

Preparing Business Graduates for Success in a Global World: The SAP Experience

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Abstract

The velocity and trajectory of the changes that have occurred in the contemporary business world in recent years is nothing less than remarkable. These macro changes and the corresponding strategies of business entities seeking to gain and sustain a competitive advantage represent a formidable challenge to business schools around the world and to their professors who, just like their corporate world counterparts, seek to continually reinvent themselves in the interest of ensuring that their graduates are prepared to succeed throughout their business careers.

Many changing paradigms have been identified and influenced curriculum revision initiatives within business schools. These have included the shifts from national to global markets and from domestic to international operations. Changing laws and regulations have likewise facilitated and encouraged organizations to pursue appropriate strategic opportunities around the world. Advances in technology have obviously opened many doors in terms of the successful pursuit of global opportunities.

These issues, in addition to others that are on the radar screen now and those that will appear in the future, present intriguing challenges to the business school faculties whose responsibility is to equip the graduates of their academic programs with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and confidence to chart the course of success for the organizations that they are entrusted with the opportunity to manage and lead, as well as that of their own professional careers.

To respond to the increasing demand for technically literate business professionals, many business schools have started to think about or have begun to incorporate popular enterprise systems (ES) software such as SAP into their curriculum. The paper describes an attempt of incorporating SAP into undergraduate Operations Management courses. The course design, delivery, and outcomes will be provided and the issues and suggestions will be discussed. The course is "business-centric" rather than technology oriented and contains two streams: a management component and a hands-on laboratory component.