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, and Fox Interactive Media, the company communicates with 70% of the world’s population on a daily basis. And while the size and variety of News Corporation’s activities create tremendous opportunities, its far-reaching and wide-ranging businesses also present enormous coordination and leadership development challenges.

To raise the game of its IT executives worldwide, News Corporation’s Dave Benson, Senior Vice President and CIO, turned to MIT Sloan’s custom programs.

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 Corporation’s 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.”

Weill’s immediate reaction was that News Corporation’s needs “were exactly in line with what we’re already doing.”

The News Corporation custom program integrated 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 gave participants new skills, perspectives, and tools, which, as a team, they apply to News Corporation’s projects during a two month interim between modules at MIT.

“The group projects are defined collaboratively among MIT Sloan faculty, staff, and News Corporation CIOs,” explained 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."

**WHY MIT**

“We initially went out to a private
training consultant to help us
develop the program,” Benson
recalled. “We quickly realized,
however, that this approach
lacked the gravitas needed to
be able to draw key personnel
from units around the world.”

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 RESULT**

The results to date are impressive.
One of the groups 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 was successful with
sponsoring CIOs as well 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?”

**CHALLENGE**

Enhance the ability
of executives to run
their IT operations
like businesses

**SOLUTION**

A custom curriculum that
capitalizes on the research and
expertise at MIT Sloan’s Center
for Information Systems Research
(CISR)

**RESULT**

ROI within a crucial
sector that spans News
Corporation’s diverse
business units

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**“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

To inquire about developing a custom program for your organization, contact our custom programs team at:

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