

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Driving Positive Societal Change: Understanding the Evolving Needs of Learners

AACSB and PRME (Principles for Responsible Management Education) developed a webinar series that brings together a community of leaders committed to creating positive societal impact and action.

Webinar date: April 20, 2022

Moderator: Mette Morsing, Head, PRME, UN Global Compact

PANELISTS:

- Bill Drayton, Founder and CEO of Ashoka: Innovators for the Public
- Robyn Fehrman, President and CEO, Enactus
- Roy Mathew, Partner, National Higher Education, Deloitte
- Sofia Martinez Grijalva, Student, PGS Regional Leader—Latin America, Centro de Enseñanza Técnica y Superior
- Yang (Marco) Li, Student, PGS Regional Leader—Southeast Asia, Peking University

TOPICS:

- Learner needs related to creating positive societal impact
- The business school's role in preparing learners for the future
- Adapting business school curricula to reflect evolving business needs

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

The business world changes at a rapid pace, and business schools must adapt in sync with it.

- We are operating in an evolving strategic environment—one that is fluid, open, and integrated—creating new calls for leadership and organizational management. The role of business schools should be to guide organizations as they transition to this new environment and to prepare learners to be changemakers that create solutions to society's challenges.
- Businesses are experiencing accelerated change, yet they continue to serve only 60 percent of the population, excluding the remaining 40 percent in their decision-making.



“ At the level of the individual, if you have not mastered the quite sophisticated skills required to be able to be a contributor in this game, you are not going to have a life. ”

—Bill Drayton

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WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

An increasing priority for learners choosing a business school is alignment of their values with the school's.

- Learners expect transparency from schools when it comes to understanding the commitment—and level of engagement—needing to create positive societal impact.
- Learners must be brave enough to ask for what they want in a business school and, once enrolled, advocate for the changes they want to see.
 - In turn, business schools should nurture open dialog with their students to gain insight and identify best practices that can lead to change.
- A key challenge for learners is balancing their passions for creating a better world with their desires for a stable, financially rewarding career, particularly in uncertain times.



“ We are in a very different changing world... So guidance [is] what students need most from business schools. ”

—Sofia Martinez Grivalja



“ If I go to an internet company, and have a project that might harm the environment, what should I do? ... If I choose the project, maybe I lose my passion; if I follow my passion, I may lose my job. ”

—Yang (Marco) Li



Over half of survey respondents believe that creating experiential learning opportunities focused on creating positive societal impact is the single best way business schools can support business leaders in their societal impact efforts.*

*Data based on responses from webinar registrants and participants, April 2022.

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WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

Upskilling must become an integral part of the business school curriculum to keep graduates competitive.

- Employers are seeking graduates with domain expertise, people skills, and the ability to reskill and upskill—the latter of which remains a challenge for many business school graduates.
- Skill needs are now changing every six to 12 months! Business schools need to engage in regular dialog with employers and continually innovate their learning experiences to remain relevant and competitive.
- Complex issues such as artificial intelligence, automation, social justice, and sustainability are becoming priorities across industries. Companies struggle to recruit the talent needed to operate in such an unprecedented environment, creating opportunities for business schools to fill those gaps.



“We are not hiring people to do the same thing 30 times for the next 30 years; they’re probably going to do 15 different jobs in the next 30 years. If you do not have the ability to learn, relearn, reskill, and upskill, you are at a significant disadvantage in today’s world.”

—Roy Mathew



The single biggest challenge facing survey respondents' organizations related to societal impact is gaining faculty support for integrating/focusing on positive societal impact in their teaching, research, and outreach efforts.*

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WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

For business schools to remain relevant, they must strive to embed current business needs into the learner experience.

- Developing changemakers starts early. Business schools should consider engaging with high schools to encourage future applicants to pursue business as a career that can create positive societal change.
- Global organizations are continually transforming in response to major societal shifts, and business schools play an important role in preparing—and reskilling—leaders to be competitive in this new environment.
- Business schools should teach future leaders that the success of a business ultimately is measured by its impact on society and the stakeholders it serves.
- Educators must ensure that learners are exposed to collaborations with a diverse set of stakeholders, capable of applying their learnings to real-world situations, and able to solidify their own values and mindsets related to societal impact.

The **three** most desirable skills for societal impact learners:
**sustainability,
cultural
awareness, and
climate action.***

*Data based on responses from webinar registrants and participants, April 2022.