

# HOW TO MAKE YOUR EMBA PROGRAM STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD



Transformational. Life changing. Experiential. Professional development. Leadership potential. Executive coaching. Career advancement.

These are all words/phrases used to describe most Executive MBA programs. Could they be used to describe *your* Executive MBA program?

Therein lies the problem. Most EMBA programs end up sounding and looking the same. How is a prospective student expected to distinguish between your program and that of your competitors?

Think of your EMBA program as a *product*. Then you must determine its **unique selling proposition (USP)**. This marketing concept was first put forth as an advertising theory back in the 1940s, yet it still remains relevant today. A USP is what makes your product/service different from all the others out there.

Domino's Pizza does a great job of incorporating its USP into its marketing communications:

"You get fresh, hot pizza delivered to your door in 30 minutes or less — or it's free."

Like a good tagline, a good USP is specific to your business and/or industry. In other words, it's not enough to simply say, "We provide great value." *How* do you provide great value?

Following are other ways you can make your EMBA program stand out from all the rest:

- **Exceptional ROI.** Is your EMBA program the least expensive in your city? region? state? the nation?
- **Fabulous faculty.** Are your faculty members noted for their research or publications? Have they received awards? Do they have industry experience? Students want to learn from those who've "been in the trenches," so to speak.
- **Innovative curriculum.** Most EMBA programs cover business fundamentals. But what types of electives are available? Do you offer specializations in or tracks according to areas of interest?
- **Impressive cohort.** Is the caliber of your cohorts head and shoulders above the rest? EMBA students learn from each other as well as from their professors. This could be a big selling point.
- **Brand equity.** Is your program ranked? Does it have exclusive accreditation? Is it part of a business school that is ranked or widely acclaimed? Is it part of a prestigious college or university? It's OK to piggyback on the brand of your parent organization.

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- **Program format.** Many schools tailor their program schedules to meet the needs of working professionals. Is there anything about your program that is especially flexible? Do you offer a hybrid of learning environments or formats?
- **Leadership development.** Do you go above and beyond basic executive coaching? Do you go the extra mile when it comes to careers and placements? Do you take leadership development to the next level? What about executive education?
- **Global reach.** Does your EMBA program have an international component? If so, how does it differ from all the rest? The University of Texas at Arlington, for example, is known for its China immersion and Asian Business Studies Graduate Certificate.
- **Alumni network.** This extends the value of your program beyond graduation. Where are your alumni now? We're talking both geographically and in terms of positions at their respective companies. You might just find a trend to capitalize on, such as a track record of success in a particular industry.

Another way you can **distinguish yourself** is **through your advertising**. Think about foregoing the traditional students-in-classroom imagery and use an image totally unrelated to academia. This will make your ads eye-catching, which is the first goal of any ad. Your messaging, however, will still resonate with your audience.

If you've read the above bullet points and still are scratching your head over how your EMBA program stands out, this could be a wake-up call. Perhaps you need to revisit one or more elements and tweak them to make your program more enticing to prospective students.

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*Annodyne can help you determine your USP with services such as brand identity and messaging workshops, competitive intelligence and communication assessments. Visit us at [Annodyne.com](http://Annodyne.com)*