



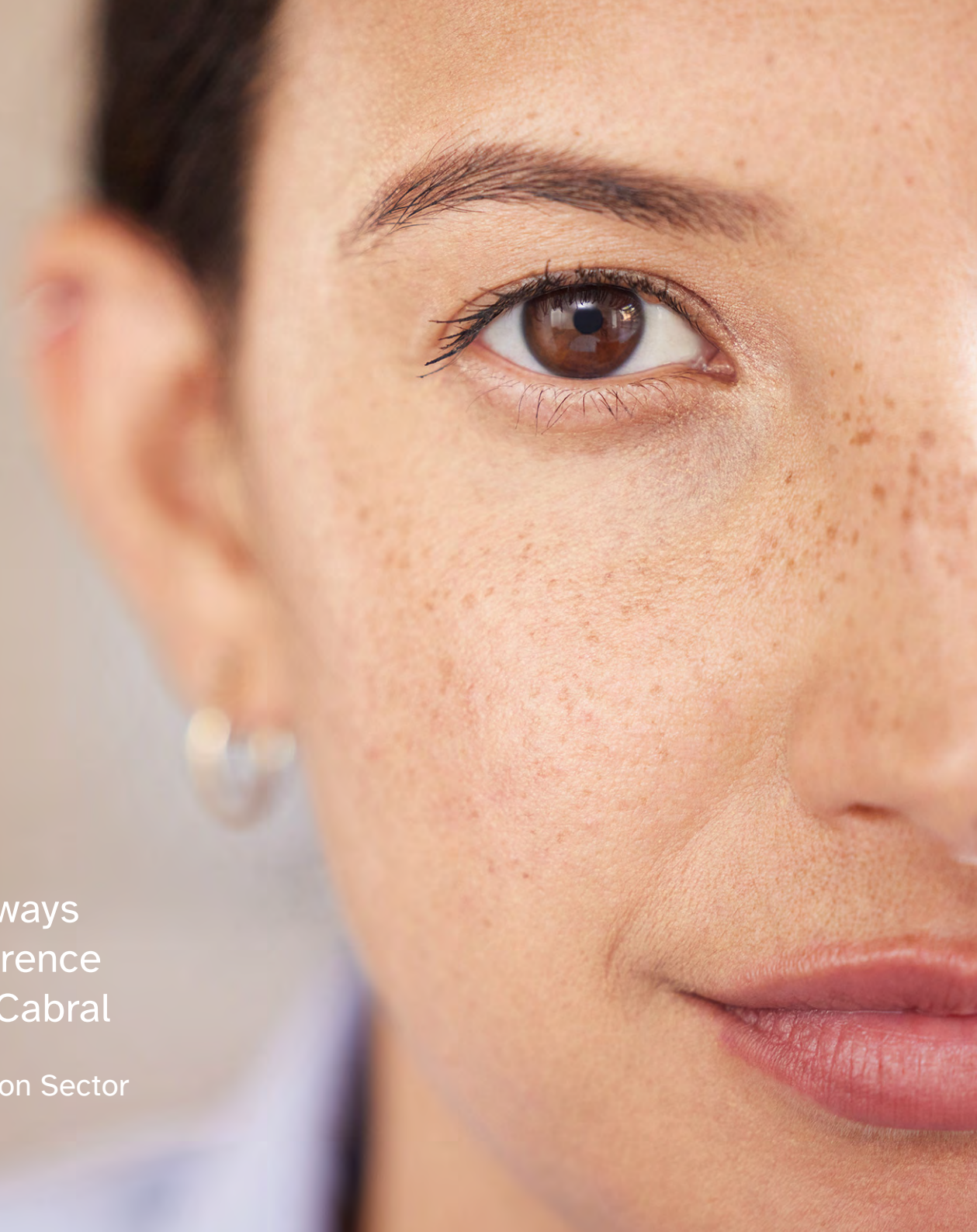
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CONSORTIUM FOR UNIVERSITY-BASED
EXECUTIVE EDUCATION

Impact: Society, Learning, Business

Impressions, insights and takeaways
from UNICON's Director's Conference
2023 hosted by Fundação Dom Cabral

A Report by IEDP for the Executive Education Sector



About this report

This report comprises summarized highlights of each session at the 2023 UNICON Director's Conference, along with provocations and questions designed to help executive education leaders link key insights directly to the business reality of their own teams and institutions.

You will find a key below surfacing ten key themes as they recurred and developed through the conference – and a contents section with jump-to links for navigation.

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Key themes

A summary of ten key themes - or 'impact' areas - for executive education leaders to focus on. Throughout the report you will find a visual map tracking how these ideas recurred and developed through conference.

Look for win-wins

Champion the growth opportunity the green economy and the SDG agenda represents - for business and educators.

Think big, start small

Innovation requires vision and experimentation.

Listen up

The importance of listening to the market, listening to clients, and listening to young people.

Reputation

There are many routes to value creation in the SDG arena, with reputational growth a key one.

Brand DNA

In the search for differentiation, first identify and articulate your brand's DNA and USPs. No one exec-ed shop is the same.

Collaboration

Wide-ranging collaboration between schools, disciplines, and other areas of civil society, governments, NGOs, etc.

SDG inspiration

The UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) agenda more broadly can be a source of hope and inspiration.

Partnerships

The increasing importance of partnerships and partnership management to implement strategy.

Inspire

The need to inspire, internally and externally, through vision, leadership, and action.

Take the leap

The need to embrace risk, set bold targets, take action, and lead with intentionality.

Introduction

“It is difficult to realize while we live through it, but we are in a moment of great change for society,” says Aldemir Drummond, Director of the Center of Strategy and International Business at Fundação Dom Cabral, and former Vice Dean, *“high youth unemployment, slow economic growth, technological disruption, climate change.”*

To this tumultuous backdrop, executive education leaders from around the world are gathered by UNICON – the consortium for university-based executive education – at the Fundação Dom Cabral (FDC) campus in Nova Lima, Minas Gerais, Brazil – to debate how the industry can make a positive impact on its stakeholders, through and beyond this moment of great change.

The conference focuses on two core questions:

01 How do the great societal challenges – economic, social and environmental – affect organizations, and how can executive education support business leaders tackle those issues?

02 Within this context, how can executive education providers differentiate themselves from their competitors, and create more value for their clients, their schools and other stakeholders?

Melanie Weaver Barnett, Executive Director of UNICON, noted that, in its 51st year UNICON continues to convene the sector in powerful ways, *“UNICON is a consortium, that means everyone here contributes. It’s a chance to immerse ourselves in Brazilian culture, in the market, and to ask each other difficult, thought-provoking questions.”*

Few other providers globally are better placed to host a discussion on these themes, as Beth Fernandes, Vice-Dean for Executive Education at FDC explains, *“FDC is a school aware of its responsibility to shape the minds of leaders. As a school we decided to be a transformative agent for financial, economic progress and social equality.”*



Great societal challenges and the role of executive education

For Antonio Batista, Dean at Fundação Dom Cabral, it is the, “advances and setbacks,” we experience, that characterizes society today. On one hand, progress in the reduction of violence, hunger and disease – on the other, unexpected setbacks in social intolerance, incomprehension, and inability to dialogue.

Other forms of change arrive in, “big waves,” from the effects of an accelerating climate emergency, to human demand on natural resources becoming unbearably heavy, and the degradation of natural ecosystems.

These waves are felt across all layers of society. In politics, effective leadership and collaboration appear to be lacking. As a result, we see declining confidence in institutions, lack of trust, and a breakdown in global consensus.

Meanwhile technological disruption poses as many problems as solutions, from unemployment to wealth inequality.

This is the context through which business schools and those gathered at conference find themselves navigating and leading. *“Business schools belong to a huge ecosystem, we belong to society,”* asserts Batista.

Collaboration

On the demand side of executive education, the role of business itself is changing. *“Companies are assuming tasks completely new to them, previously delivered by governments,”* comments Batista on the rise of the SDG agenda. The opportunity for business is to become, *“agents of social well-being, not slaves to short-term performance,”* he adds.

In response to this reality a new agenda for executive education is forming, focused on responsible consumption; ethics; inclusion; and sustainable growth.

Who better to tackle this agenda than business schools?

Listen up

“We are experts on the problems and demands of companies,” Batista urges, *“we know that rapid change demands continuous learning.”*

The FDC Way

“FDC has developed a peculiar way of doing education, balancing theory with practice, economic performance with social progress. We bring emotion to the learning process and a close connection to the country,” says Batista, of FDC’s unique approach, adding, *“We are a mission driven school, a passion driven school.”*

Brazil’s economy is the tenth largest in the world, but also one of the most unequal. *“We decided as a school we can no longer tolerate this huge social inequality. We developed a new model, dedicated to the bottom of the pyramid.”*

 Take the leap

What this means in practice is impressive:

The Favela Business School

FDC are delivering executive education to entrepreneurial people in favelas and launched the first Favela Business School, in partnership with the largest NGO in Brazil.

 Collaboration

They offer mentorship for young businesses and reached more than 3000 people this year, co-creating educational solutions that meet the needs of under-privileged people.

The CEO Legacy

An initiative founded by Batista, gathering together CEOs who are particularly committed to developing ethical leaders. Batista visited 250 CEOs as part of the founding process. What started as a group of ten CEOs has in the seven years since grown to fifty.

 Think big, start small

Imagine Brazil

An initiative that speaks to FDC’s determination to, “put people at the center of business,” convening ‘dialogue meetings’ with leaders from underrepresented segments of society. The initiative resulted in the first meeting of indigenous leaders at a business school, as well as developing a program dedicated to responsible agribusiness.



The Exec-Ed Challenge

Questions and takeaways for executive education leaders

 Listen up

1. “Executive education should track society’s needs and reorientate it’s programs and solutions in response,” suggests Batista. **How does your organization currently track society’s needs? How do you track your clients’ needs?**

 Collaborate

2. “We need new and innovative bonds between government, business, and civil society,” says Batista. **Executive education is well-positioned to act here. Can you envisage an initiative that fulfils this role?**

3. Demand for continuous learning requires, “new themes, new subjects, new content,” says Batista. **Is your institution developing new knowledge fast enough? How can it be accelerated?**

 Brand DNA

4. “Each school has its own DNA, its own core values,” says Batista. **What makes your institution distinctive, different, or unique?**

 Listen up

5. “If you want to teach executives, listen with empathy, intentionality, and flexibility to those impacted by the decisions executives make,” challenges Batista. **Is your institution leveraging stakeholder engagement in this way?**

The great societal challenges – global and Brazilian perspectives

The economic and geopolitical challenge

“We are moving toward a fragmented world. In economic and social terms this poses huge challenges,” begins Carlos Primo Braga, Adjunct Professor at FDC and former executive at the World Bank. *“We used to speak about globalization as if it were the law of gravity. No longer, with President Trump’s protectionist policies a turning point.”*

Braga describes how global supply chains are trending towards resilience through re-shoring, off-shoring, near-shoring, and friend-shoring – “strategic decoupling,” on a grand scale.

“Leadership in moments of transition become even more important,” says Braga, adding that in order to stay relevant and meet the needs of companies in the midst of these challenges, *“business schools must pay more attention to geopolitical trends.”*

 Listen up

The environmental challenge

For Virgilio Viana, Adjunct Professor at FDC and former state secretary - living in Manaus, Amazonas - the inspiration to tackle the climate emergency couldn’t be closer to home. The Amazon rainforest constitutes 55% of Brazil’s land mass and deforestation has been central to the Brazilian story since the 1960s. Deforestation peaked in 2004, low-pointed in 2012, but is now worryingly, sharply rising again. *“We are reaching a tipping point of ecological collapse,”* Viana warns.

 SDG inspiration

Viana is also the CEO of FAS, the Foundation for Amazon Sustainability, which takes a systemic approach to actioning the UN’s SDGs in the Amazon, creating centers of education for sustainable development for those, *“at the bottom of the pyramid.”*

The ultimate goal for Viana, FAS, and FDC, is to move Brazil from a deforestation-based economy to an inclusive, innovative, green economy. For Viana the SDGs are, “a source of hope,” for achieving this goal, spelling an end to the days of greenwashing.

Viana has a stark message too, “*The climate emergency should be priority number one for business schools. If not, in 50 years we won’t have businesses to work with.*”

Viana has a concrete suggestion for conference: to increase the number of teaching hours in executive education dedicated to sustainability. “*Currently it is less than 10% of teaching hours. It should be 30%,*” he says.

 Take the leap

The social democracy challenge

Adjunct Professor Ricardo Henriques argues that ‘ESG’ is missing a letter, and that we should add a ‘D’ for democracy for another alarming societal emergency: the regression of democracy and degradation of social rights.

“*The world became steadily more democratic over the last two centuries, but over the last ten years we can see it decreasing,*” warns Henriques, “*the number of closed autocracies worldwide has risen from 22 in 2012 to 33 in 2022.*”

A global trend towards authoritarian political candidates points to the fact that, “*democracies can regress anywhere and even collapse,*” cautions Henriques. Troublingly familiar warning signs include politicians treating rivals as enemies and the rejection of election results.

 SDG inspiration

Henriques sees how the ESG and SDG agenda can counter this effect and strengthen democracies, by:

- Promoting corporate accountability and transparency.
- Helping reduce abuse of power and corruption
- Prioritizing diversity and inclusion for better decision-making
- Encouraging sustainable and equitable economic growth
- Strengthening democratic institutions, and
- Addressing global challenges, not just local

“*Just as we have the climate challenge we have too a democratic challenge,*” says Henriques, “*and the biggest contribution we can make as business schools is to bring this discussion to our clients.*”

The Exec-Ed Challenge

Questions and takeaways for executive education leaders

1. During the panel the idea that, “bonus structures should be based on environmental and social measures as well as financial,” was raised, and echoed a number of times by others through conference. **What are the necessary steps toward making this a reality? Who must be included in the discussion?**
2. “The best way to off-set carbon emissions is through nature-based solutions like planting trees,” says Viana. **With the return of in-person programs, is carbon off-setting, perhaps with carbon credits, something you are considering, as a way to ‘walk the talk’ on sustainability?**
3. Kate Anderson, Senior Director Executive Education, MIT Sloan School of Management, notes the different challenges posed by building this agenda into degree programs, short courses, and custom. **How might your approach differ in each business area? If market pushback occurs – what next?**
4. Shana Yansen, Director, Program Development, Harvard Kennedy School Executive Education, points to the potential for competitive advantage that exists in this “cusp moment,” including the growth opportunity of renewables and the new skills demanded by the green economy. **Is your institution applying this ‘opportunity’ framing to the SDG agenda, seeking ‘win-win’ solutions?**

 Look for win-wins

Food production and its environmental challenges

FDC Adjunct Professor Marcello Brito is an agri-environmentalist with background in both business and the public sector. He opens with a challenge, *“how much do you know about the supply chain of the food you’ve eaten today, or the clothes you’re wearing? How can we teach fair consumption if we don’t know what life is like for the people who produce these things?”*

 Collaboration

Brito has an equally powerful view of where solutions lie. *“Too many projects are written off by risk analysis,”* he says, *“in the green economy, benefits can balance out the risks.”* Not least amongst these benefits is the, “incredible reputational value,” that comes with championing sustainability. He cites the effect that winning a Greenpeace award has on opening up market access.

 Reputation

Brito urges business schools to teach benefit analysis in their classrooms

Brito urges business schools to teach benefit analysis in their classrooms and encourages them to “think big,” in terms of goals. *“Thousands of business people go through our collective classrooms each year. In five years we can completely change how the world of business views sustainability,”* he insists.

 Take the leap

Brito cites a study from McKinsey into whether consumers care about sustainability enough to effect purchasing decisions. Researchers compared sales revenues between consumer packaged goods brands making ESG claims vs those that did not. Companies that did, enjoyed cumulative growth 8% higher than those that did not. The study reinforces the idea that ‘win-win’ solutions and green growth opportunities are plentiful.

 Look for win-wins

The Exec-Ed Challenge

Questions and takeaways for executive education leaders

1. Brito stresses the importance for business and business schools to, “listen more to young people,” and track trends in their consumption. These are tomorrow’s consumers, clients, and leaders. **Is your institution listening to, tracking, and including data from young people in strategic decision making?**
- A small icon with a speaker symbol and the text "Listen up" in a rounded rectangle.
2. **Where could your institution incorporate ‘benefit analysis’ into its decision making?**
 3. Brito neatly illustrates the role of executive education with the example of a, “board level climate program,” in which climate scientists are paired with private sector sustainability experts. **Is such a program possible for your own institution?**
 4. Jean Choy, Associate Dean of Executive Education at the Foster School of Business, University of Washington, notes that, “Targeting specific industries can achieve more impact than an open classroom approach.” **Which industries might you target?**

Developing senior leaders and great societal challenges

Roberta Campana, Associate Dean for Education and Innovation at Fundação Dom Cabral chairs a panel exploring how executive education is already finding success developing senior leaders for the improvement of society.

Shana Yansen, Director of Program Development, Harvard Kennedy School Executive Education, describes how the school is, *“embedding this content in programs, even where the demand may not be there yet. We’ve taken the decision to lead on these issues.”* Yansen is particularly excited about a new program focusing on the opportunity side of the green economy, which pairs a climate scientist with a ‘growth economist.’

 Look for win-wins

Yansen sees great scope for cross-discipline collaboration around this agenda. *“We are very decentralized,”* she says, *“very few topics bring the whole school together with collaboration across all our centers. Climate is one.”*

 Collaboration

Dennis Lanham, Sr. Assistant Dean of Executive Education at the Silicon Valley Executive Center at Santa Clara’s Leavey School of Business, describes the entrepreneurial approach he and his team has taken to a board diversity initiative. *“The program brings under-represented voices to company boards to improve corporate governance. We’re seeing great results,”* he says.

“Those who speak, facilitate, and mentor on the program are board members themselves, black executives and women executives. People who have experienced and overcome systemic disadvantage,” says Lanham, of how the initiative departs from traditional executive education models.

Another unique aspect is success measurement. *“We are not measuring revenue or enrolment,”* Lanham explains, *“the way we measure success is placing executives on boards. We are approaching 100 placements already and the program is still young.”*

For Nathalie Nawrocki, Executive Director of Corporate Partnerships at INSEAD, the lens she is applying is one of integration. *“If business education in the 60s and 70s was about internationalism and trade, and the 90s was innovation and growth, then today it’s all about integration,”* she explains, *“how can we integrate impact and income, performance and progress?”* At INSEAD, Nawrocki says, *“the MBA now has sustainability built in to every module.”*

 Take the leap

We should be developing ecosystems.

Nawrocki urges business schools to take this integrative approach even wider. *“Today executive education is for developing individuals and companies. We should be developing ecosystems,”* she says.



The Exec-Ed Challenge

Questions and takeaways for executive education leaders

💡 Think big, start small

1. Campana comments that, “simplicity is important. Think big, but start small. The challenge is starting an initiative where the profit isn’t there immediately.” **Can you think of an example where a lack of profitability has been a barrier? What would a longer-term approach to profitability look like?**
2. Lanham describes the experience of, “overcoming resistance,” in his board diversity initiative, and how short-term pain has brought growth, “Our reputation has grown. Corporates are coming to us and growth is coming in areas we hadn’t foreseen.” **What types of resistance might you face, creating an SDG-related initiative? How might you counter it?**
3. Jean Choy, Associate Dean of Executive Education at the Foster School of Business, University of Washington, shares a popular definition of executive education: “the innovative R&D arm of the school. We create fast, fail fast, and find new solutions.” **Is there an ethos of ‘fail fast, create fast’ at your institution? What conditions are needed to foster one?**

★ Reputation

SMEs and the great societal challenges

Brazil's population is 210 million and 50% of all jobs and a third of the country's GDP forms a huge middle market of small and medium-sized businesses. Aligned with their mission and over a 30-year period, FDC has become a reference in this market through its Partners for Excellence (PAEX) program.

The middle market requires a different approach to traditional executive education. *"We have a large program portfolio to reflect the range of different challenges posed by this market,"* says Selma Rodrigues, Management Director for Executive Education Portfolio at FDC, *"SMEs come to us in different maturity stages, with different areas of fragility. This requires specialists."*

Business model innovation is required to meet a different budget level. *"How could we give them access?"* recounts Rodrigues. The solution was a monthly, fee-based subscription model, with fees pooled to fund development across the consortium.

Partnerships

Crucially, FDC found it was not enough for PAEX to deploy academic faculty. Instead faculty leads – termed, "Technical Advisors," – needed first-hand business experience driving implementation themselves. *"They need to speak the same language as the SME owners,"* says Luiz Buccos, Program Director of FDC's Medium Sized Business Program, *"bridging business school knowledge to the SME reality."* It is the 'TA' who recommends which specialists to work with, selects the KPIs, and sets the action plan.

PAEX focuses on directly implementing these action plans on the business frontline. FDC wraps advice and support around to aid implementation, and specialists are inserted at different moments – in sales, marketing, finance, strategy, etc. – as required. As strategic reviews identify new challenges, new specialists are brought in to tackle them.

The Exec-Ed Challenge

Questions and takeaways for executive education leaders

1. Rodrigues describes how each business area at FDC is afforded strategic autonomy, whether open, custom, or in the SME market. **To what degree does your own institution afford autonomy to business units like this?**
2. PAEX launched 30 years ago in response to huge demand to fill knowledge gaps around new technology of the time (web 1.0 etc.) for SMEs. **Could a new knowledge gap demand similar supply side innovation? Is such a gap emerging around the green economy?**



3. Georges Blanc, Professor at HEC Paris, sees the PAEX approach as a way of, “increasing the legitimacy and credibility of executive education,” within the university system and the market. “The future of executive education is more applied research: research through the lens of transforming a company.” **How can this link between the research side of the business school and the action side of executive education be better exploited?**

Differentiation: the client-side perspective

“With such a wide range to choose from, including new competitors from EdTech, LinkedIn, Google and many others, how do you choose providers?” asks Marcelo Altoé, Associate Dean for Corporate Development at Fundação Dom Cabral, chairing a demand side panel session.

“We can’t go on reputation alone,” says Karina Ude, Global Head People & Organization Development, Syngenta, “a provider needs to be aligned with us on the cultural side and our values. For example with innovation, we want a provider who really lives innovation, not only speaks about it. We want someone who can deliver something very scalable too, sometimes for 20,000 employees. We ask: what do we want our participants to feel, and what provider can help us achieve that?”

Luciana Armond, Talent and Diversity Management Manager at Embraer, has a different consideration, “we want a global vendor that understands local needs,” she says, “to reflect that culture is different in each country.”

For Dani Plesnik, Director of Talent & Culture at Deloitte Brasil and Chief Happiness Officer (CHO), the decision depends on the desired outcome, “*what are we looking for?*” she asks, “*adding lots of value is difficult as we have a big internal university. It needs to be something we don’t have ourselves. If I’m looking for a program on innovation, I don’t want my participants to feel comfortable, I want them to feel disturbed, moved.*”

“What are the good and bad characteristics of university-based business schools as executive education providers?” Altoé asks.

“Currently, it’s pricing,” says Plesnik, “a class of twenty is not going to make a change. If I want to do something amazing it needs to be at scale. But I may only have budget for twenty. My people all want something amazing! It can be hard to pick a business school provider because of that, even where it’s my preference.”

“What good looks like is a partner who truly understands our needs and comes up with something unique and innovative to address them,” says Ude, of the good characteristics, “something experiential, something different. I want a partner who can challenge me, a partner who shows me the best version of my vision, and designs something special and only for us. This is what we do for our customers, so this is what we want from our partners.”

♡ Inspire

Jean Choy, Associate Dean of Executive Education at the Foster School of Business asks, *“After a few good years with a provider, what reasons might prompt you to end the partnership?”*

👂 Listen up

“When they stop paying attention and being attentive to our needs,” says Plesnik, “maybe they’re distracted by other clients. If you stay focused on my needs, I’ll walk with you forever. Treat your clients in a special way, listen to their needs.”

“I do not want someone who is only doing what I want,” notes Armond, “I want to be provoked. I want someone who is coming to me with new trends and new ideas.”

This is what we do for our customers, so this is what we want from our partners.

The Exec-Ed Challenge

Questions and takeaways for executive education leaders

1. Direct feedback from the demand side of the market is invaluable as this panel session proves. **What mechanisms are available to you, to listen to the market like this?**
👂 Listen up
2. What processes could be built into your teams to ensure ‘responsiveness’, ‘attentiveness’, **and a flow of ‘new ideas and suggestions’ is maintained?**

Differentiation through learning experience design

Following an experiential outing exploring the mountainside town of Ouro Preto, conference gathers off-campus to discuss differentiation in the context of designing learning experiences.

Clarissa Biolchini, Head of Design, Electrolux LATAM, and Adjunct Professor at Fundação Dom Cabral, gives a background in design thinking and how human-centricity can be applied to program design to effectively address the context and needs of participants.

“One framing we use is to look at ‘before vs. after’ the educational experience. What has changed for the participant? Planning the journey for participants is key, whether it’s a one day program or six months,” says Biolchini.

Building on the theme of design, Roberta Campana, Associate Dean for Education and Innovation at Fundação Dom Cabral, tells the story of leading a rebranding project at FDC that brought unexpected benefits for the organization.

Describing their initial motivation, Campana says, *“we realized, if we don’t position ourselves in the market, the market will do it for us, with new vendors attacking us as ‘too academic,’ while positioning themselves as very practical.”*

Partnerships

FDC partnered with a design consultancy and took care to listen to each stakeholder group that touched FDC’s programs. *“We identified ten areas of the business - HR, faculty, catering, marketing - everyone - and we carried out workshops with each group.”*

Brand DNA

A key finding from the feedback process was identifying a unique selling point for FDC around human connection. *“Partnering with FDC felt like a hug,”* says Campana, *“for FDC it is thinking about the emotion of each participant, to design a transformative experience for them.”*

Something no delegate could fail to appreciate is the exemplary warmth and familial connection between FDC team members, and an infectious passion for their work.

What started as a branding exercise ultimately created value in unexpected areas, bringing the team together and giving them a powerful narrative to take to market. It also served to reinforce the importance of including all stakeholders, *“before we were focused 100% on the client,”* Campana explains, *“but the internal side is equally important.”*

Inspire

The Exec-Ed Challenge

Questions and takeaways for executive education leaders

1. Biolchini says that, “understanding the client’s context, needs, and expectations,” is key. **What mechanisms could you put in place to understand individual participants in this detail?**
2. Meg Regan, Senior Director, Executive Programs, MIT Sloan School of Management, suggests, “better employee experience in executive education teams leads to better participant experience. Take care of your faculty and your delivery team.” **Is the internal side given equal weighting to the external in stakeholder feedback at your institution?**

Technology as a source of differentiation

At EDUCAUSE, Susan Grajek works with education and technology leaders to identify emerging trends for the sector. Changing attitudes towards generative AI and its application in universities and the learning space is the hot topic right now, and, *“could transform the way business schools work,”* says Grajek.

 Think big, start small

Grajek notes gaming and simulation as other areas of technology and innovation with the potential to transform education. Meanwhile, Grajek calls the metaverse, *“definitely a sandbox worth starting to play in,”* in the way it can, *“immerse students in a digital campus experience,”* and that, *“could explode,”* as it becomes widely accessible. *“Technologies like these can help people develop relationships, so for education that could mean a move towards relationships-based models rather than course-based ones,”* suggests Grajek.

In the second half of the session Perry Samson, Professor in the College of Engineering and the School of Information at the University of Michigan, talks about ‘Learning Clues’, an AI-enabled tool that mines the transcripts of class videos to, *“help time-poor students to help themselves.”*

“Our students are always asking for study guides, and adult learners often don’t know where start in a new field of study,” says Samson. The tool uses transcripts of classes alongside OCR visual recognition technology to compile uses of keywords, building a database of exactly what is said and when in the classroom. A search engine gives access to every instance where a phrase was used by the instructor, or in supporting materials. Finally, ChatGPT is deployed to produce study guides around chosen search terms. Samson calls the resulting tool a, *“virtual teaching assistant.”*

 Take the leap

Samson urges those in education to, *“embrace ChatGPT,”* arguing that, *“we need to give students the tools and skills to make use of AI, because they will need them throughout their careers.”*

The Exec-Ed Challenge

Questions and takeaways for executive education leaders

1. Grajek notes that institutions are still exploring and deciding where responsibilities for AI should sit. **How is your institution readying itself organizationally, to support the use of AI?**
2. Eric Bergemann, Senior Director of Executive Programs, MIT Sloan School of Management, says that, “ChatGPT has people fascinated and terrified in equal measure. Who is really doing the work? Can you trust the content? It’s less to do with whether people are cheating, more whether they are still learning.” **How is the rise of ChatGPT being tackled by your institution? How is it being embraced?**

Differentiation: how to build the necessary competencies

Marcelo Altoé, Associate Dean for Corporate Development at Fundação Dom Cabral, chairs a panel on how business schools can identify and access the competencies required to differentiate in the market and address the great societal challenges.

“The big societal problems can’t be solved by business schools alone,” says Jane Crombleholme, Managing Director of Executive Education at Alliance Manchester Business School, *“at Manchester we’ve formed thematic, interdisciplinary institutes of research around key global challenges like humanitarian and conflict response, sustainable consumption, work and equalities – etc. Nine schools across the university collaborate in these institutes.”*

Collaboration

In terms of recruiting, Crombleholme adds, *“what I look for in new hires are innate, soft skills like listening; balancing priorities; negotiation. Are you going to be a good partner?”*

“We look at three levels of competencies,” says Foo Yuk Meng, Deputy Director and Head of Open

Enrolment, Executive Education Programs at NUS Business School, *“one is the traditional, timeless things the school has always been good at. Two is that we want to be really good ‘fast followers.’ You can’t be at the forefront of every trend, but we can track opportunities and gear-up fast to take advantage of them. Finally, we want to be at the bleeding edge in some areas too. Building competencies in areas that may not have a commercial fit yet is important.”*

Eric Bergemann, Senior Director of Executive Programs, MIT Sloan School of Management, says the competencies he looks for include, *“growth mindset, continual learning, sensemaking, the challenging of confirmation bias. For leaders we look for the ability to inspire people, leading diverse groups, and leading complex teams.”*

Partnerships

“An important new area for us is building ‘partnership management’ as a competency,” says Foo Yuk Meng, *“for example, the SME market is a growth area for us and that requires partnerships.”*

The Exec-Ed Challenge

Questions and takeaways for executive education leaders

1. Devin Bigoness, Chief Client Officer, Darden Executive Education & Lifelong Learning, notes that finding, “consistent motivation across the whole organization,” is an area of need for many business schools, with different incentives and motivations to align. **What competencies might help an organization rally behind a shared vision?**

 Inspire

2. Cüneyt Evirgen, Faculty Director, Center for International Business Education and Research, Georgia State University, and UNICON primary rep for Sabanci EDU, raises the importance for executive education to, “make connections with faculty - not in a reactive way when a client has a request - but ahead of time. Forging connections and raising awareness of exec-ed.” **What skills could you develop in your team to achieve this?**

 Collaborate

3. Brendan Woo, Director of Learning Operations, Yale School of Management, raises the need for executive education to be courageous and embrace risk, “it’s very important to stand for something and there’s often a leap involved. If you want to do something for society then go do that. Build a reputation, take a risk.” **Are courageousness and risk appetite qualities you would consider hiring for with this in mind?**

 Take the leap

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A Report by IEDP for the Executive Education Sector

