

Financial Times MBA Rankings 2008 – Views and News

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Each year the Financial Times (FT) publishes its top 100 business school rankings. For within the schools the news is anxiously awaited as it has a direct impact on the quality of staff and students that can be attracted. But this year the rankings also give an excellent insight into how the MBA is changing – and where the future of the MBA is likely to be.

The University of Pennsylvania – Wharton maintained its #1 spot. Below this, however, there were significant winners and losers in the top 20. Between them the US schools lost 24 points and gained only 7 – and this gain was entirely to MIT Sloan. The European schools, in contrast, gained 17 points and only lost one.

Two big surprises were Hong Kong UST coming into the chart at 17 and the Indian School of Business arriving at 20. Neither of these schools had even made it into the top 100 before.

Finding a high-earning role following the MBA is one of the key reasons why students choose the MBA path. The Indian School of Business scored 100% for the number of students who had found a role within three months of graduation – higher than any other school. Hong Kong UST scored highest in the change in the level of seniority and the size of the company alumni are working in now versus before their MBA.

On a recent trip to Mumbai I was pleasantly surprised to learn how much employers value an MBA and are seeking out those with an MBA to return to India to work. Meetings with companies like Accenture, Ernst & Young, CapGemini and Standard Chartered Bank all left me with the same impression – an MBA graduate from an excellent school will find huge opportunity in the major business centres of India.

Interestingly, then, is the collaboration that the Indian Business School has with the top two ranking schools, Wharton and London Business School, and also the 24th ranked school, Kellogg. Clearly they are leveraging the long experience of these other institutions, particularly when it comes to careers, to advance their own standing.

Hong Kong UST takes a slightly different, but innovative approach. With over 100 partners in North America, Europe, Australia and Asia, their extensive overseas student exchange programs opens doors and creates opportunities for MBA students.

So what does all this have to do with MBA careers? The value of the international perspective is climbing in value every year. The skyrocketing success of these two programs gives a clear indication that those who make the most of international opportunities are:

- In demand by the top employers
- Building peer networks that will provide substantial benefits throughout their careers
- Part of alumni networks that provide a wide range of interesting and diverse opportunities.

Do you see your international experience as a weakness on your CV/resume? Look at the post-MBA executive education on offer at these top schools. You may just find that tapping into the power of these up and comers will provide useful benefits for many years to come.