

Deutsche Bank and Duke University: A Corporate/College Alliance Customized to Fit

Although still in its early stages, the alliance between Germany's Deutsche Bank and Duke University's Fuqua School of Business epitomizes a number of key success factors that may well set the standard for future alliances. Although the first students have not yet begun participating in the program, preliminary planning and ongoing discussions between the German banking giant and Fuqua indicate that the ideas behind this alliance and its basic architecture will address the most fundamental issues of what it means to be a global learning organization and what it means to partner in the international arena.

Fuqua—one of the top-ranked business schools in the United States—recently implemented an unprecedented program known as the Global Executive Masters of Business Administration (GEMBA). GEMBA was created to meet the needs of high-potential managers and executives of globally oriented corporations. GEMBA's unique format, combining residential classroom sessions on four continents with distance education via Internet-based technologies, allows students to earn a world-class MBA degree in 19 months while working and living anywhere they chose.

The GEMBA program begins and ends with two weeks of classes at the Duke campus in Durham, North Carolina. Then each module of the program consists of two weeks of face-to-face encounters in a different corner of the globe. For example, one GEMBA class met in Prague with Czech business leaders to visit factories trying to make the transition from a centralized to a market economy. This live, on-site, real-world training is followed by a 15 week period during which students engage in independent study and collaborate with each other through distance learning. The program, which costs \$82,500 per student, comes with a fully loaded IBM laptop computer dubbed the "GEM BOX." This computer allows Duke students to scroll through an electronic bulletin board for questions and reading assignments from professors as well as check e-mail for messages from classmates. It is, in the words of *The Wall Street Journal*, "the most ambitious attempt at delivering virtual classes worldwide." The concept for the alliance with Deutsche Bank grew out of GEMBA and reflects Fuqua's

cutting-edge approach to global learning.

Fuqua is no stranger to international learning alliances with major corporations. Glaxo Wellcome, Philips Components, and Siemens are just a few of the major European firms for whom Fuqua helps deliver executive education. What distinguishes Fuqua from many other business schools engaged in similar alliances is its emphasis on customizing specific programs to address the unique business problems of each company. This is a key reason why Deutsche Bank was attracted to Fuqua (see Figure 1). According to Blair Sheppard, Fuqua's senior associate dean for programs: "Deutsche Bank was looking for a school with a reputation for being customer focused. They wanted a school that was really willing to learn about both their industry and them as a firm. They were also looking for a school whose culture epitomized part of what they were trying to achieve as a company—one with an entrepreneurial/risk-taking culture. So they had an interesting need for a school that was reputationally and pedagogically centered, but also one that was sort of pushing the edge.

"A lot of what we're doing in this alliance we're not necessarily getting compensated for," adds Sheppard, "but it's still crucial to the relationship and any future relationships of this type. The piece I'm talking about here is that we have to articulate just what a corporate university really means, and what it means for a business school to be the backbone of that university. Another issue of concern centers around the question of what it means to manage knowledge and learning when you are a globally distributed organization."

Heinz Fischer, executive vice president of human resources for Deutsche Bank, says the appeal of Fuqua as a learning partner was a matter of shared development: "When we were looking at other schools, we found out that a lot of them were offering modules of their normal executive development program, slightly customized to Deutsche Bank. What we really wanted, though, was a more in-depth type of partnership. We found that Duke University—not only because they have state-of-the-art technology to help us with our globalization and with running most of the programs in a virtual world—offers a partnership where we can develop together and create a new environment—a learning community together with the university.

"Typically, most business schools use case studies and try to apply them to your specific business," continues Fischer. "But we are currently growing so much in the international field that these case studies are quickly outdated and irrelevant. We want to create real-world case studies while learning—a form of action learning, if you will. Combining the working environment with the learning environment and involving real business issues, together with faculty of a university with a proven global delivery capability—I think this was a big advantage the Deutsche Bank saw in Duke University."

The alliance between Fuqua and Deutsche is designed to foster Deutsche Bank University and expose the highest lev-

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Why Duke?

- Similar goals
- Looking for a partner
- Reputation
- Global aspiration
- Flexibility and innovativeness
- Differentiation by customization
- Faculty expertise and network
- Executive education as part of strategy
- Innovative use of technology

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els of management to leading-edge ideas (see Figure 2). Although the curriculum and delivery modes of the alliance have not yet been formalized, the program has been taking shape through extensive, high-level discussions between the two organizations and through the application of Fuqua's experience and well-established principles to the entire endeavor.

Deutsche Bank University's Philosophy

- Create and share knowledge for action
- Encourage networking and group learning to add value
- Enable just-in-time learning
- Foster self-development for employability
- Break paradigms of learning: place, time content

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Figure 2

Sheppard outlines some of Fuqua's fundamental principles in its approach to international alliances and Fuqua's as yet undefined role at Deutsche Bank: "A combination of face-to-face learning and distance learning creates the optimal pedagogy. If you put the two together, you're better off than if you have either one alone. Deutsche Bank liked that argument.

"Now we're working with them to build the kind of educational infrastructure and philosophy that allows them to do this internally, on a global scale. We will be the backbone of Deutsche Bank's learning, both by way of designing it and building it, and also servicing it. We will also be a partial provider of the educational interventions—but not a sole provider. I'm not sure how it's going to look. It will probably be alliances with other schools. It may be that we are quality control. It may be that in some instances we're a kind of general contractor. That's the long-term view.

"The other portion of what we do is fairly traditional executive education, but in a very different way, given that we have this kind of medium that we're working with them on," Sheppard says. "That is sort of taking the issues they have in real time, and building educational interventions around those issues, either developmental issues or strategic issues or implementation issues."

Fuqua's analytical basis for developing its alliance with Deutsche Bank—the constant questioning of basic definitions and processes long taken for granted—is key to understanding the nature of this partnership. The benefits of redefining a corporate learning organization, and implementing not just a curriculum or series of procedures but an entire philosophy and overall approach to global learning, are obvious. This is

an alliance that revolves around long-term goals and the creation of an organization that can adapt to constant change in the international economic climate.

