

Opportunities for Enlargement

Ten mainly Eastern European countries joined the European Union (EU) in 2004, with two more following suit in 2007. This enlarged single market offers companies new business opportunities, but its new members are far from homogeneous. When a leading pharmaceutical company wanted to learn more about their needs, attitudes and behaviors, IESE's Custom Program team came up with an innovative solution.



Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Slovakia, Malta, Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were the 10 countries that joined the EU in May 2004 in a "big-bang" round of expansion. Bulgaria and Romania entered the economic and political union in January 2007, completing the "fifth enlargement" in the EU's history.

For one global pharmaceutical company operating in Eastern Europe, enhancing the knowledge and skills of its clients in the region - such as officials at health ministries and hospital administrators - was identified as key for continued growth.

Specifically, the company needed to find a way to help clients reduce their costs through new budget and organizational management approaches, before simply pushing for price cuts.

The classroom was identified as an ideal environment for achieving this. As a result, the custom program "Perspectives of the Future of Health Care," was offered at the school's Barcelona campus on Nov. 10-12, 2008.

Organized by IESE's International Executive Education team and led by the school's faculty, the program brought together some 30 senior decision-makers in Eastern European health care markets. They included general managers of hospitals and senior officials from health ministries. Participants represented a range of countries including Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine.

IESE Profs. Alfredo Pastor, Mike Rosenberg, Núria Mas, Jaume Ribera and

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Paddy Miller led sessions on industry-specific topics such as pharma supply chains and healthcare economics. The program also encompassed sessions on global topics such as the outlook for the world economy and leadership.

Both the "macro" and the "micro" themes had a tight focus on educating the pharmaceutical company's stakeholders on how best to manage their hospitals, health ministries or departments. For example, the leadership sessions developed participants' awareness of different management styles and provided change management tools.

Prof. Mas, the program's academic director, said, "The program was an excellent opportunity for participants to step back and think about the challenges facing their organizations, and perhaps re-evaluate their ways of thinking and behaving in the face of uncertainties and future trends."

As well as interaction with faculty, teamwork and networking opportunities were important aspects of the program. The three-day seminar included a case study focused on the health care sector, requiring work in small teams. Social activities were included to build relationships among members of the group.

Following the program, representatives of the sponsoring firm made follow-up calls to participants for feedback on the learning experience, with their communication now informed with fresh insights on their clients' attitudes, behaviors and expectations, gleaned in the seminar.

Based on the success of the program, the company has decided to sponsor

another edition in 2009, in collaboration with other companies and NGOs. The next program offering is expected to include a larger participant group, with the focus expanded to Western Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

The custom program delivered for the participants, too. "I liked the structure of the program, as it has some academic parts, but also practical parts – so it was equally structured. I think the program is of perfect length and intensity," one participant said. Another commented, "I found the interactive methods used by the professors extremely useful to keep us 100 percent involved in the case solving and to learn the lessons we needed."

IESE professors' highly interactive teaching methods were an important aspect of the program's popularity: participants invested in the learning process, rather than listening to a speaker talk ex cathedra in a traditional conference. On top of that, participants appreciated the opportunity to attend a program in a world-class business school rather than in a conference facility.

Carlos Hornstein, associate director of IESE's International Executive Education team explained the program's success: "In increasingly diverse markets where a company's stakeholders are constantly being bombarded with communications, this custom program 'cut through the static' and delivered the message to those that counted, while providing them with the tools to improve their management skills."

Results-oriented programs

The programs are results-oriented. They provide hands-on, applicable knowledge challenging you to consider strategy and operations and the markets in which you compete in radically different ways.

Leading partner institutions

For these special programs, we are able to draw on the expertise of leading partner institutions. These include Harvard Business School, Stanford and the University of Michigan Business School. We have run company specific programs together with Harvard, Wharton and the University of Michigan. Our unique, joint-venture approach to custom programs affords you the best of U.S. and European thinking on relevant business issues.

Teaching methodology

IESE's company specific programs are highly dynamic and interactive. The methods used include case studies, simulations, class discussions, presentations, small-group learning activities and break-out sessions. Case studies normally form the centerpiece of the programs. They engage faculty and clients in an interactive process of analysis of business issues and in-depth discussion to facilitate problem-solving and enhance decision-making skills.

Business cases about your company

If your company requests it, a member of the program faculty will write a case of specific relevance to the organization, in consultation with you and your colleagues.

Program management

Our experienced team of Executive Education managers will assure that all matters pertaining to program management and logistics are carried out to your satisfaction.

Venue

Most programs take place at IESE's campus in Barcelona. We have, however, held programs at our campus in Madrid, and others in China, Africa, the United States and Latin America.

Contact

To learn more about IESE's international company specific programs, please contact:

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