Smooth Operator
Embratel’s CEO Is Reinventing Brazil's Top Telco
Sharpening The Executive Mind
The continuing education of top executives has become a priority for Latin American corporations as they grow in the global marketplace. A review of top programs.

By Rochelle Broder-Singer

Despite reports of the demise of Internet-based training, many of the world's top executive education programs use it as an integral part of the learning process. The trend towards Internet usage stems from the current business buzzword: globalization. As our survey of some of the top programs for Latin American executives shows, a global audience and an education in global business practices are the focus of many universities. While English is still the favored language, a few programs (including one in the US) are taught in Spanish.
The Financial Times ranks IAE No. 29 worldwide on its executive education list, and executives from companies such as P&G, Carrefour, American Express and The Excel Group have attended its degree and non-degree programs. One of the most interesting is the P&G Top Management Program (US$17,000), designed for CEOs and company presidents. Over a period of sixteen weeks, 45 students attend two full weeks of classes and one full day of classes each week in between, and do about twelve hours of self-directed work weekly. Learning is applied and intense – executives are asked to think about the long-term future of their companies and, eventually, to identify their own leadership strengths and weaknesses as they relate to that goal. Forty percent of students in the course are CEOs, and nearly 15 percent come from outside Argentina. IAE also offers its FIDE program, specifically targeted to Mercosur executives. It follows much the same curriculum, meeting for one full week each month. Custom programs round out IAE’s offerings. IAE has taken advantage of its regional position, says Dean Fernando Fraguero. "We teach companies to adapt from the global perspective to the regional characteristics," he says. "And, in the opposite, to the regional companies, we offer them the global and the international perspective."

Instituto de Empresa (Madrid, Spain)

IE offers a bilingual (Spanish and English) International Executive MBA, as well as a Senior Management Program that focuses on the relationships between Europe and Latin American companies. The 13-month MBA program involves two, two-week residential periods in Madrid and one in Miami, with 12-20 hours per week of online work in between. Tuition for the program is US$22,000, and no more than 25 students are enrolled in each class. Using case analysis studies, the program aims for outcomes identical to the schools face-to-face program. The Financial Times rates IE's executive education No. 11 in the world, and No. 1 in the Spanish- and Portuguese-language market. The median professional experience of the first International Executive MBA class, which began in January, is 0.3 years, with nearly 40 percent in top management positions. Half come from outside Spain, from countries including Colombia, Costa Rica and Argentina. Director Manuel Villalta says the program's strengths are "the bilinguality and the high level of the students in terms of executive experience and geographic distribution." Says Dean Angel Cabrera, "We are at a crossroads. We are in Europe and, at the same time, we are part of the Spanish-speaking world."

Duke University Fuqua School (Durham, North Carolina, US)

Duke University offers two executive MBA programs: the Duke MBA-Cross-Continents and the Duke MBA-Global Executive. Both combine in-classroom residencies with Internet-enabled discussions, classrooms, team projects and research. The Cross-Continents has its two 33-student sections, consists of eight one-week residencies in North Carolina or in Frankfurt, Germany, with six weeks of Internet learning in between. Participants in the US$75,000 program are typically marketing or engineering specialists who want to move into management positions. The MBA-Global Executive is a traveling curriculum. Students meet for five two-week "residencies" in North Carolina and earning cities in Europe, Asia and South America, with computer-based work in between. The US$95,000 tuition includes stays at 5-star hotels. The "residencies" around the world combine academic training with corporate meetings, social and cultural experiences and team-building. The Global program has no entry examinations, but participants average 14 years of international professional experience. Duke sells the combination of what Assistant Dean for the Cross-Continents Program Donna Spinella calls "place, space and experience" means that "students get to work both sides of their brains: the speedy rabbit and the slower tortoise that often wins the race."

Emory University Goizueta Business School (Atlanta, Georgia, US)

While Goizueta offers an 18-month alternate and executive MBA (US$21,000), its non-degree programs, ranked No. 19 in the world by The Wall Street Journal, are probably more appealing to executives who cannot be away from their business. Goizueta's marketing management savvy is well-known, says Dr. Peter Topping, the school's Executive Director of Executive Education. And Goizueta offers a certificate in Strategic Marketing. Classes meet in Atlanta one week a month for three months. Students run a telecommunications company simulation, involving manufacturing, service and high-technology components. Between classes in Atlanta, students use the Internet for self-directed learning as well as for online meetings. Companies such as Coca-Cola, Xerox, Equifax and BellSouth have sent executives from their Latin American divisions to the program, where the average age is 46 and students are typically directors, vice presidents and general managers with low technological savvy. (Goizueta's program changes that.) Goizueta has also designed custom programs for companies such as Germany's Dresdner Bank. The
next frontier? “Improving our knowledge of how managers and executives learn,” Topping says.

Florida International University (Miami, Florida, US)

IU’s Global Executive MBA is an Internet-focused experience. During the 5 one-week residencies at Miami’s Biltmore Hotel Conference Center of the Americas, the 20-25 students are constantly plugged into the Internet. During the weeks of the 13-month program when students are not in Miami, they meet for class online at specific times to participate in discussions and lectures. The US$45,000 (includes room and board) Global EMBA is specifically designed for managers with five to eight years of international Latin American management experience, and has attracted executives from the Latin American divisions of companies such as Monsanto, Xerox, Feld and 3Com.

“We don’t isolate e-business in a course,” says Steve Seste, the program’s director. “It’s business has changed supply chain management, it’s changed marketing, all of the disciplines we teach. This Global Executive MBA program is an e-business... so we think we’re really far ahead than people who are just teaching it.”

New York University
Stern School of Business (New York, US)

The inaugural classes of NYU Stern’s GLOBE executive education program (US$20,000 for tuition and lunches) and Trium Executive MBA (US$87,500 for everything but airfare) start this year. Students in the programs will meet with local business and political leaders and study with local faculty at NYU Stern, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, HEC Paris and Fundacao Getulio Vargas in Sao Paulo. Trium also includes a module at the London School of Economics and Political Science. GLOBE’s four one-week modules, conducted over one year, with a little Internet-based preparation in between, are directed at international managers with 10-15 years of professional experience, many of whom have MBAs. The program focuses on hands-on applications. Trium’s 16-month MBA program teaches theory and fundamentals through ten weeks on the various campuses and 360 hours of distance learning. Most Trium students also have 10-12 years of experience. With either program, says Associate Dean of Executive Programs Rosemary Mathewson, “What our students are getting, in addition to the technical understanding, is a real hands-on experience of what it’s like to do business around the world.”

University of Miami (Miami, Florida, US)

UM’s one-year Master of Science in Professional Management is taught in Spanish and designed for Latin American executives — this year’s class has students from nine countries. One year of residential learning is compressed into five intense two-week sessions of two courses each. Classes run from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. every day and evenings are spent in study groups. Paul Sagree, Dean of the School of Business, says Miami is the perfect place for Latin American executives to study: It’s easy to access, and everything from the food to the atmosphere has a familiar feel. Around 40 students are enrolled in the US$32,200 (including books and food) class, which has an average age of 40 and a minimum of eight years of business experience. There is no distance learning component to the degree. “They’re getting the same classroom experience a student would get going to a full-time program,” Sagree says. “We feel that could never be replaced by any other type of program.”

University of Navarra Iese Business School (Barcelona, Spain)

Combining US and European perspectives and faculty, IESE (ranked No. 13 by the Financial Times) offers a Global Executive MBA and non-degree courses. Both attract Latin American managers with 7-8 years of experience; the EMBA also requires high test scores. The EMBA focuses on globalization and e-business issues through eight two-week residencies in Barcelona, Shanghai (China) and Silicon Valley (California, US). Distance learning occurs between the modules of the two-year course through chats, online discussions, bulletin boards and video-conferencing. The US$50,000 (tuition and lodging) program is conducted in English, and most of the 26 students are from outside Spain, including Brazil, Mexico and Chile. In a joint international program with Harvard Business School (US), IAE (Argentina) and IPADE (Mexico), IESE also offers a one-week course called Achieving Breakthrough Service in Miami, Mexico and Toronto. The Spanish-language course costs US$6,500 for tuition and lodging. “It explores how improving service quality can improve profitability,” Hunte says all of IESE’s executive programs focus on both the social and economic aspects of business, but operational improvements are the goal. “We think a half of the participants not realizing that in two years, they can go home with a-do to-do list that is very specific and allows them to have a relatively fast impact on their operations,” he says. “If somehow you add more than just an economic dimension, you are making executive education a very exciting experience in which you get a little bit of a transformation of the participant.”