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GLOBAL BUSINESS SCHOOL

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No Bachelor's, No Problem!
There's more than one way to an MBA

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There's more than one way to an MBA

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The Financial Times, in a recent article headlined: "No degree, no problem as MBA courses diversify" argues that there has been a major shift in the way business and universities value what is learned in the real world. "Many prestigious schools will accept students who have not gained a first degree". But can, and should, students with no bachelor's degree be admitted into prestigious MBA programs?

Consider the following:



IVY LEAGUE UNIVERSITIES REJECT BILL GATES ADMISSION FOR MBA!

Well, to be honest, Gates never actually applied for an MBA. But if he did, he would in fact be rejected by American universities. It might sound ironic that industry titans like Gates, or for that matter, Zuckerberg, Branson, Dell, Ellison... are invited to address MBA students at elite universities, but would be denied entry into these same programs.

THE REASON? Because none of these business leaders completed a Bachelor's degree, which is a mandatory entry requirement for US colleges. But for the rest of the world, including many of the world's elite universities, there is a broader view of readiness to undertake an MBA. This includes either a Bachelor's degree, or demonstrated significant professional experience typically a minimum of 5 sometimes up to 10 years demonstrated management experience.

Gates undeniably has a wealth of business expertise through founding one of the largest and successful tech companies in the world. In fact, in 2007, Gates even received an honorary degree from Harvard University for his world-changing accomplishments. **An honorary degree yes, but admission into an actual MBA, No.**

The focus on checking boxes in an admissions process, rather than logic, means a 22-year-old college graduate, who may have almost no real business experience, and just completed years of classes in astronomy, history, calculus and language, has a much better chance of entry into an elite Masters in Business program, than an actual business leader. And this is not an issue isolated to the business elite. There are hundreds of thousands of (maybe not quite so famous) exceptional and motivated individuals where the traditional college path simply wasn't an option.



Take for example the following inspiring individuals:



Steve R.
Senior Fire Department Drill-Master

Steve is a fire department drill-master, an entrepreneur and electrical industry business owner. Steve focused on years of education in the electrical field, instead of a broad college degree to more rapidly be able to financially support his family.



Nada T.
Technology Operations Manager

Nada was formerly working as an office manager and fully focused on family and income earlier in her career. With an ambition for a bigger career, Nada completed an MBA, and is now the Operations Manager for a global B2B collaboration, SAAS company.



Adrian D.
Founder & CEO Driscoll Entertainment

Adrian was juggling college and establishing his entertainment industry business at the same time. The commute and time demands of founding his own successful entertainment business forced Adrian to choose between college and career.

These are the options they face in aspiring to an MBA:

TRADITIONAL USA ENTRY TO MBA

- » Complex application process to college
- ↓
- » Required General Education classes in astronomy, medieval history, calculus etc.
- ↓
- » Study 6–8 years (Part Time duration)
- ↓
- » \$120,000 USD cost for average US college degree
- ↓
- » Application to schools for an MBA
- ↓
- » GMAT (entrance exam for many schools)
- ↓
- » 2 years average duration
- ↓
- » \$60,000 average US MBA cost

GLOBAL MBA PROGRAMS

- » MBA entry based on 5+ years existing Professional Experience
- ↓
- » Study 1–2 years
- ↓
- » \$12,000–\$15,000*

TOTAL: 8–9 Years, \$180,000

TOTAL: 1–2 Years, Up to \$15,000*

*Note: these are fees for Dücere MBA programs in partnership with the University of Wales Trinity Saint David and the University of East London



Access to an MBA across the US is regulated by a rigid framework with little room for exceptions. Either you were fortunate enough for everything to fall into place since middle school to high school, college, and then graduate school, or you fall outside the system. To get back into the system will require \$180,000 and a commitment of 8 or so years. How realistic is this for a 40 something manager working long hours, with family and expenses to pay. The myriad of obstacles are stacked up to prevent even the most ambitious from the dreams of graduate school education.

THE GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE ON MBA'S

There is an assumption, at least in the US, that the US model is representative of all universities, but is it?

Actually, the US is quite unique by global standards. Internationally there is the realization that one cookie-cutter approach doesn't work for everyone. In the Harvard Business Review article 'How CEOs without College degrees got to the top' the value of workplace experience is clearly articulated. It goes on to state,

“In the absence of ready-made credibility that comes with academic credentials, you can establish bona fides by gaining deep industry-specific and firm-specific knowledge. 89% of CEO's without college degrees “grew up” in the same industry where they served as CEO and spent 40% more time in the industry where they became CEO compared to their peers with college degrees.”

—Harvard Business Review

It even went on to say that CEO's without degrees were “humble, and more open to soliciting ideas from all types of people, regardless of status or rank”.

With these characteristics in mind, many international schools value professional achievements as an advantage over simply having a bachelor's degree, recognizing that these students bring incredible value to the program and the student cohort. In other words, such schools would more readily accept Gates, Branson, and Dell above our 22-year college grad we considered earlier.

So is such an innovative pathway to an MBA reflective of only a few fringe schools in some remote countries? Quite the contrary, MBA entry based on experience is common across many of the world's most advanced higher education systems, from England to Australia and all the way up to the highest-ranked and most prestigious schools in the world.

Perhaps the most important aspect is the real impact such an opportunity has on the lives of individuals. Remember Steve, Adrian, and Nada. 8-9 years and \$180,000 was not an attractive option for them. Now they are all MBA Class of 2021 candidates solving real-world challenges as part of their world-renowned MBA.

As for Gates, Zuckerberg and Branson? You are welcome to apply here!