



Painless Education

We all know that there is no such thing as painless learning, but CCCC, over the past five years put in an effort to make learning as easy as we could. Perhaps we have made history as we valiantly competed¹ with universities' MBA programs by ours, which was tailored for business persons' practical, every-day, needs. The continuous, highly complimentary, feedback from the more than 60 participants of six differently-dated presentations, confirms we were on the right path. Allow us to share some of the results of this landmark learning experiment.

Henry Mintzberg, an MBA professor at Montreal's McGill University, lamented in his 300-page book² for the typical MBA program which he seemed to describe as nothing more than catering to societies' imagination of what business people should learn about managing an enterprise.³ CCCC, with the mantra of "Making good companies even better", and hoping to fill the business educational void, launched its first "Practical MBA" in 2012. Limited to 10 students, so that each could be assured of individual attention to his or her complex business problems, CCCC ran the sessions annually up and until 2017. 'Students', mostly presidents and senior executives of companies, hailed from Canada, Germany, India, Mexico, Poland, South Africa, Ukraine, and U.S.A.

Think about it for a moment: other than the MBA, most senior executives never have access to, or receive comprehensive management training. If the MBA is as faulted as Mintzberg suggests (and was confirmed anecdotally by those students at CCCC's training program who were already carrying an MBA), what is an executive who wants to learn to be a president, to do? Enter the Practical MBA (PMBA).

With a curriculum of 5,404 pages of business-relevant information, to be explained and absorbed in an 8-day, no break time-frame, the course demanded that students possess relevant experience, an agile mind and a willingness to hunker down for a very intense period. The course was for people who wanted to learn the 'right stuff' because the initials of PMBA after each graduate's name from CCCC, an almost unknown institute, would not garner any assurance of walk-in jobs in the majority of businesses. But prepared these learners would be – to tackle the most perplexing business challenges that they will confront.

The 'right stuff' offered a holistic look at the science and skill of managing humans and inspiring them to be the best they could be – running from one end of the commercial-enterprise spectrum to the other: accountability (throughout the enterprise), balance sheets, cash flow, communications, conflicts, information flow, marketing, motivation, personnel evaluations, priorities, problem solving, etc. We felt that every conceivable aspect of running a business was addressed, and the way those parameters linked into a predictable matrix was mapped out for all to see and behold.

Back to making the learning experience easier: No one in their right mind would say the 5,404-page load would be easy. But a few things, we were told, after the fact by students, made it worthwhile.

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Seminars 2017-2018:

- **28-30 Sept.**
Guadalajara,
Mexico
- **14,15 Nov.**
Ottawa,
Canada
- **16,17 April**
BKMS
Kiev,
Ukraine

For more information, go to:
www.caswellccc.com

¹ Due to the difficulty of continuing this modestly-priced course, the 2017 version, Practical MBA VI, is expected to be the last one. Hence, the reason for this wrap-up newsletter.

² Mintzberg Henry, "Managers, not MBAs", Barrett-Koehler, San Francisco, 2004

³ We refer you to two previous CCCC papers on the subject: "Is Mis-Management getting Worse?" and "The Practical MBA" of August 2004 and September 2004 respectively.

**CCCC offers
4 products:**

1. Read about the CCCC management methodology for **\$40** electronically or **\$400** with a set of 12 books (2,700 pages) in a hardboard case.

2. Learn about the CCCC management methodology by attending the week-long **Practical MBA**, **\$7,500**.

3. Act on the first step of resolving your key issues with a tactical planning session by CCCC at approximately **\$10,000**.

4. Engage fully in the *Climb to Excellence* right from the start (3-year step-by-step program) guiding you to *Excellence*, **\$150,000** (\$4,200/mo.)

One keen attraction were the topics, reportedly not available elsewhere in business-teaching institutions, such as: how the mind actually works and contrives to mislead us, how the CEO can stay on top of the business numbers without the aid of the accountant (but still use the accountant for precision and as a mutual check on key performance numbers), how to add up a bunch of wild estimates – yet end up with a precise answer, how to cope with human emotions – especially those that mislead, how to throw new resumés in the wastebasket and yet hire the right person who will love the job and stay on for years, means to focus on bottom-ranked employees so that top-ranked executives excel, how each student (even without business success) can assure themselves of a \$1 million fallback position, how to work with difficult people – and turn them around, how to train your boss, and so on.

The ice-breaking opening night before the seminars employed board games such as crokinole and board hockey to throw the group into fits of laughter and comradery, quite early in the proceedings.

A recreational break between 3 pm and 5:30 pm each day, before the evening workshops, had the group (for example, in 2017) visit museums, waterfalls and expansive parks in Ottawa as a release from each day's session which began at 8:30 am and ended at 8:30 pm. A professional football game of Ottawa Redblacks vs. Hamilton Tiger Cats thrown in the middle of all of that, added to the diversion in 2017.

Two home-cooked daily meals with a variety of soups, a host of salads, borsch, cabbage rolls, lasagna, roast turkey with all the trimmings, fresh home-made pizza, etc., served with wines and beers, spiced up the variety.

Besides absorbing Bill's professorial insights all week long, guest speakers, Dr. Sorin Cohn, Tim Ragan, Patrick McGarry and other leading entrepreneurs offered the students challenging and highly experienced opinions of serious matters to ponder.

Each year, the graduation ceremony, during a delicious dinner at a prestigious restaurant, was highlighted by a keynote speaker which was either a leading scientist, politician, or ambassador who invariably recognized the individual student's achievement of getting through the course, and more importantly, the speaker gave the students credit for having made the decision to attend in the first place.

So now, in 2017, we are saying a fond farewell to this unique educational foray by sharing the experience with our readers. I hope you will join me in congratulating the 54 PMBA graduates⁴ over the past 5 years and six public presentations of the PMBA.

Bill

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⁴ 54 of 61 graduated; 7 participants did not.