



Discussion Notes: Employer and MBA Faculty Breakfast, May 19, 2017

Attendees: Please See Attached.

The meeting began with a brief introduction by Dr. Inniss and Dr. Ellis. To break the ice with other participants they started with an activity where each person was given a date and asked to talk about the significance of that date to them.

Responses:

- Brought about a feeling of nostalgia
- For some they were barely in elementary school
- For others the dates brought back memories of the changes in technology which prompted conversations on how technology has changed over the years
- All agreed that this activity got personal real fast

The significance of this activity, especially after the comment that it got personal real fast, was to help set a tone among participants about what we expect and what we want so that we could accomplish our objectives for the day. The objective being to open a dialogue between employers and MBA faculty about what employers want to see in employees' (Students) knowledge, skills and abilities.

Dr. Inniss made a comparison to community partnerships which was that if you work in silos the output could have defects, but that if you partner you can catch those defects earlier in the collaboration and have a better output

Facilitation Process:

1. What do you think about a MBA grad? (One-word Association)
 - a. Arrogant
 - b. Brilliant
 - c. Applied Knowledge
 - d. Strategic
 - e. Practiced
 - f. Quantitative
 - g. Energetic
 - h. Ambitions
 - i. Leader
 - j. Analytical
 - k. Methodical
 - l. Enthusiastic
 - m. International
 - n. Collaborative
 - o. Enterprise

*One employer mentioned that you can find all these qualities in undergraduate students as well.

2. Tell me about a time when you felt excited to work with an MBA grad.
 - a. Having students as external consultants brought a different experience to the work environment
 - b. MBAs hit the ground running and have a different level of thinking
 - c. They're able to integrate faster and have more experience based on their previous work experience
 - d. Look at their first job as an extension of their learning process and they want to know the business from top to bottom
3. Tell me about a time when you felt frustrated working with an MBA grad.
 - a. They have expectations that they will be running the company in 2 years (goes in-hand with the one-word association of arrogant)
 - b. They leave the company quickly
 - c. They take shortcuts or are overly efficient
 - d. Have unrealistic salary expectations
 - e. Very good with textbook theory, but not able to apply to real-life
4. What challenges do you think our region faces that places significance on leadership and employees?
 - a. Rebranding the image of the Sacramento area
 - b. Reputation (the city doesn't have the best rep in terms of talent/ jobs)
 - c. Transportation
 - d. Very few large corporations (difficulty with the ability to attract employees because small-medium size companies are not the Intels and HPEs that graduates often want to work for. We should set expectations that students are not going to get a big corporation job here)
 - e. Potential for government to be part of the incubation process that is unfolding
 - f. Aligning our graduates with the jobs our region is producing (i.e. Biotech firms are coming to the region so we should pursue greenfield ranchers)
 - g. Ethics (value-based approach)
 - h. Reading, writing, arithmetic skills of incoming students

Sticky Wall Facilitation: Tables were asked 'What competencies do employers want from MBA grads?' and to write the competencies on half sheets of paper in less than 5-7 words. The results ended in the following thematic descriptions:

EMPLOYER AND MBA FACULTY BREAKFAST—MAY 19, 2017

MBA COMPETENCIES

| EFFECTIVE ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATION SKILLS | ORGANIZATIONAL INFLUENCE AND LEADERSHIP (OIL) | TEAM DYNAMICS | SELF-AWARENESS | TECH SKILLS (DATA AND QUANTITATIVE) | ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET/ SPIRIT | BUSINESS ACUMEN |
|---|--|--|---|---|--|---|
| <p>strong written and verbal communication skills</p> <p>excellent oral and written skills</p> <p>communication skills (writing and disc. and interpersonal)</p> <p>effective written and verbal communication</p> <p>listening to help design/ build rapport</p> | <p>influence</p> <p>decisiveness</p> <p>influencing</p> <p>awareness of people-management [in]experience</p> <p>navigate organizational influence</p> <p>organization culture and navigating relationships</p> <p>accountability</p> | <p>collaboration skills (with diverse groups)</p> <p>relationship building-emotional building</p> <p>team player: collaborative, holistic, seek to understand, enabling others to do best work</p> <p>effective team player</p> <p>take and give constructive feedback</p> <p>network skills</p> <p>listening and communicating (oral and written)</p> | <p>humility: self-awareness, emotional intelligence, open-minded, respectful</p> <p>willingness to learn</p> <p>empathy (putting yourself in others' shoes)</p> <p>ability to learn and teach</p> | <p>enterprise software competency</p> <p>data analytics (Excel, stats, online)</p> <p>comfort with cutting edge technology</p> <p>synthesizing large data sets to drive decisions</p> <p>strong stats foundation</p> <p>Excel ninja</p> <p>quantitative/ data skills (job specific)</p> <p>online fluency</p> | <p>entrepreneurial spirit—creativity</p> <p>being able to move from analytical to critical thinking</p> <p>can deal with ambiguity</p> <p>idea practitioner</p> <p>bigger picture</p> <p>innovation: customer centric, gap analysis, problem solving, taking risks, 360 degree views</p> <p>dealing with ambiguity (no right answer)</p> <p>transference of knowledge from</p> | <p>stakeholder management</p> <p>logical thinking skills</p> <p>micro/ macro business acumen</p> <p>project management skills</p> <p>systems awareness</p> <p>integrated business case development</p> <p>better fit to role need</p> <p>strong analytical skills</p> <p>problem solving</p> <p>critical thinking</p> |

5. What makes you excited about these competencies?
 - a. National Association for Colleges and Employers have similar if not the same competencies. (See document distributed from Glen Fowler)
6. One of our MBA Faculty members (Jerry Estenson) asked employers the following question: Should we be developing strategic leaders or technical ability?
 - a. Most employers agreed that we should be developing strategic leaders willing to earn their skill set/ stripes.
7. What did we leave out of the sticky wall?
 - a. Global perspective
 - b. Implementation plan with measurements and metrics
 - c. Food for thought: How do you become a better consumer of data?
8. What did we learn?
 - a. Sac State is willing to listen to employers, but will we implement?
 - b. Faculty felt justified in leaving cases ambiguous because that's what students will face in the real world- Glen Fowler from the California State Auditor mentioned that they do case study interviewing and will tell applicants that their solution and been already tried in the field what others ideas do they have to solve a problem
 - c. A suggestion from Samer Batarseh of Intel and part-time faculty- Make the competencies part of the course objectives in the syllabus may be the fastest way to implement this feedback
 - d. On the employer side to use these competencies as part of the hiring process and creating an on-going evaluation process that assess whether students have acquired these skills
 - e. Suggestion from employer: have students evaluate themselves and each other on these competencies when they complete a group project
 - f. Glen offered to host a case study workshop for CBA faculty
 - g. Focus on next steps for the implementation process
 - h. We were able to come to a consensus in less than an hour, impressive to Dr. Inniss
 - i. To hire Dr. Inniss for facilitation visit www.kocigroup.com