THE CHALLENGE

Schlumberger is a legend in the oil field sector, known for industry-leading technology and a deep expertise. In 2006 alone, Schlumberger’s R&D investment topped $500M U.S. dollars. But with roughly 70,000 employees of more than 140 nationalities working in more than 80 countries, ensuring teamwork and knowledge sharing across boundaries requires a great deal more than financial resources. To remain a leader in these areas, the company has staked a commitment to two essentials: maintaining a strong, cohesive work force and developing innovative technologies.

“Our personnel have grown much more diverse over the last few decades, and our increasingly decentralized R&D operations are regularly generating new product lines,” explains Schlumberger’s Management Development Director Joe Perkins. “The challenge for us is to find a common language that will enable us to look at innovation and product development as an integrated chain, from the field to the lab on through to our business operations.”

THE SOLUTION

Schlumberger executives consulted with MIT Sloan faculty and staff to design a customized version of MIT Sloan’s Driving Strategic Innovation: Achieving High Performance Throughout the Value Chain program that convenes a broad spectrum of Schlumberger managers to the MIT campus from around the globe. One cadre included tech center managers, product managers, geographic marketing managers, and the president and managers of well services operations from locations as far flung as Dhahran, Saudi Arabia; Stavanger, Norway; Beijing, China; Cambridge, England; and Sugar Land, Texas.

This strategic custom program features case studies developed from in-depth interviews with some of the company’s Houston-based employees. Participants spend five days of intensive study on value chains, supply chains, marketing, and causal loops in the context of Schlumberger-based case studies.

WHY MIT

When a team of Schlumberger’s senior executives traveled to MIT to participate in Driving Strategic Innovation, one of MIT Sloan’s most popular executive education courses, the team quickly realized that the course they were taking embodied the critical elements the company was looking for—everything from causal loops in the energy market to innovation, value chains, supply chains, and...
marketing. They also realized that MIT Sloan's unique ability to integrate advanced research, new technology, and innovative business practices made the School an ideal collaborator.

**THE RESULT**

The five-day intensive session created an invigorating climate for brainstorming. Participants applied best practices from within and outside of the industry to Schlumberger’s highest priorities. At the same time, executives build a powerful interdisciplinary network that helps them to keep the company anticipating rather than reacting to the demands of their industry.

“Schlumberger places a great deal of value on global managers who’ve worked in diverse environments and functional segments,” said Perkins. “The custom program we’ve developed with MIT Sloan helps us encourage managers to think broadly with a common focus and a common language.”

Schlumberger executives returned to their operations energized from their intensive learning experience at MIT Sloan and equipped with new strategies and new relationships that will support them in the challenges ahead.

**AS SCHLUMBERGER CONTINUES TO GROW, WE BECOME FUNCTIONALLY AND CULTURALLY MORE DIVERSE. OUR MIT SLOAN CUSTOM PROGRAM IS CRITICAL TO HELPING OUR MANAGERS MAINTAIN A COMMON FOCUS.”**

**JOE PERKINS**

Management Development Director

Schlumberger