3 BIG MYTHS ABOUT EARNING AN ONLINE EXECUTIVE MBA

Dan Besecker
Executive MBA Candidate 2012
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INTRODUCTION

We know you have questions about earning an online Executive MBA. Is it worth the money? Is it worth the time? Will it disrupt my work-life balance? Does it hold up to traditional learning? And, most importantly, will it give me an edge in today’s ultra-competitive market?

There are a myriad of issues to contemplate as you think about earning your degree – especially online.

Indeed, we’ve found that many of our potential students at the Jack Welch Management Institute raise some excellent questions – as well as some misconceptions – about the online education experience as a part of their discovery process. By debunking three prevailing myths about online degrees, we’ll help you cut through the noise and figure out whether an online program is right for you.

Melissa Bucher
Executive MBA Candidate 2012
Sales Engineer
Eaton Corporation
MYTH 1
AN ONLINE EXECUTIVE MBA JUST ISN’T AS GOOD AS A CAMPUS-BASED EDUCATION.
Almost all of us grew up in school with the teacher at the front of the classroom and the students assembled in rows, looking on, taking notes. Most of us attended college in such a traditional setting as well.

Perhaps that’s why online education, even with its appealing levels of flexibility and excellent value, can give some of us a moment of pause. “Can real learning take place in virtual space?” we wonder.

The fact is, online education may have been uncharted territory ten years ago. But since then, it has really advanced in terms of both quality and widespread acceptability. A recent annual report by the Sloan Consortium shows that growth in online higher education continues to vastly outpace growth in the higher education student population as a whole – and shows no signs of slowing. If current trends continue, online learning enrollment could actually surpass enrollment in traditional on-ground programs in the near future – particularly in fields like business.

Of course, online learning is not just becoming more prevalent; in many cases, it’s also eclipsing the effectiveness of the traditional classroom model. A landmark study published by the federal Department of Education in 2010 found that students who were instructed online actually performed better, on the whole, than those taking the same courses in a face-to-face, on-ground classroom.

The reason likely lies in today’s cutting-edge technology, which creates a learning environment that might surprise you – characterized by immediacy, robust interaction, and rich camaraderie among classmates and between students and professors. Jack Welch Management Institute students, for instance, debate with classmates on discussion boards every day, collaborate on team projects and have the opportunity to network with other students to build strong, lifelong relationships. They find the course instructors always front-and-center, eager to engage. In fact, many of our students report that they were originally attracted to our curriculum and the program’s incredible flexibility, yet have come to find that the meaningful individual attention afforded to them in the virtual classroom actually surpasses what they have experienced in a campus-based setting.

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“A 2010 Executive MBA Council study showed that students increased their salary an average of 11.4% from what they were earning at the start of their Executive MBA program to the completion of it.

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Source: Executive MBA Council (http://www.emba.org/research_corp_roi.htm)

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“Ken Hughes
IT Manager
Able Engineering & Component Services

As a result of exposing our managers to the Jack Welch Management Institute and Jack’s philosophy and business practices, for the first time ever this year, every single part of our organization is moving in the right direction at the same time.”

- Lee Benson
CEO
Able Engineering and Able Aerospace

“I found the online program really engaging with a lot of activity on the discussion boards. My classmates and the professors share their real world knowledge from the variety of industries they come from.”

- Susmitha Kantheti, Executive MBA Candidate 2013
Product Manager
LexisNexis
MYTH 2
IT’S IMPOSSIBLE TO HAVE A LIFE IF YOU GET A MBA WHILE WORKING FULL TIME.
Already in a balancing act between expanding careers and full lives, spouses, kids, and countless other commitments, many would-be college students ask themselves, “How in the world will I fit it all in? Is it really possible to be a student, a top performer at work, and still achieve some semblance of work-life balance?” An undergraduate or graduate degree just seems like one more impossible teacup to juggle. Not only is it possible, it happens all the time. Top performers are top performers for a reason. They’re usually talented, smart, productive, and most of all: driven. They have successful lives outside work too, filled with family, volunteering, and hobbies – even while they’re attending school. They’ve figured out what they want and how to make it all happen. Of course, in an economy as staunchly competitive as ours, it’s easy to feel overwhelmed by conflicting demands. We can feel pulled in too many directions at once – and held captive by technology. Yet feeling swamped is really just what occurs when you don’t face what “work-life balance” actually comes down to, which is making choices and living with their consequences.

In fact, we believe that the term “work-life balance” should be replaced with “work-life choices.” Balance itself is a myth. There’s no one right, one-size fits all ratio for work, school, and the rest of life. There are simply personal choices and tradeoffs based on what feels right, given what you want from life, personally and professionally. So, yes, it is completely feasible to be a top performer, a college student and achieve work-life balance – as long as you truly believe in making your career – and the education that will bolster it – a real priority.

And indeed, the online format makes such “balance” a whole lot easier. The beauty of an online degree program, especially for busy working people who are constantly on the go, is its broad scheduling flexibility. At the Jack Welch Management Institute, our online students often tell us how much they value the convenience of being able to fit coursework into their free pockets of time and not having to commute to a campus. They also enjoy the fact that class discussions are largely asynchronous, meaning they don’t have to be logged into the virtual classroom at the same time as students in other time zones.

A 2010 study showed that 68% Executive MBA students gained new responsibilities while they were still in school - and 37% received a promotion.

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Source: Executive MBA Council (http://www.emba.org/research_corp_roi.htm)

All the flexibility in the format doesn’t mean an online degree program is easy, however. At the Jack Welch Management Institute, the curriculum is actually quite intensive. It’s simply not for people who don’t know how to manage their time well. Yet the fact is, most students at the Jack Welch Management Institute work full-time and are experts at balancing work and life. They understand how to squeeze the most out of a 24-hour day. Ultimately, we’ve found that our students’ own boundless energy and talent actually tend to help them forge meaningful lives outside of school, too — often with just the balance they want.

“There are a lot of different MBA programs out there. At the Jack Welch Management Institute, I felt very strongly that the Jack Welch brand was a differentiator.”
- Paul Danek, Executive MBA 2011
Management Consultant
Accenture

“I would recommend the Jack Welch Management Institute to anyone. Jack’s a great leader, and he’s taking his experiences as a CEO and applying them to the Institute.”
- Melissa Bucher, Executive MBA Candidate 2012
Sales Engineer
Eaton Corporation
AN EXECUTIVE MBA IS JUST AN EXPENSIVE PIECE OF PAPER. IT DOESN’T MATTER IN THE REAL WORLD.
Hands-down, one of the biggest obstacles conventionally associated with earning a degree is cost. For instance, according to Forbes, the average cost of earning an MBA at a traditional on ground school is upwards of $100,000. Students at the Jack Welch Management Institute pay less than 1/3 of that cost for their Executive MBA program. Not to mention, many applicants are eligible for financial aid, grants, graduate scholarships, or corporate tuition dollars to help finance their degrees, putting the program well within reach.

But regardless of the exact price tag, the question of whether to go back to school, for most people, comes down to one simple cost/benefit equation:

What’s the return on my education? Will the results be tangible? Is it worth it?

Certainly in our view, there has never been a better time to earn your degree. The past several years have been very tough sledding for everyone. The bottom line? In the post-recession world, outstanding performance is the best (if not the only) tool for career security and advancement.

That’s precisely why the academic programs developed at the Jack Welch Management Institute are specifically designed to make an immediate impact in how you perform on the job. In fact, 88% of our students tell us that The Jack Welch Management Institute is having a substantial impact on meeting their professional goals. Our curriculum is about solving real-world issues with real-world practices. The concepts taught are meant to expand mindsets and broaden perspectives, turn employees into managers - managers into leaders - and directly drive results.

**100% of Jack Welch alumni surveyed report that their Executive MBA will help further their life and career goals.**

So, we know that continuing your education is an investment worth making. To us, a degree isn’t merely a piece of paper – it’s one of the best career-enhancing dream-following tools out there. Our alumni report that their organizations recognize their degrees, and reward them with promotions and greater job responsibilities. Our alumni are proving that they, too, can successfully lead. Hear from JWMI alumni: JWMI Student Voices

It is, of course, never easy adding another “task” to your busy life. Yet, earning your degree isn’t really a task anymore. In today’s world, it’s an opportunity to invest in your future and set yourself apart. The true ROI of a degree then, is your own performance. It’s your ability to act faster, think smarter, and help your company win.

You’ll discover that throughout your career, there’s ultimately no bigger payoff than that.

Certainly in our view, there has never been a better time to earn your degree. The past several years have been very tough sledding for everyone. The bottom line? In the post-recession world, outstanding performance is the best (if not the only) tool for career security and advancement.

**“Having access to Jack Welch completely changed my thoughts on e-learning. Jack was actively engaged in the program and we were able to ask day-to-day business or course related questions and received answers straight from Jack himself. It felt like a candid discussion with the CEO of the Century.”**

- **Ken Hughes**
  IT Manager
  Able Engineering & Component Services

**“The Jack Welch Management Institute is all about developing leaders, and there’s no better person to do that than Jack Welch.”**

- **Dan Besecker**, Executive MBA Candidate 2012
  Senior Systems Engineer
  CSC

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE JACK WELCH MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE RIGHT NOW, CALL 1.855.596.5964 OR VISIT WWW.JWMI.COM