Custom Programs

MIT Sloan Executive Education

Massachusetts Institute of Technology
MIT Sloan School of Management
Office of Executive Education
238 Main Street, E48-501
Cambridge, MA 02142-1046
U.S.

Phone: +1 617 253 7566
Fax: +1 617 253 6773
email: sloanexeced@mit.edu
http://mitsloan.mit.edu/execed

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Partners in Transformation

MIT Sloan Custom Programs
Learning in action: High-impact programs for world-class organizations

The MIT Sloan School of Management stands at the intersection of management, science, and technology. MIT Sloan faculty are renowned for their teaching and research in management. As an integral part of MIT, the Sloan School of Management embodies the Institute’s culture of innovation, collaboration, and excellence.

Today the need for companies to learn, adapt, innovate, change, and grow has never been greater. Companies come to MIT Sloan because of its innovative and entrepreneurial culture, because of the rigor of its discipline-based understanding of business, and because MIT is the place where management, engineering, and science faculty address the imperatives and challenges faced by businesses today.

In partnership with some of the world’s most influential organizations, we create programs that allow companies to drive revolutionary change, to take advantage of opportunities, and to master their toughest challenges.

“In MIT Sloan, we found great people—good friends—totally committed to our transformation. MIT people are committed to solving problems. We realized we could tap their exceptional resources to set up processes and systems essential to making us a world class corporation.”

Marco Dalpozzo
Human Resources and Organizational Development Director
Companhia Vale do Rio Doce (CVRD), Brazil
Types of Custom Programs

In our experience, companies use custom executive education programs to enhance the capabilities of their organization. Designed to address the specific challenges and opportunities of today’s complex organizations, custom programs can be tailored to develop top leaders in an organization’s context. Driving strategic change, creating social networks, enhancing leadership potential, and strengthening customer relationships are four broad imperatives that often compel custom executive programs.

**LAUNCH NEW STRATEGIC INITIATIVES**
Custom executive programs provide the platforms through which CEOs and senior executives can communicate new strategic initiatives or changes in strategic direction. The customized program can be specifically designed to signal and convey the new skill sets and approaches required to achieve these objectives. Examples of new directions may be moving from being a regional player to a global player in an industry or capturing greater value as power moves from one part of the industry value chain to another. In cases like these, custom executive programs are high leverage interventions capable of driving the organization to achieve a more competitive positioning within the industry.

**BUILD NETWORKS ACROSS BOUNDARIES**
Custom programs bring together senior managers from across multiple functions and geographic segments around shared organizational learning. The opportunity to work together creates a valuable network within the firm that enhances senior managers’ abilities to work effectively and rapidly throughout the organization. Custom programs can reinforce or begin to shift the corporate culture, create shared vocabulary, put new perspectives and approaches to work, and build trust among leaders who will produce results.

**DEVELOP LEADERSHIP CAPABILITIES**
Custom programs enhance the capability of key leaders within a company to increase the capital productivity of the firm and deliver outstanding business performance. Custom programs are usually focused on providing direction, building alignment, and enhancing communication between senior executives and key asset populations within the firm who have the most influence on the company’s performance.

**ENRICH CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS**
Custom programs can also help deepen relationships between an organization and its key clients. In this case, the executive program is developed with a sponsoring organization not for its employees but for its customers. By providing clients access to cutting-edge research and new approaches to management issues, firms can have a real, positive impact on their customers’ businesses. In turn, this builds trust and strengthens the bond between an organization and its best customers.
MIT Sloan + Merrill Lynch
Together we created an intense virtual program for high potential leaders to apply leading edge investment theory to innovate at the frontlines of the investment business.

The MIT Sloan Custom Learning Experience

An MIT Sloan custom program is a joint venture created by a team of executives from your organization in collaboration with our top faculty from across the MIT community. Together we develop a set of strategic frameworks to address your company’s key priorities.

Programs can last two days, three months, an entire year—the length of time that is appropriate for achieving your learning objectives. Often, programs include multiple, residential sessions for a group of participants or “cadre”. Our experience has shown that a cadre size of approximately 30 participants provides optimal discussion and meaningful interaction among faculty and participants. Programs frequently draw participants from around the world who connect, often for the first time, in the classroom and then work virtually on company-related team projects that translate newly acquired frameworks into action strategies for your company.

Over the course of the custom program, participants from your company will witness a dramatic evolution in their perspectives and their ability to meet new challenges.

We recommend that programs be delivered at MIT, either on the campus or at MIT Endicott House, our executive conference facility. Participants live and work together in an environment designed to foster challenging discussion and extensive interaction and take them away from the daily obligations and distractions of their positions. Coming to MIT allows participants to absorb MIT’s unique culture of innovation and offers them wide access to the resources of the world’s leading research institution.

MIT Sloan approaches each of our custom engagements as a long-term, mutually productive relationship, not an isolated educational transaction. We look for companies that are interested in making fundamental, strategic changes in the way they do business. For a custom program to have meaningful impact on the organization, it must be sponsored and championed by senior management. Companies looking to forge creative long-term educational partnerships would be well-served by developing a relationship with MIT Sloan.
High-Performance Collaborations

When we work with organizations to build custom executive programs, we draw on the core approaches used across MIT that advance the frontiers of management, science, and technology. While each MIT Sloan custom program is distinct, all are powered by three essential engines.

**DYNAMIC PARTNERSHIPS**
Productive collaborations are potent agents of change. When we work with your organization to develop a custom program, we begin by putting together a team of MIT Sloan’s top business minds with your organization’s best managers. We bring together subject expertise from across MIT to meet your specific needs. You bring your company’s imperatives, culture, and purpose. Together, we collaborate to tailor the program to address your organization’s own challenges and goals.

**RIGOROUS CONCEPTS AND FRAMEWORKS**
MIT is first and foremost a research institute, and MIT Sloan faculty lead the world in management thinking and research. The concepts and frameworks taught by our faculty in your custom program are based on the faculty’s cutting-edge research. This expertise offers combinations of strategic management, leadership, and innovation with science, engineering, and technology, enabling participants to be more effective in today’s complex, global, and technology-driven world. Our faculty’s frameworks provide your participants with new ways to think about doing business, new perspectives for analyzing challenges, and new approaches for solving problems.

**LEARNING IN ACTION**
It is critical to apply theory in the context of complex, real company issues. One approach we offer is the “deep dive” case in which we introduce your own organization’s real data and source materials as company-specific cases to be analyzed by teams of participants. We often invite the real-life player to offer his or her perspective on the case. Another powerful approach is to have group projects between sessions. Back at work between sessions, your participants work on team projects, mentored by faculty, to apply what they have learned to sponsored initiatives that result in recommendations for change or innovation in your company. These approaches increase the depth and breadth of the learning and return real outcomes for the company.

“This program has become a think tank for our participants to step back from business as usual and develop a broader understanding of what’s going on in other areas of our organization and throughout the industry. Participants examine industry trends and brainstorm key objectives for the future direction of the company.”

Serge Panczuk
Corporate HR Director
Serono International, Switzerland
High-Yield Benefits

THE MIT SLOAN FACTOR
Here, at the nexus of management and technology, we offer companies a powerful and unique integration of knowledge and resources.

- Access across MIT to the world’s leading experts in areas related to your program and your business
- Frameworks, tools, concepts, and opportunities to help your organization drive innovation into practice
- Inspired collaborations built to deliver optimal insights and new ways of thinking about complex issues
- Interdisciplinary approaches that integrate management with technology and science to meet your organizational challenges
- Multiple formats from immersive “deep dives” to structured team initiatives that increase the depth and breadth of learning and yield real results for your organization
- Fertile environments for new ways of thinking about and creating sustainable change
- An extensive team of experts and staff to support the program from inception through design to delivery
- Transformational results: executives and managers who think strategically and lead collaboratively, with expanded perspectives, increased confidence, and a higher level of skill

MIT Sloan + Vale
Together we mobilized a top Brazilian company to transform operational excellence into strategic advantage for optimizing global growth.
High-Impact Tools

Every MIT Sloan custom program is distinct, but most share these core elements:

- **Integrated curriculum**
  A dynamic fusion of rigorous content, tools, and strategic frameworks maximize learning and dovetail with company needs, challenges, and objectives.

- **“Deep dive” experiences**
  Immersive learning mechanisms allow participants to zero in on specific company issues.

- **Action learning projects**
  Participants put the latest research into practice through program project teams which address real company imperatives and make recommendations for action.

- **Targeted goals**
  Custom programs are designed around specific company goals set by the sponsoring executives who are intent on achieving those goals.

- **Reciprocal learning**
  Program participants get vital knowledge and perspectives from one another and build healthy alliances that serve them for years to come.

- **Virtual collaborations**
  Team members located in multiple locations stay connected throughout the process with technology-enabled learning platforms.

- **Continuous feedback**
  Input from MIT Sloan faculty, company representatives, and program participants shapes the evolution of the program.

- **High-powered team**
  Company participants, MIT faculty, and program staff create a productive, enduring network.
Our collaboration with MIT Sloan has been a resounding success. It has had a gigantic impact on BP. The Projects Academy has given us a unifying tool to coalesce nine major strategic mergers and acquisitions, has allowed us to bring a consistent approach to our major projects, and has created community among all the major project leaders, wherever they reside in the world. It communicates across the firm the importance that BP places on project management excellence. The tools and processes we developed with MIT Sloan are now BP’s standard operating procedures.”

Jim Breson
Founding Director, Projects Academy
BP, United Kingdom
High-Voltage Connection

Several years ago, an independent study revealed that if the more than 5,000 companies founded by MIT alumni and faculty formed an independent country, that “MIT nation” would have the 24th largest economy in the world. This figure has only mushroomed in the intervening years with the extraordinary success of MIT-spawned companies.

One of the primary components of this entrepreneurial success is collaboration. At MIT, schools and departments work together seamlessly on multidisciplinary innovations. Engineers starting companies call in marketing experts from MIT Sloan. Management experts rely on the best minds in IT to improve a company’s technical infrastructure. Working across boundaries is natural at MIT.

What this means for your organization is that MIT Sloan has, at the ready, some of the best experts in a vast array of subject specialties. We have access to pioneering research centers and late-breaking discoveries. Most important, our faculty has extensive experience integrating multiple disciplines into one powerful learning experience.

Working at this critical intersection of management, science, and technology gives MIT Sloan an edge. Our edge becomes your edge in an MIT Sloan custom program.

World Class Expertise

FACULTY: DRIVING THE FUTURE OF BUSINESS

The MIT Sloan faculty are among the most respected leaders in the business field. Our professors conduct forward-looking research in their fields and have extensive experience putting that research into practice. They consult widely in organizations and governments around the world on critical issues that require both the latest thinking and in-depth industry experience.

The MIT Sloan faculty has been distinguished by renowned innovators and Nobel Prize winners, including pioneers like Jay Forrester, the father of system dynamics, and John D. C. Little, founder of marketing science. Many members of the faculty have written definitive books in their fields—landmark titles like Organizational Culture and Leadership by Edgar Schein, The Fifth Discipline by Peter Senge, Product Design and Development by Steven Eppinger, and IT Governance by Peter Weill and Jeanne Ross. MIT Sloan faculty are quoted daily in print, online, and in the international news media.

The expertise available to organizations through MIT Sloan custom programs reaches beyond MIT Sloan’s business expertise to encompass the entire Institute. To meet the goals of the custom program, the world’s foremost experts in engineering, IT, biopharma, and dozens of other fields may be included on the team to teach courses and help shape action strategies.

MIT Sloan + Mars

Together we worked with top R&D management from around the world and across business units to learn new approaches and launch five strategic initiatives in R&D management.
How to Partner with MIT Sloan:
The Custom Program Development Process

**Initial Assessment**
We invite you to phone or email us to outline your organization's desired outcomes and the timeline for your program. We arrange a conversation, usually by phone, with a custom program director to further understand your business challenges and determine whether your needs match our capabilities.

**Exploratory Meeting**
Senior executives and human resources representatives from your organization are encouraged to visit MIT Sloan to meet with faculty who are likely to teach in the program and the executive education directors who will manage the program. During the meeting, we discuss your business goals and organizational challenges, as well as your requirements, proposed participants, and desired outcomes for the program.

**Proposal**
After the meeting, we prepare a preliminary proposal for your review. The proposal outlines suggested curriculum topics, program structure, potential faculty, delivery methods, recommended location, timing, and fees. We work together with you to refine the proposal until an agreement is reached.

**Capabilities Requirements**
Once we have an agreement, a faculty director and executive education program director are assigned to your program. Faculty review detailed company information and conduct interviews with management in your organization in order to understand the challenges facing your organization. On occasion, program faculty will travel to your site to better understand your business and meet prospective participants and program sponsors.

**Program Design**
After collecting all the necessary company information, the faculty and program directors refine the curriculum and delivery methodologies, and engage additional faculty members to teach in the program. Throughout the design process, we work collaboratively with your team to ensure the program meets your expectations and addresses your needs.

**Delivery**
The program is delivered by the faculty team to participants selected by your organization. All programs are taught by full-time MIT Sloan faculty, the same faculty who teach in our top-rated MBA and MIT Sloan Fellows programs.

**Feedback**
Throughout the program and at its conclusion, we collect feedback and suggestions from participants, company sponsors and administrators, and faculty. The comments are analyzed and recommendations shared with all parties. If possible, real-time adjustments are made during the program.

**Refinement**
Based on the program experience and feedback, as well as any new company or industry information available, the program is revised and updated for future sessions.
MIT Sloan Custom Programs
Select Client List

Aetna
Air Liquide
BP plc
Credit Suisse
CVRD
E.ON
General Electric
IBM
Mars/Masterfoods
Merrill Lynch
News Corporation
PepsiCo
Schlumberger
Serono
Siemens
UBS
Vale
Positioning an Iconic Company for Global Growth

In Brazil, Companhia Vale do Rio Doce (Vale) is a legend, a powerhouse, and a household name—and rightly so. Launched in 1942 as a state-owned company, it grew steadily over the latter half of the 20th century to become the largest diversified mining company in the Americas. During that evolution, the company made the transition from public to private ownership and diversified widely, branching out into the electric power and aluminium industries. Vale now has international operations on five continents.

But prodigious growth presents prodigious challenges. At the cusp of the two centuries, company leadership realized it had to align its infrastructure, which had become an ever-mushrooming amalgam of acquisitions and global offices. To build Vale into one of the three leading global firms in the mining industry, its leaders would have to unify the company’s management tier with a shared vision and cohesive practices.

To their credit, Vale leaders were not afraid to be introspective. They assessed company strengths and, among them, found a loyal and talented labor force. They realized, however, that these core managers would need new knowledge and skills to support the company’s ambitious mission.

Because Vale relies so heavily on leading edge technology, its senior management team felt that a leading edge business school would be the ideal partner—made all the more ideal if that B-school was at one of the world’s top technology institutions. “We needed to think hard how to lead the business as a whole and oversee its strategic transition from a state-based company to a private, globally-focused company,” says Marco Dalpozzo, Vale’s Human Resources and Organizational Development Director. “In MIT Sloan, we found great people totally committed to our transformation.”

MIT Sloan worked closely with Vale to design two programs for the company’s key managers—the Senior Management Program for Vale’s top 100 managers and the Transformational Leadership Program for the next 150 leaders. Now, several years later, the programs are vital to the company’s powerful management culture.

Each program takes place over six months, including a six- to eight-day academic term at MIT, followed by teamwork on Vale-focused action learning projects, and concluding with the project teams’ presentation of...
actionable recommendations to MIT faculty and Vale sponsors. Teams also build upon projects from previous cadres, resulting in the speedy integration of innovations.

Early in the relationship, MIT faculty teaching in the program customized the content to fit Vale. Professors Rick Locke and Gabriel Bitran visited the company to understand its history, internal dynamics, and short- and long-term goals. They incorporated what they learned into a curriculum designed to meet the needs of Vale’s leaders and wrote a Vale-specific case study for use in the course.

With a strong emphasis on putting knowledge into practice, the custom curriculum comprises three major learning streams: strategic global thinking, results-based decision-making, and interpersonal leadership in a diverse environment. Vale managers build global perspectives, and the knowledge necessary to compete productively on an international scale. They learn customized frameworks to assess the impact of risks and decisions, and they learn to lead change and manage across cultures.

Bitran reports that Vale’s progress has been exciting for MIT Sloan faculty to track. “The program has energized the company and its managers, generating new ideas and a higher level of investment in the direction and future of the company. Senior executives are now advancing new projects with a sense of ownership and motivation.”

Dalpozzo agrees. “Our continuous investment in improving the company’s managers is yielding tangible results. Ninety percent of Vale’s management vacancies worldwide are being filled by internal candidates who have participated in the program.”

Vale is also reaping broader organizational benefits as a result of its ongoing, collaborative relationship with MIT Sloan. “This partnership generates increasing value over time,” says Dalpozzo. “The company and the school know and trust each other well. As a result, we have been able to adapt and reshape the program easily in response to emerging needs.”

This proved invaluable when Vale acquired Canadian-based global mining and metals company Inco in 2006. Dalpozzo needed a new management-training program in short order. He and his colleagues at MIT Sloan designed a revised model that focused less on internal transformation and more on integration of Inco’s top tier managers into Vale’s new global management culture.

Dalpozzo is confident that Vale and MIT Sloan are delivering on the company’s commitment to develop its managers into global strategists. The challenge going forward, he believes, is for MIT Sloan to continue to develop innovation models that will prepare the company for the next century. “As a natural resources company, we must take a very long view of what is to come. MIT’s culture of innovation is very important to us. We keep pushing them to innovate and, in return, we become a laboratory for new ideas. Together we are helping to create each other’s futures.”

“In MIT Sloan, we found great people—good friends—totally committed to our transformation. MIT people are committed to solving problems. We realized we could tap their exceptional resources to set up processes and systems essential to making us a world class corporation.”

Marco Dalpozzo
Human Resources and Organizational Development Director
Vale
IBM Mexico

Big Blue Thinks Even Bigger

Think. The iconic slogan of IBM founder Thomas J. Watson, Sr. has defined the company for nearly a century. IBM employees have earned five Nobel Prizes, and the company holds more patents than any other technology firm. This culture of innovation inspires IBM engineers and consultants in more than 170 countries. That includes Mexico, where company leaders have collaborated with MIT Sloan on yet another information advance—an executive program not for its own employees but for its customers.

The concept emerged from a philosophy promoted by both institutions—trust-based marketing. When you provide your customers with unbiased information, you build their trust. The leaders of IBM Mexico decided that the most valuable perk they could offer their best customers was late-breaking information that could have a real impact on the growth of their organizations.

So company staff sat down with MIT Sloan faculty and program designers to create a learning vehicle tailored to the specific challenges facing IBM Mexico’s customers. An adaptation of MIT Sloan’s highly-regarded executive education program *IT for the Non-IT Executive*, the custom program they devised is an intensive two-day session for 30-50 executives—in teams of three from each company. The program is held close to Mexico City for the convenience of IBM Mexico’s busy clients.

Now in its third year, this team-based experience provides an optimal opportunity for the CEO, CFO, and CIO of high-growth companies to convene and expand their thinking about IT. Specifically, they look at IT from a fresh perspective—not as a cost center, but as a strategic resource for profit and growth. With the benefit of MIT Sloan faculty who provide critical frameworks and deep expertise in the field, program participants become more aware of the strategic role that IT can play in the larger goals of their organizations.

Roberto Sanchez, Director of Marketing at IBM Mexico, says the dynamic of the participants makes this inventive program especially productive. “While it’s true that people learn through experience, at the end of the day, smart leaders also acknowledge that they should be reading more, learning from others, keeping their knowledge fresh,” Sanchez observes. “It can be intimidating to have to admit not knowing something, but in a positive environment, working with professors who clearly have access to...
“We have seen an immediate impact from this MIT Sloan custom program—stronger relationships with our customers as they achieve greater success. We are now looking at how this program might be adapted for our clients in other regions of Latin America.”

Roberto Sanchez
Director of Marketing
IBM Mexico

Sanchez notes that the custom program does not include a single plug for Big Blue. “IBM Mexico is not out to gain anything from this experience,” he notes, “except a better understanding of and relationship with our clients. And we want these executive teams to build stronger bonds with one another—a long-term takeaway.”

In the end, all parties are seeing the benefits. “We are being called earlier to look at projects because customers trust that we are doing everything we can to make them successful,” Sanchez says. “In the case of this custom program with MIT Sloan, we are providing them with vital information. When the program is over, they contact us because the experience sparked new ideas, and they’re excited to get started.”

Sanchez says that participating executives appreciate the power of the knowledge they take away from the program—even more so as they gain distance from it. “Our intention is to provide clients with valuable information and methodology. No strings attached. That’s quite clear to them. In fact, that is what makes the program work so well.”

Thomas Watson, Sr. would no doubt be pleased that IBM is, more than ever, inspiring its customers to think—bigger and better.
Serono
Preparing a Biotech Pacesetter to Lengthen its Lead

Geneva-based biotech powerhouse Serono (now Merck Serono) has a signature dynamism and an industry reputation as a pathfinder. But leaders quickly become followers in today’s hypercompetitive market unless they continually strive to innovate and to reach higher levels of excellence.

Serono decided that, to stay on top, it needed to reach outside its sphere. The company decided to work with two schools of management—MIT Sloan and Thunderbird/Garvin School of Management—to develop a custom program to prepare its high-achieving worldwide management to lead the company into a strong future.

According to Serge Panczuk, the company’s corporate HR director, Serono was disappointed in MBA-style programs because they failed to stimulate and challenge Serono’s high potential leaders. “We tried an off-the-shelf program,” Panczuk says, “and found it didn’t give us what we needed.”

Following a wide search of leading U.S. and European universities, Serono determined that MIT Sloan was one of the only institutions whose faculty has the industry experience to challenge Serono’s senior scientists on their own terms. According to Panczuk, many biotech scientists had difficulty relating to marketing before the program, but coming to MIT Sloan brought about an attitudinal sea change.

“Being taught by a world-class MIT Sloan marketing professor who is immersed in real scientific research was eye-opening,” says Panczuk. “Here was someone who could communicate with our senior scientists at their level and instruct them in methodologies and techniques they could use to take their work to a new level.”

In addition to instruction in state of the art business frameworks, speakers from the science and engineering faculty at MIT exposed the participants to leading edge research in fields directly related to Serono’s research activities. “The program connected Serono’s own scientists with the MIT science faculty,” explains MIT Sloan professor Duncan Simester, faculty director of the Serono custom program. “There are few other institutions that can bring a faculty of this caliber and breadth to a custom-profile-
“This program has become a think tank for our participants to step back from business as usual and develop a broader understanding of what’s going on in other areas of our organization and throughout the industry. Participants examine industry trends and brainstorm key objectives for the future direction of the company.”

Serge Panczuk
Corporate HR Director
Serono International

Serono’s Panczuk agrees. “MIT is famous within the biotech industry. For our senior scientists, attending MIT was like a child going to Disneyland. They were stimulated and challenged by being immersed in MIT’s research and educational environment.”

MIT Sloan faculty thrive on collaboration and were intrigued by the chance to integrate with faculty from Thunderbird and with Serono’s senior management team. Key executives and board members from Serono worked with participants to determine just how the frameworks developed in the program could be applied in the context of Serono’s own strategic plan.

The overall quality of the program has created a major incentive for talented and rising executives within Serono. “By exposing our top talent to the world-class instruction of this MIT Sloan custom program, we are demonstrating just how highly we value them,” says Panczuk. “We are giving our best people the tools to excel, to take the company to new levels of performance. This program helps us to retain and develop our best people. It has been a huge source of maturation for them.”

Panczuk adds that several of the program participants have been promoted, including four to VP positions at the highest levels within the company.
News Corporation
Upping the IT Quotient

The reach and influence of media titan News Corporation are unprecedented and growing. With business units as diverse as 20th Century Fox, The Times, MyNetworkTV, HarperCollins Publishers, Classic FM, National Geographic Channel, Inside Out magazine, Fox Interactive Media, and MySpace, the company communicates with 70% of the world’s population on a daily basis. And while the size and variety of News Corporations’ activities create tremendous opportunities, its far-flung and wide-ranging businesses also present enormous coordination and leadership development challenges.

To raise the game of its IT executives worldwide, News Corporations’ Dave Benson, Senior Vice President and CIO, found the perfect vehicle in MIT Sloan’s custom programs. “We initially went out to a private training consultant to help us develop the program,” Benson recalls. “We quickly realized, however, that this approach lacked the gravitas needed to be able to draw key personnel from units around the world.” At the recommendation of News Corporations’ head of HR, Benson turned to academia in search of the right partner.

Serendipitously, Benson had on his desk Peter Weill’s book IT Governance: How Top Performers Manage IT Decision Rights for Superior Results. Inspired by what he was reading, Benson contacted Weill, who is a Senior Research Scientist at MIT Sloan and the director of the School’s Center for Information Systems Research (CISR). Benson took Weill through News Corporations’ goals for the program: to develop the leadership skills of the participants, to enhance the ability of executives to run their IT operations like businesses, and to better align News Corporation’s IT activities with its diverse business units. “After incubating our vision for more than a year, we were very anxious to get the implementation right. Peter’s immediate reaction was ‘This is exactly in line with what we’re already doing.’”

Benson’s first meeting with the MIT Sloan team confirmed the fit. “Virtually every concern I’d been harboring for the last year went away. Reputation, content, logistics, cost—everything fell into place.”

The News Corporation custom program integrates MIT Sloan’s front-line research and expertise in finance, marketing, leadership development, and generating business value from IT. The tailored curriculum and one-on-one coaching give participants new skills, perspectives, and tools,
“The key to the success of this program is the combination of MIT Sloan’s reputation, a strong customized curriculum, outstanding faculty, and the ability to deliver it all without relieving people of their day jobs.”

Dave Benson
Senior Vice President and CIO
News Corporation

which, as a team, they apply to News Corporation projects during a two-month interterm between modules at MIT.

“The group projects are defined collaboratively among MIT Sloan faculty, staff, and News Corporation CIOs,” explains Benson. “This approach gives us several important benefits. The projects reinforce and build on the lessons learned in the classroom. The small group collaborations help to develop the person-to-person network within the company across multiple businesses and geographies. And, best of all, we get consulting support and ROI on News Corporation’s high priority internal IT projects.”

The results to date are impressive. One of the groups has proposed a framework for sharing internet development strategies across all News Corporation business units to reduce duplication of effort and enhance coordination. A second team developed a new internal communication mechanism that enables the company to deliver common messages to all News Corporation employees instantly.

According to Benson, the program is as successful with sponsoring CIOs as with the participants themselves. “Corporate has agreed to fund the program. The business units have agreed to share their best people. The participants say it’s the most rewarding professional development opportunity of their careers. What can we possibly do for an encore?”
Schlumberger
Building a Dialogue for Innovation

A legend in the oil field services sector, Schlumberger has built that renown on industry-leading technology and a deep expertise that allows the company to deliver maximum value to its customers.

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. In 2006 alone, Schlumberger’s R&D investment topped half a billion dollars US. 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.

“Our personnel have grown much more diverse over the last few decades, and our increasingly decentralized R&D operations regularly are 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 what is happening in the field to what happens in the lab on through to our business operations.” The search for that common language brought Schlumberger to MIT Sloan.

The solution began to take shape when a team of the company’s senior executives traveled to MIT to participate in Driving Strategic Innovation, one of MIT Sloan’s most popular executive education courses. The Schlumberger 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.

In consultation with Schlumberger executives, MIT Sloan faculty and staff designed a strategic custom program that features case studies developed from in-depth interviews with some of the company’s Houston-based employees. The program brings a broad spectrum of participants to the MIT campus from around the globe. A recent 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.
“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

The five-day intensive session creates an invigorating climate for brainstorming. Participants apply 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,” says 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 return 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.
BP

Fueling Performance Through Major Project Leadership

For the BP executives who lead major oil and gas projects all over the globe, challenges and opportunities exist on a dizzying scale. This global energy giant spends annually $15+ billion on capital projects in 19 countries. That’s more than the cost of “the Chunnel” from England to France or the 25-year price tag of Boston’s Big Dig.

In 2003, the stakes in these major capital projects led the company to partner with the MIT Sloan School of Management and the MIT School of Engineering to design and launch the revolutionary BP Projects Academy. A dynamic collaboration of 10 BP executives and over 25 MIT faculty, this pioneering program gives the company’s most experienced executives and its most talented leaders the resources they need to mitigate risk and maximize success.

The Projects Academy integrates a vast array of critical knowledge into one powerful, yearlong learning experience. MIT Sloan provides the management expertise, the MIT School of Engineering supplies the technical wisdom, and BP integrates essential context from the organization.

“We needed expertise in leadership, business acumen, and technical excellence,” reports BP’s Projects Academy director Jim Breson, “MIT brings to the table deep domain expertise in all three areas. Great thought leaders with rich industry experience who can communicate effectively with our participants. Their ongoing ties with industry give them a depth and breadth of research directly applicable to our goals.”

In this collaborative venture, BP has brought together more than 150 of its major project leaders to develop new insights, challenge existing practices, and improve the delivery of major capital projects. These executives explore managing complex projects and attaining technical excellence. They address issues of personal leadership, team building, contract negotiation and supply chain management, technological risk, financial systems, cultural and geographic challenges, and overall project management.

Less a curriculum of book learning than a carefully calibrated set of frameworks, concepts, and tools, the Projects Academy is real-world, real-time, for real-impact. Three two-week immersive learning sessions take place...
At the outset we were looking for a symbiotic relationship—a lively collaboration in which both parties benefit. And that’s exactly what we’ve found with MIT. The Projects Academy has enriched the MIT faculty and its teaching, and it has infused critical ideas and concepts inside BP. It has inspired us to share and work collaboratively and has given us a more enlightened approach on how to manage projects. When a partnership like this works — it really works.”

Jim Breson
Founding Director
Projects Academy
BP

on the MIT campus over twelve months. Throughout the year, participant teams tackle real initiatives, applying what they have learned to their own work. Peers from around the world do the analysis, share knowledge, and develop strategies to present as actionable recommendations to senior BP management. Their “assignment” is to help BP do a better job of major project management.

The Projects Academy has been recognized for its impact and was even featured in The Financial Times. But it’s not just the press coverage that has the executive suite celebrating, it’s the extraordinary results. In fact, BP recently honored the Projects Academy with its prestigious Helios “Best in Class” Partnership Award in recognition of the program’s “significant contribution to BP.”

“It’s been an extraordinarily successful program,” reports Breson. “Because of the degree of executive involvement, it has completely transformed within BP how we think about developing projects—and how we think about developing personnel.”