worth of executive education in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When evaluating, it is more important to learn how the program can be improved than to try to justify the expenditure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Calculating the financial return on investment in executive education is so difficult that it is rarely worth doing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Executive education forms such an important part of strategic change initiatives; it is vital to evaluate its effectiveness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluation is becoming more important because purchasing professionals are playing a bigger role within our organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other functions have proved that 'intangible' benefits can be measured, so the same should be true for executive education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My organization recognizes training and development is essential, and so it does not expect a detailed justification of expenditures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No worthwhile evaluation of leadership development can take place until participants have been back at work for at least three months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is often not possible to calculate objective measures of the return on investment in executive education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

18) Which of the following most closely matches the kind of results you seek from your investment in executive education programmes?

- Want the organisation to be in better shape to deliver our strategy
- Want individual leaders in the organisation to be better able to perform effectively
- Want to create an effective network of leaders across the organization through the program experience
- Want a clear financial benefit, where the monetary gains attributable to the programme exceed the costs of the programme

19) Any additional information you can provide to explain your answer would be very helpful:

20) What best describes the change in your views about measurement and ROI for executive education programmes over the past 5 years? (Please check all that apply.)

- I feel that it is even more important today than it was in previous years
- My views have changed very little
- Post-programme surveys give us sufficient evaluation and feedback
- Carrying out post-programme surveys gives us little additional benefit
- I now believe measurement is becoming less important than it was in the past

21) Looking forward over the next three years, how do you think attitudes towards evaluating the impact of executive education will change in your organization?

- Evaluating impact will become more important than it is today
- There will be no change in evaluating impact of executive education programmes
- Evaluating impact will become less important than it is today

22) Would you be interested in taking part in further research in this area?

- Yes
- No

Please know that all responses and information collected will be treated in strictest confidence

Appendix 6 – UNICON Member School ROI Questionnaire



ROI RESEARCH PROJECT – UNICON MEMBER QUESTIONNAIRE

HOW DO WE KNOW IF EXECUTIVE EDUCATION MAKES ANY DIFFERENCE?

Please tell us in which country you are based for your work

Name

Job Title

Email address

UNICON Member's school

8) In business development dealings with clients, is the subject of program measurement or ROI (Return on Investment) a part of their program request or come up in the discussion?

- Yes, it comes up sometimes in custom or open programs
- Yes, it comes up on a regular basis in custom or open programs
- No, it rarely comes up in custom or open programs
- It never comes up as a topic of conversation in custom or open programs

9) Has your university-based executive education unit provided evidence to clients on program impact or ROI for either open or custom programs?

- I have seen regularly that program impact or ROI is provided to open or custom clients
- I have seen some program impact or ROI provided to open or custom clients
- I have not seen any program impact or ROI provided to open or custom clients
- I don't know, not enough experience to say

10) Any additional information you can provide to explain your answer would be helpful.

11) What progress have client organizations made to connect executive education investments to their overall strategy? (For example, growth, increased profitability, retention of key talent, promotions, change management, etc.?)

- Client organizations always connect executive education investments to their overall strategy
- Client organizations usually connect executive education investments to their overall strategy
- Client organizations rarely connect executive education investments to their overall strategy
- I am not sure if client organizations connect executive education investments to their overall strategy

12) Do you know if client firms have developed meaningful methods to determine impact or ROI for their executive education initiatives?

- I am aware that client firms have developed methods to determine impact or ROI
- I am not aware that client firms have developed methods to determine impact or ROI
- I am not sure if client firms have developed methods to determine impact or ROI

13) Are client sponsors and HRD (Human Resource Development departments) feeling any financial pressure to prove the worth of executive education investments or is it not a current concern?

- I know many clients feeling pressure to prove executive education worth
- I know some clients feeling pressure to prove executive education worth
- I know few clients feeling pressure to prove executive education worth
- I am not sure if clients are feeling pressure to prove executive education worth
-

14) Below is a list of areas where business schools, working with clients, might carry out research. Which one would be most useful to you?

- Establishing generic links between the development of individuals' competencies and organizational performance
- Developing methodologies to attempt to calculate the financial ROI of specific executive education activities
- Understanding the factors in the organizational climate that influence how well participants can apply and transfer learning from executive programs

15) What other areas of research might be useful to you?

16) Which of the following most closely matches the kind of results you believe clients should seek from their investment in executive education programmes?

- Want the organization to be in better shape to deliver our strategy
- Want individual leaders in the organization to be better able to perform effectively
- Want a clear financial benefit, where the monetary gains attributable to the programme exceed the costs of the programme

17) Any additional information you can provide to explain your answer would be helpful.

18) Listed below are some tools, techniques, and data sources that can be used in evaluating executive education. Please indicate those you have used or plan to use.

	Have used and <u>will</u> <u>use again</u>	Plan to use in the future	Have used but <u>will not</u> <u>use again</u>	No plans to use
End-of-Programme Evaluation - participant feedback immediately after the programme	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Automated online reaction questionnaires	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Follow-up interviews or questionnaires with participants after the programme	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Follow-up questionnaires or interviews with participants' line managers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Follow Career tracking, (e.g., monitoring promotions)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specific questions in employee surveys	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specific questions in customer surveys	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial value of learning projects implemented	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial value of business changes implemented post-programme	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

19) Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about evaluating the impact of executive education.

	<i>Agree agree nor</i>	<i>Neither disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>
Evaluation is the client organization's responsibility, not the business school's	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluation will only be effective if it is built in from the very start of a development initiative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HR professionals will have to get better at proving the worth of executive education in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When evaluating, it is more important to learn how the program can be improved than to try to justify the expenditure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Executive education forms such an important part of strategic change initiatives; it is vital to evaluate its effectiveness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluation is becoming more important because purchasing professionals are playing a bigger role within our organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other functions have proved that 'intangible' benefits can be measured, so the same should be true for executive education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is difficult to evaluate leadership development program impacts until participants have been back at work for at least three months.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is often not possible to calculate objective measures of the return on investment in executive education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

20) Looking forward over the next 3 years, how do you think attitudes towards evaluating the impact of executive education will change your organization?

- Evaluating impact will become more important than it is today
- There will be no change in evaluating impact of executive education programs
- Evaluating impact will become less important than it is today

Please know that all responses and information collected will be treated in strictest confidence.

Appendix 7 – UNICON Member School ROI Questionnaire -UK/EUROPE



ROI RESEARCH PROJECT – UNICON MEMBER QUESTIONNAIRE

HOW DO WE KNOW IF EXECUTIVE EDUCATION MAKES ANY DIFFERENCE?

Please tell us in which country you are based for your work

Name

Job Title

Email address

UNICON Member's school

8) In business development dealings with clients, is the subject of programme measurement or ROI (Return on Investment) a part of their programme request or come up in the discussion?

- Yes, it comes up sometimes in custom or open programmes
- Yes, it comes up on a regular basis in custom or open programmes
- No, it rarely comes up in custom or open programmes
- It never comes up as a topic of conversation in custom or open programmes

9) Has your university-based executive education unit provided evidence to clients on programme impact or ROI for either open or custom programmes?

- I have seen regularly that programme impact or ROI is provided to open or custom clients
- I have seen some programme impact or ROI provided to open or custom clients
- I have not seen any programme impact or ROI provided to open or custom clients
- I don't know, not enough experience to say

10) Any additional information you can provide to explain your answer would be helpful.

11) What progress have client organizations made to connect executive education

investments to their overall strategy? (For example, growth, increased profitability, retention of key talent, promotions, change management, etc.?)

- Client organizations always connect executive education investments to their overall strategy
- Client organizations usually connect executive education investments to their overall strategy
- Client organizations rarely connect executive education investments to their overall strategy
- I am not sure if client organizations connect executive education investments to their overall strategy

12) Do you know if client firms have developed meaningful methods to determine impact or ROI for their executive education initiatives?

- I am aware that client firms have developed methods to determine impact or ROI
- I am not aware that client firms have developed methods to determine impact or ROI
- I am not sure if client firms have developed methods to determine impact or ROI

13) Are client sponsors and HRD (Human Resource Development departments) feeling any financial pressure to prove the worth of executive education investments or is it not a current concern?

- I know many clients feeling pressure to prove executive education worth
- I know some clients feeling pressure to prove executive education worth
- I know few clients feeling pressure to prove executive education worth
- I am not sure if clients are feeling pressure to prove executive education worth

14) Below is a list of areas where business schools, working with clients, might carry out research. Which one would be most useful to you?

- 21) Establishing generic links between the development of individuals' competencies and organizational performance
- 22) Developing methodologies to attempt to calculate the financial ROI of specific executive education activities
- 23) Understanding the factors in the organizational climate that influence how well participants can apply and transfer learning from executive programmes

15) What other areas of research might be useful to you?

16) Which of the following most closely matches the kind of results you believe clients should seek from their investment in executive education programmes?

- Want the organization to be in better shape to deliver our strategy
- Want individual leaders in the organization to be better able to perform effectively
- Want a clear financial benefit, where the monetary gains attributable to the programme exceed the costs of the programme

17) Any additional information you can provide to explain your answer would be helpful.

18) Listed below are some tools, techniques, and data sources that can be used in evaluating executive education. Please indicate those you have used or plan to use.

	Have used and <u>will</u> <u>use again</u>	Plan to use in the future	Have used but <u>will not</u> <u>use again</u>	No plans to use
End-of-Programme Evaluation - participant feedback immediately after the programme	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Automated online reaction questionnaires	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Follow-up interviews or questionnaires with participants after the programme	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Follow-up questionnaires or interviews with participants' line managers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Follow Career tracking, (monitoring promotions)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specific questions in employee surveys	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specific questions in customer surveys	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial value of learning projects implemented	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial value of business changes implemented post-programme	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

19) Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about evaluating the impact of executive education.

	<i>Agree agree nor</i>	<i>Neither disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>
Evaluation is the client organization's responsibility, not the business school's	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluation will only be effective if it is built in from the very start of a development initiative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HR professionals will have to get better at proving the worth of executive education in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When evaluating, it is more important to learn how the programme can be improved than to try to justify the expenditure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Executive education forms such an important part of strategic change initiatives; it is vital to evaluate its effectiveness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluation is becoming more important because purchasing professionals are playing a bigger role within our organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other functions have proved that 'intangible' benefits can be measured, so the same should be true for executive education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is difficult to evaluate leadership development programme impacts until participants have been back at work for at least three months.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is often not possible to calculate objective measures of the return on investment in executive education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

20) Looking forward over the next 3 years, how do you think attitudes towards evaluating the impact of executive education will change your organization?

- Evaluating impact will become more important than it is today
- There will be no change in evaluating impact of executive education programmes
- Evaluating impact will become less important than it is today

Please know that all responses and information collected will be treated in strictest confidence.

Appendix 8 – Acknowledgements

The authors would especially like to acknowledge the help and support received from:

...The UNICON ROI Advisory Group Members			UNICON Office Support...
Country	Name	School	Name
Costa Rica	Camilla Ille	INCAE	Bill Scheurer – Executive Director
Hong Kong	Della Wong	HKUST	Dan Collins – Webmaster
Mexico	Monica Sacristan	ITAM	
Norway	Lise Hammergren	BI	The Research Sponsor
Spain	Joaquin Uribarri	IE	Shalini Bhatia - Stanford
Spain	Gaston Fornes	ESIC	
UK	Cleo Hall	Ashridge	
USA	Lisa Hughes	Harvard	
USA	Melanie Barnett	U Michigan	
USA	Jean Choy	U Washington	

The Sponsors and Clients from the 52 global companies and organizations who took the time to respond to the questionnaire and those who accepted the invitation for a follow-up interview. We appreciate your willingness to participate and support us on this research project with your thoughts and opinions on the impact and ROI of executive education investments.

...The UNICON Prime Reps and Members Who Responded to the Questionnaire...

Aisha Azhar	Hobbs Liu	Matthew Walkley
Aldemir Drummond	Jane Crombleholme	Melanie Weaver Barnett
Alice Acheson Snow	Jean Choy	Michael Koenig
Andres Ibanez	Joel Dupuis	Mireia Rius Bou
Bridget Tee	Julie M Shapiro	Molly Nagler
Camelia Ilie	Kabir Mathur	Monica Sacristan
Carlos Lopez	Klas Ottosson	Nicola Barrett
Cathleen Shea	Lisa Hughes	Nora Anderson
Claudia Snyder	Lise Hammergren	Paul Lambert
Dalia Dabbagh	Lori Neiswander	Paul Slaggert
David McCulloch	Luis Rodrigues	Peter Hirst
David Goodridge	Maeleine Mira	Samantha James
Della Wong	Maha Ismail	Sergio Alonso Gallardo
Dennis Lanham	Mark Healy	Steve Ludlow
Elena Escagedo	Markus Frank	Tina Narron

Appendix 9 – Authors



Patrick Cataldo, Ph.D. (Honorary)
(Pat)

Independent Consultant, Instructor, and Researcher

Pat Cataldo is an independent consultant, instructor, researcher. He is the former Managing Director for Executive Development at UNC-Chapel Hill where he currently serves as an executive education advisor and consultant for various clients. Prior to UNC, he was the Associate Dean for Executive Programs at Smeal College of Business for the Pennsylvania State University.

Before joining academia in 2004, Pat had extensive corporate experience with global Fortune 500 organizations as a Chief Learning Officer and the senior executive for customer training, employee education, and leadership development. He has worked in the telecommunications, retail, and computer industries with SAIC (Science Applications International Corporation)/Telcordia Technologies, Home Depot, and Digital Equipment Corporation.

He received an honorary doctorate from Grand Valley State University in Grand Rapids, Michigan and completed The Executive Program at the University of Virginia’s Darden School of Business. He has an MBA degree from Boston College in Chestnut Hill, MA and his undergraduate degree in economics from Saint Francis University in Loretto, Pennsylvania.

Pat is a former Chair of the Board for UNICON and an Emeritus Board Member. He is a former board member of the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) and the Professional Society for Sales and Marketing Training (formerly NSSTE). ASTD has recognized him with the Distinguished Contributions to an Employer award and the International Trainer of the Year award.



Bob Stilliard, BSc (Econ), CertEd, ACMA, CGMA
(Bob)

Associate and Client Director - Ashridge (United Kingdom)

Bob Stilliard has a BSc (Econ), CertEd, ACMA, CGMA, is an Associate and Client Director at Ashridge. During his Ashridge career, Bob has been Director of Finance programmes and Director of the Advanced Management Programme, Ashridge's flagship general management programme, as well as leading Ashridge's Open Programme business and leading faculty groups. He served as a member of the Management Board for seventeen years. His current interests in finance are in how organisations approach the creation of value and in how decisions with significant financial impact

are made. Outside of finance, his interests are in developing managers' abilities to take an integrated, cross-functional approach to business problems.

After graduating, Bob taught Economics for two years and then moved into industry to qualify as an accountant. He held a number of financial management posts within the BAT Industries Group. His experience covered the full range of financial management functions, with a concentration on developing and implementing integrated accounting and management information systems.

Bob has been involved in leading major, customized, executive development initiatives in large organisations such as the BBC, Rexam Plc and Continental AG. During 2006 – 2007, Bob was Chair of UNICON, the International University Consortium for Executive Education, and is currently an Emeritus Board member.

He has his degree in economics from the University of London. Bob has authored numerous articles and presentations (Emerging Best Practice in Executive Education, ROI - Bringing the client's voice into the debate, Methodologies for ROI in Executive Education, etc.) as well as co-authored the Executive Education Handbook: A Guide to International Executive Development Programmes with Roderick Millar.



Peter Topping, Ph.D.
(Bob)

Professor, Practice of Organization/Management -Emory

Peter Topping is Professor in the Practice of Organization and Management at Emory University's Goizueta Business School in Atlanta, GA. Peter has a secondary appointment as a Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Emory's School of Medicine. His areas of teaching are leadership, organizational behavior, organizational change, high-performance work teams, and negotiations.

Prior to becoming a full-time faculty member in 2006, Peter had a fifteen-year career in executive education at three different business schools: Kenan-Flagler at UNC, Moore School of Business at USC, and Goizueta (1999).

Peter was also a member of the UNICON Board from 2000-2006 and hosted two Fall conferences during that time. His focus in executive education was primarily in developing, designing and executing custom programs.

Peter is an active executive coach and human capital consultant to a broad range of both for-profit and not-for-profit organizations. He has a Ph.D. in Adult & Higher Education from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

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