To grow profitably, your organization needs to handle complex, unstructured, cross-functional business problems effectively…
Welcome to Custom Executive Programs at Washington University’s Olin Business School

The pace of business competition keeps accelerating. Expanding global pressures, technological advances, emerging markets – these are only a few of the issues facing CEOs and their companies. To grow profitably in this kind of environment, your organization needs to handle complex, unstructured, cross-functional business problems effectively. Innovative solutions to these problems will come from agility, creativity and critical thinking.

To remain on the leading edge, successful organizations seek the essential business knowledge and perspectives that Olin Business School’s Custom Executive Programs provide. We’ve been educating business leaders for more than 90 years, equipping them with the fundamental knowledge and critical-thinking skills demanded by the business world. As that world has evolved, so too has our approach to executive education.

Effective business education integrates seemingly discrete functional specialties into broader themes that address complete business issues. To tackle these issues holistically, we have developed a unique platform approach to Custom Executive Programs. Complex business themes – innovation, sustainable growth, maximum organizational performance, market focus and leadership development – form the foundation for the powerful solutions provided by the Olin Custom Executive Programs experience.

Our world-class faculty delivers intensive, engaging learning opportunities for executives to develop far more than practical skills. Our programs dig deep within your organization, exploring and exposing a broad spectrum of new insights and knowledge that can be applied to rise to challenges and capitalize on untapped potential. And, as our name suggests, Olin’s Custom Executive Programs feature a highly tailored, consultative approach to deliver targeted solutions to each client.

Whatever your goals and objectives, we look forward to partnering with you to provide solutions that create real value.

Mahendra Gupta, Dean
Olin Business School
Custom Education Creates Value

People often take classes to learn new things. Organizations use custom executive education to do new things. The learning environment at Olin Business School is all about applying knowledge to get results. After all, education provides a return on investment only if you do something with it. Olin’s Custom Executive Programs provide leading-edge business education to build critical- and strategic-thinking skills, creativity, and agility for success in today’s complex business environment.

We design programs to produce value. Organizations seek Olin’s customized solutions because these solutions provide objectivity and perspective that are difficult to gain from the insider’s point of view. Our programs are led by exceptional faculty members who advance business thinking. To ensure that our solutions are uniquely and powerfully targeted to your business needs, our programs are designed through a highly consultative process with your leadership team.

Leveraging Change

Effective value creation comes from a combination of strategy and execution that drives the top line and builds the bottom line. Success depends on whether your leadership understands what generates value creation for your company and what that means in terms of actions for execution. By helping you accomplish your goals, our Custom Executive Programs form developmental opportunities that enable your organization to grow and build internal capabilities that create value and leverage transformational change.

Attaining the right outcomes depends on:

• leadership’s ability to enact and manage constant change
• your managers’ knowledge, skills and ability to think critically and act decisively.

Critical Platforms

Olin’s Custom Executive Programs address complex, unstructured and cross-functional challenges that face businesses in the global economy. Our program building blocks come from a menu of critical platforms that incorporate business themes central to every high-performance organization. Olin’s critical platforms include:

Sustainable Growth: Driving and sustaining profitable growth is critical for every company. Our Custom Executive Programs solve problems that impede growth – whether your organization is focused on organic growth or growth through restructuring. For companies experiencing rapid expansion, managing growth and the myriad issues that accompany it poses unique challenges. But for many firms, the question is how to generate and sustain profitable growth in highly established and competitive markets.

We build critical- and strategic-thinking skills, creativity, and agility for success in today’s complex business environment.
Innovation: Every business line has a natural life cycle. Effective innovation keeps the pipeline of new possibilities full. Innovation lays the foundation for future revenue streams. Yet the better your company gets at managing its core line, the more difficult innovation often becomes. This platform addresses these tensions and identifies the tradeoffs required to enhance innovation inside your organization. At Olin, innovation and creativity are infused throughout our own culture and curriculums. Our faculty members are expert at fostering innovation through experiential and applied-learning exercises.

Leadership Development: Developing teams of well-trained executives who create and execute innovative strategies is imperative to your company’s success. Identifying and developing the talent within your organization drives organizational momentum. This platform covers aspects of individual assessment and development, leveraging informal systems and teams to drive change and managing corporate culture to sustain high performance. Quality decision making, strategic thinking and a greater awareness of the personal and financial implications of decisions at all levels of your company are some of the results of investing in leadership development with Olin as your partner.

Operational Excellence: Operational excellence is a combination of process control, creative thinking and collaboration across the entire supply chain. The complete supply chain starts with sourcing and ends with the point of sale. In this way, operational excellence goes far beyond cost cutting and productive efficiency. Operational excellence lays the foundation for any effective strategy and is essential in our globally competitive economy. With the insight and expertise provided by our faculty, new opportunities are revealed and implemented – resulting in superior operational performance.

Olin’s Custom Executive Programs help reveal and implement new opportunities for superior performance.

Market Focus: Market focus means more than marketing and sales. Your company’s ability to pay attention to its external shareholders and customers drives its value-creation capability. You must be able to deliver on customer demands while ensuring these customers are managed for retention and profitability. Effective customer service requires the commitment of your entire organization. This platform addresses the metrics, motivation and coordination necessary to drive results consistently.
How We Create and Deliver Programs

We construct our Custom Executive Programs to define, crystallize and clarify the challenges facing your organization. Through our processes, we uncover the appropriate solutions to take your company forward. By developing within your leadership team the tools, skills and ability to diagnose and attack fundamental business problems, we empower your company to build performance from the inside out.

Our partnership begins with an in-depth needs assessment of the issues, concerns and circumstances affecting your company. This process consists of interviews with your senior management, human resources professionals and prospective participants.

Using the information gathered from the needs assessment interviews, we select a core faculty team with the expertise and experience that match your company’s requirements and the program’s objectives.

Working with your company leaders as a cross-functional team, our faculty members initiate a highly collaborative program design process. This phase of program development is marked by continual clarification of educational and developmental objectives. We develop the unique structure, case studies and active-learning exercises that will become the key components of your customized program.

Program delivery is when active learning begins. In many instances, this is when breakthroughs in thinking emerge within your organization. Our faculty team facilitates this interchange among program participants by employing a variety of learning approaches – from case studies to unconventional group interactions – designed to spark new insights and delve deep into the fundamental business issues facing your organization. We work with you to develop action-learning projects that provide takeaways, frameworks and tools for key issues. Your executives leave the program with new skills and perspectives that can be applied immediately. Finally, we help implement the solutions and initiatives that arise from the program. Our faculty members are readily deployed to help your executive teams make direct use of program learning in implementation projects throughout multiple levels of your organization.

Both during and after program execution, we apply client feedback and continual improvement to shape our programs. Although this is particularly important in ongoing programs that are spread over multiple modules, we also are adept at incorporating on-the-fly feedback and improvements to sessions in progress. We take great pride in our responsiveness to client needs throughout the entire program cycle. Client feedback and input provide an opportunity for further refinements and breakthroughs that push the envelope of growth opportunities for your organization.

Faculty teams

In line with Olin’s approach to custom solutions, the faculty composition for your program is customized as well. We match the expertise of our faculty and other leading thinkers and practitioners to your program needs. Our faculty are a diverse group of renowned educators working on the leading edge of business thought. As facilitators in a collaborative learning process, they use action-oriented learning strategies that foster interaction and help your team develop creative solutions to unstructured, complex problems.
Driving Growth, Building Profit

Faced with complex, cross-functional, unstructured business challenges, organizations partner with Olin’s Custom Executive Programs to drive sustainable, profitable growth. We use our understanding of your business environment and opportunities for growth to create a program that develops critical-thinking skills. We then help your executives apply these skills to attain breakthrough outcomes for your company. Our process drives solutions that deliver results, fusing the best of Olin’s thought leadership with the energy and creativity of your executives.

State-of-the-art facilities

Olin’s learning environment is exceptional. Located in the Charles F. Knight Executive Education Center on Washington University’s Danforth campus, the Custom Executive Programs facilities are elegant and well-appointed. Our classrooms feature the latest technology yet encourage personal interaction. The Knight Center includes a hotel, a fitness center, dining rooms, and a business center and pub; your executives will be able to eliminate distractions during their learning experiences while enjoying all the amenities that Olin has to offer.
In 2004, the commercial real estate company Colliers Turley Martin Tucker (CTMT), one of the largest and most influential members of the Colliers International group, faced a watershed moment. The company had grown consistently and rapidly despite the difficult years immediately following the events of Sept. 11, 2001, and was in a position to reassess its strategic approach to the market as well as set new priorities for its next strategic planning cycle.

“Olin Business School absolutely was the right partner for us. They had the faculty expertise, objectivity and facilitation skills required to help us see future possibilities and get aligned around a specific vision of how to maintain and even accelerate our growth.”

In the end, every Custom Executive Program has to deliver a result. Burkhart concludes:

“What came out of those sessions from 2004 to 2005 was a set of priorities that we as a company converged around. These strategic priorities were the very center of the next three-year planning cycle and drove much of what we did as a business. We set aggressive goals and we’ve attained those goals. And today our company has made great progress as a result. Our relationship with Olin Business School continues to be a central part of our planning and growth, both as a business and as individuals.”
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM: Driving Sustainable Growth

In 2002, Bunge, a global agribusiness and food company, partnered with Olin Business School to create a broad-scope executive education program. The company’s goals were to integrate key managers from different businesses around the world, align them with Bunge’s global strategy and affect growth by introducing a process that allowed for constant, constructive reassessment of strategic thinking, operational approach and organizational dynamics.

“The Executive Development Program has served as a platform to help our senior executives determine where we are today and where the organization should go in the future.”

The initial effort focused on the creation of the Leadership Development Program (LDP), which was designed to support the implementation of Bunge’s growth strategy, with an emphasis on its unique operating model. The success of the LDP spurred the expansion of Bunge’s leadership development efforts to other levels of the organization. To date, nearly 500 of Bunge’s leaders have participated in the program.

Olin Business School also is the global partner and host for Bunge’s Executive Development Program (EDP), which focuses on the top 120 senior leaders of the organization. According to Mark Feurer, director of global personnel planning and development:

“The Executive Development Program has served as a platform to help our senior executives determine where we are today and where the organization should go in the future. This program provides an opportunity for our top leaders to review our priorities and how we will hit our targets during the next several years.”

As a reflection of the ongoing commitment to Bunge, Olin faculty continues to work with the company’s leadership around the globe on a consultative basis to apply and implement key tools from programs in the field. These “local application sessions” help Bunge yield returns on its investment in executive development. Flavio Sa Carvalho, Bunge’s chief personnel officer, notes:

“Olin has been instrumental in helping us put together a program that created a common language and platform that we use to integrate and align our people. Our relationship with Olin has been fruitful and the results have been very positive. Bunge has faced some significant challenges during the past few years, and I believe that the framework offered by our leadership programs has helped us better face these challenges and position Bunge as one of the world’s best integrated food and agribusiness companies.”
A Powerful Partner

Creating a Custom Executive Program for your organization entails a significant investment of time and dollars. Thus, it is paramount that you select the educational partner best capable of meeting your specific needs and creating genuine value.

The hallmark of Olin’s Custom Executive Programs is personal attention. The highly consultative experience of a custom program ensures our solutions are precisely designed to meet your unique needs. We begin and end every program the same way – by listening to you. We infuse what we learn from our clients throughout every stage of the program experience. Our flexibility and open approach to discovering – and delivering – exceptional solutions to complex issues make us a powerful partner for each of our clients.

The structure of a custom program is determined by you. Depending on your needs and the results of our in-depth consultation with your management team, programs may be designed as short modules or as one-time sessions of longer duration. Programs can last a few days or several weeks. Some of our more intensive programs consist of multiple sessions that occur during the course of several months or years. And although most clients attend programs at the Knight Center, some programs may be conducted off-site when company priorities require such flexibility.

Regardless of duration or location, our Custom Executive Programs create exciting, intensive learning experiences for your executives. Our collaborative instructional model, which can incorporate real-time data from your company, is led by our world-class faculty. It provides uniquely tailored solutions to your most pressing business challenges.

At Olin, we understand that the goal of every organization is to sustain growth and profitability through a combination of strategy and execution. We look forward to partnering with you to develop the essential business knowledge and perspectives that you need for further success.

For more information or to schedule an initial consultation, please contact our Executive Education professionals at 314-935-6608 or execprog@olin.wustl.edu.

The highly consultative experience of a custom program ensures our solutions are precisely designed to meet your unique needs.