



# BUILD AND STRUCTURE YOUR EXECUTIVE MBA CASE FOR SPONSORSHIP

## DESIGN A PERSUASIVE ARGUMENT TO NEGOTIATE SUPPORT FROM YOUR ORGANIZATION

You will always be the best judge of how the different components of the IMD Executive MBA program meet the needs of your organization. Your challenge is to:

1. Show the value and benefits of the IMD Executive MBA to your organization, your unit, your department, your team and to yourself. See the IMD Sponsor's Guide document for details.
2. Make a clear statement of what the commitment will be (financial and non-financial) from your workplace. See the IMD Executive MBA brochure for dates and time requirements. Contact a program advisor at [info@imd.org](mailto:info@imd.org) or +41 (21) 618 0700 for more details.
3. Where there is an existing process within your organization to gain nomination or apply for support for your development, make sure you are fully aware of the process, who manages this, and what critical deadlines are involved to ensure that you will be a competitive candidate. You may need to go through an internal application process first, or may only be allowed to apply once you are assured of your place in the EMBA program.

## CREATING A CASE

A case requires you to be structured and to be relevant to your audience. The objective is to give the audience the information needed to be able to make a decision.

Who is your audience? The most usual combination of stakeholders will include your line manager, department head and HR manager. As you write your case, check on assumptions. How much does your audience know about the MBA world? What do they understand about Executive MBA formats?

You will have spent time analyzing and reviewing many business schools and programs. Ensure that you give enough information. If the knowledge level is low, the best place for detailed appendices, course descriptions, ranking information etc., is in a supplementary appendix.

# STRUCTURE YOUR CASE

There is no one single way of doing this, but we suggest below one straightforward way of structuring your case:

## SECTION 1: THE BUSINESS NEED

Briefly outline key challenges, changes and predicted trends in your sector and workplace.

This does not have to be detailed – but does need to be relevant. How does this translate to the goals of your unit, department, team and your own role and personal career objective? Successful business case studies have been phrased in general terms or been highly specific. You need to know where to “pitch” this in your organization.

For example:

- a. Failed understanding of company valuation process and investor relationships.
- b. Entering new markets and territories.
- c. Changes in regulatory environment.
- d. Make informed decision making utilizing tools and frameworks.
- e. Maintain, sustain or growth of position.
- f. Build upon technical expertise to lead teams as a general manager.
- g. Developing human capital to a culture of innovation.
- h. Obtain a market perspective on where our company stands within our sector.

## RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Establish how your increased contribution will be measured both during and after the program at the level of getting and applying new skills and knowledge, and what the expected results would be at an organizational and/or personal level.

The IMD Executive MBA benefits for the company:

1. Retain and build skills and confidence in high-potential people
2. Reap immediate benefits from company-related projects
3. Maximize learning impact by integrating work and study
4. Coordinate business demands around flexible program timing

## SECTION 2: ANALYSIS

Support your choice by identifying the components of the IMD Executive MBA that are particularly relevant to your organization’s needs.

Whilst it is tempting to show the entire program, it is likely that out of the business needs, there will be two, perhaps three areas that are particularly important or relevant to your case. They may also reflect your own business role and goals. As before, you have the option to be specific or general.

For example:

Program feature:	Return on investment:
Discovery Expeditions to India, Silicon Valley, China	
Diverse, experienced and international participants	
Business skills development and implementation	
Decision making and risk analysis	
Leadership skills development and coaching	

## RECOMMENDATION

At this point, you will have:

1. Shown the business need
2. Provided the analysis of program choice to resolve meeting the need.

Now you come to the recommendation of why you are a suitable candidate for support to the EMBA program. Even though this is about your case for support, you will still need to ensure that you highlight the aspects of your personal development that are most important in the context of the business need and your career development plans.

For example, general recommendations:

*“There is a clear business trend in the marketplace to value the qualification of an EMBA. This can be seen in the increasing desire of companies to employ and develop people with all-round business knowledge in addition to their technical expertise. Our company is no different as it is important for managers to be far more than specialists in their own fields – we need business managers as opposed to managers of business functions.”*

*“I believe that it is the right time to undertake an EMBA program because I do not wish to be restricted to technical management positions and the program will increase my opportunities to enter the more commercial side of the business. Although I have the necessary industry experience and knowledge, I cannot progress to more senior positions without the commercial and marketing skills acquired through an EMBA. The EMBA will equip me to have the transferable skills to handle project management in any fields, and work at a strategic level anywhere within our organization.”*

For example, specific recommendations:

*“As a manager/executive in X department, I am tasked with delivering on ...”*

*“I have demonstrated experience, skills and strengths in ...”*

*“I have achieved ...”*

*“This is a solid grounding on which to develop my skills and knowledge of ....”*

*“I have had the benefit of attending courses in (example) with the following outcomes...”*

If your workplace already offers significant development opportunities through various courses, you will need to clarify why the IMD Executive MBA is preferable to taking a number of short non-degree courses in specific subjects, attending a corporate university or doing an E/MBA with another recognized school. If you have already benefited from such courses, you will want to show clearly how you have translated the learning and experience into tangible results in your current role.

## SECTION 3: SUPPORT REQUEST

Whilst there are varying levels of commitment, to gain the most value in the IMD Executive MBA, there is a strong need for support in three key areas: project work, financial support, and time.

### PROJECT WORK

The IMD Executive MBA includes five company-specific assignments on marketing, finance, strategy, organizational design, sustainability. These assignments let you look in-depth at your particular business – in a way that is valuable for your company and for you and your career. Based in your office, you work at a distance with your classmates and with IMD, completing individual assignments that use your company as the “laboratory”.

Ideas, examples and materials are exchanged across time and geographies. You build on theory and ideas from classroom sessions and discovery expeditions by applying these learnings in your company. We provide the context, frameworks and expectations for the assignments; you decide how to best position them for maximum impact.

We direct your efforts and give you the tools and resources you need to:

- Gather knowledge from customers, bringing new insights into the organization
- Build financial analysis skills, interpreting how strategy impacts financial health
- Design interfaces to integrate units with different organizational designs into a cohesive whole
- Scan the competitive landscape and create a strategy for getting ahead of the competition
- Evaluate the effectiveness of sustainability initiatives and assess opportunities to become more competitive while acting responsibly
- Evaluate execution capabilities and develop an implementation plan

An estimated 12-15 hours per weeks are generally recommended. How you will manage your time and resources to complete these assignments is flexible.

### FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Please see the website for the current tuition fee and details of what is covered by the fees. You can show the financial request within the case, or in an appendix attached to the case. Be realistic about the costs. You may also highlight the additional funds required for accommodation or for travel.

Prepare different funding options so you have a “package” to request. Outside of 100% funding, participants on recent intakes have also been financially supported in a variety of ways including: matching funding, percentage splits, reduced hours, tuition reimbursement at key stages or after successful completion and bonus payments.

If you are paying part of the tuition yourself, we offer a staged payment schedule to spread your payments over the program. Please contact an IMD program advisor to discuss this schedule.

### TIME

In the business case, you will need to show how you will manage the time out of the office, and what you will do to minimize the impact on your team or clients. Allow time off to complete studies, but also to be aware that assignment deadlines may conflict with business needs. Indicate clearly in your request the extent of the time required, and how much of your personal time (agreed study days, unpaid leave, vacation, lieu time) for this. It may be helpful to put the detailed schedules into an appendix and to give a short table within the business case showing the requirements for the IMD Executive MBA.

## YOUR COMMITMENT

Your statement of commitment is critical and should show your commitment to both your organization as well as being a successful participant on the program. There are a variety of ways of demonstrating this commitment and agreements will most typically encompass lock-in periods, reimbursement of tuition and other costs (whole or percentage) if you leave during or within a specified period after the program.

For example:

*"I am willing to commit to the time and dedication needed to complete the program and to undertake specific company projects. The projects undertaken can be discussed with senior managers and can be tailored to reflect strategic areas currently needing analysis in the business."*

*"I would be willing to accept an addendum to my contract specifying a period of work after successful completion of the EMBA, or undertaking to refund the costs of the program if I should leave immediately after the program is completed."*

This commitment ensures that you take responsibility for your learning, and "repay" the investment that will have been made in you. Companies that want to develop and retain their top talent will actively create opportunities and planned career transitions for their top management pools, both during and after completing the program. It is important to start this dialogue as soon as feasible.

## SECTION 4: APPENDICES

In this section you may include timetables for the program and other relevant attachments and details like (for example, a class profile).

### HOW CAN IMD SUPPORT MY APPLICATION PROCESS?

Our Program Advisors should be your first point of contact for any questions relating to the program. They will be able to assist you with your application, put you in touch with the EMBA program managers or EMBA alumni in your region.

We wish you every success in your application and proposal.



If you have any questions, please contact  
an IMD Program Advisor at +41 21 618 07 00 or at [info@imd.org](mailto:info@imd.org)