

MAKE WORK MATTER

altMBA

The breakthrough approach
for learning **real skills**.

PROVEN • EFFECTIVE • WORLDWIDE



The altMBA makes change happen.

We exist to help you see the world differently, help you make better decisions, and most of all, help you change the world around you.

It's a workshop, not a course, an intensive month-long experience that will expose you to new people, new challenges and new ideas. We've been running the altMBA for over five years and our alumni are already making a ruckus in more than 74 countries.

Instead of simply giving you access to information (no need, it's everywhere) or setting you up to memorize things you will forget or taking tests that don't matter, the altMBA is built around experience. You and your fellow students will engage in 13 projects, mostly done in groups, that will transform the way you do your work.

We're proud that this process isn't for everyone. We're looking for a few people who are ready to leap, who care so much about their organization, their project and their community that they will push themselves ever harder to make a difference.

One thing we teach is that everything we do has a reason, a "what's it for" that enables us to make smart strategic investments. And in our case, the "what" is simple: We work to shine a light and open a door so you can step through and make an even bigger impact on your world.

I hope you'll join us.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name 'Seth'.

Seth



***The altMBA helps leaders
to effectively drive change
within their organizations.***



An intensive, 4-week online workshop that challenges you to level up and make a significant impact.

The altMBA prepares you to navigate the complex challenges of driving organizational change. Following a competitive selection process, the altMBA delivers a condensed learning experience through teamwork, personalized feedback, coaching, curated readings, and shipping thirteen projects in four weeks.

DEADLINE

Visit altmba.com/apply for session details.

COMMITMENT

We've organized the altMBA so that busy people (like you) can fit it into your schedule. But it does take commitment. Group discussions meet three times a week. Students use other hours for their solo work. We offer multiple time zones to choose from, and you can pick the one that works best with your schedule.

PROGRAM DETAILS

Visit altmba.com for program details.

PROGRAM STATS

More than 97% of each class of the altMBA successfully completes our 4-week intensive workshop. And every single person reports that the workshop exceeded their expectations, that it was the most intense and productive online engagement that they've ever experienced.

COMBINING 25 YEARS OF INSIGHT

Seth Godin has created 13 hands-on projects designed to work in a connected, digital workshop. Highly leveraged, intensive, and applicable.

COACHING

With one coach for every 10 students, we're able to pay attention to our students and the work they create.

LEARN BY DOING

Our student portal features curated resources, videos, articles, and books. Of course, it's not about secret content—the altMBA is a workshop, and virtually all your time is spent creating, critiquing and leveling up.

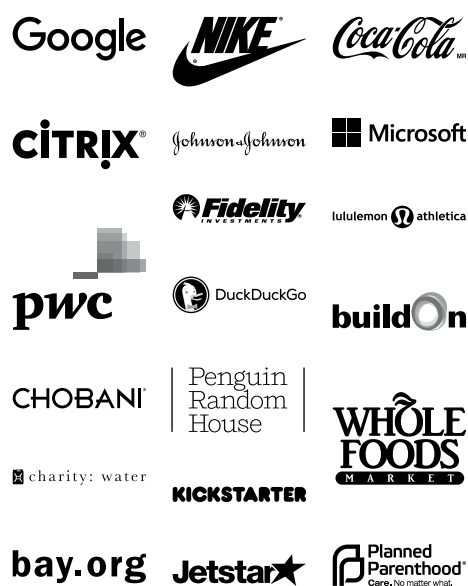
CONTACT

altMBA Admissions
hello@altmba.com



Created by Seth Godin, for you.

OUR STUDENTS AND ALUMNI ARE FROM FAST-GROWING ORGANIZATIONS LIKE THESE



AFFILIATIONS FOR IDENTIFICATION ONLY

“After the altMBA, I had a keen new perspective on how to overcome obstacles.”

—IAN SCOTT, DIRECTOR OF PRODUCT, SIMON SINEK, INC.

Preparing Leaders for the Modern Economy

TESTED, PROVEN & EFFECTIVE

Smart Fortune 500 Learning & Development teams choose the altMBA to fuel growth, promote from within, and inspire leadership. The altMBA helps high performers at corporations and fast-growing startups level up.

MAXIMIZING EMPLOYEE POTENTIAL

The top 5-7% of your employees are different. We give your A-players the tools they need to get to the next level.

CORE COMPETENCIES:

- **Interpersonal effectiveness**—Secure buy-in from multiple stakeholders inside and outside the organization.
- **Leadership and management skills**—Take charge and manage projects and coworkers. Lead multiple projects, set priorities, adapt to changing conditions.
- **Strong work values**—Grit, dependability, integrity, confidence, empathy, motivation, courage, and a positive attitude.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND:

We have thousands of alumni from all backgrounds, industries and career level. The majority of our alumni are senior leaders, and senior-level directors and managers. The commonality is they are leaders who want to achieve more, at a faster pace, and reach higher than they thought possible.

REGISTRATION DETAILS:

www.altmba.com

Contact us to apply for corporate seats:

Ishita Gupta, Head of Partnerships: ishita@altmba.com

“After the altMBA, I had a keen new perspective on how to overcome obstacles. Now I perceive tension as an opportunity and am inspired to find new ways to challenge myself.”

—Ian Scott, Director of Product, Simon Sinek, Inc.

Grow your leaders; promote from within

ALTMBA STUDENTS DEMONSTRATE INCREASED:

Motivation, Initiative, Engagement, Empathy, Efficiency, Confidence, Communication Skills, Proactiveness, Critical Thinking, & Productivity

“The altMBA taught me that I can fit even more into my day than I thought possible.” —Denise Visse, Buyer, North American stores, Nike

AFTER THIS PROGRAM, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO:

- Gain buy-in with cross-functional partners
- Confidently formulate a perspective
- Sell ideas and influence others
- Analyze and process information
- Write and communicate effectively
- Iterate quickly and ‘ship’ your work for maximized productivity
- Deliver and act on feedback
- Plan, organize, and prioritize work
- Navigate important conversations

74+ Countries

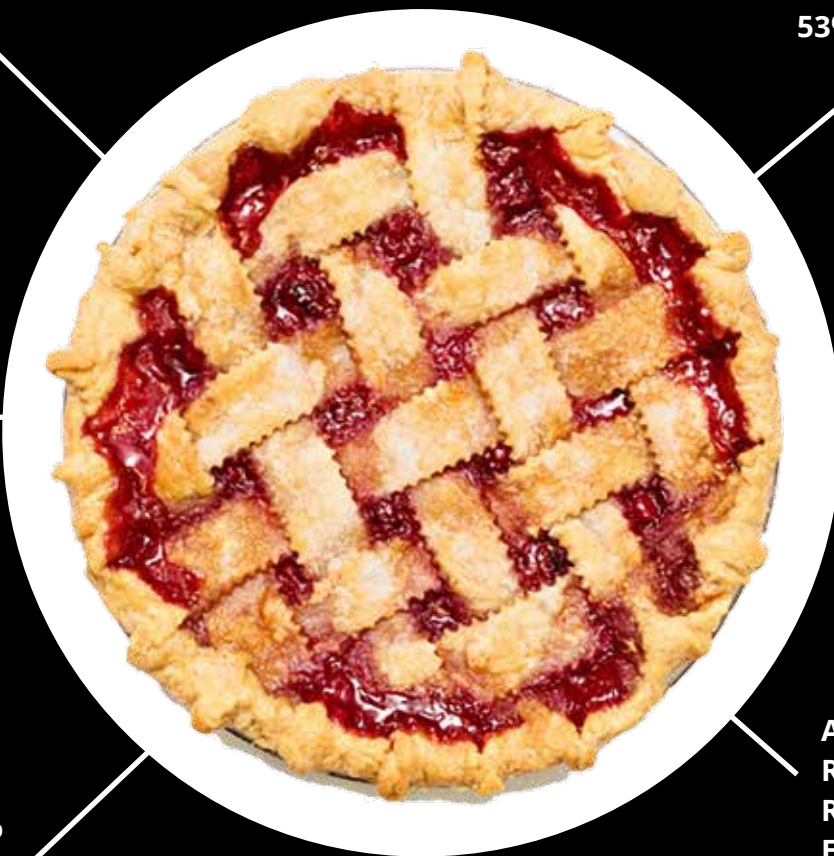
53% Women

**Fortune 100 & 500
Companies**

Age 19-74

**Manager/VP 40%
Director 30%
Freelance/CEO 30%**

**Army Rangers,
Red Cross leaders,
Rock group Audio
Engineer, Real Estate
CEO, Brand Manager,
Product Manager,
Fundraiser, Teacher...**



ALUMNI INDUSTRIES

Accounting
Apparel
Arts
Automotive
Aviation & Aerospace
Biotechnology
Brand
Broadcast Media
Business Equipment
Chemicals
Childcare
Coaching
Construction
Consulting
Consumer Electronics
Consumer Goods
Defense & Space
Design
Ecommerce
Education
Electronic Mfg.
Energy
Entertainment
Event Planning
Fashion
Film
Financial Services
Food & Beverage
Franchise
Gaming
Government
Grocery
Healthcare
Hospitality
HR
Industrial
Automation
Information Services
Insurance
International Trade
IT
Law
Logistics & Supply
Chain
Management
Consulting
Manufacturing

Marketing
Medicine
Nonprofit
Oil & Gas
Packaging
Pharmaceuticals
Photography
Physics
Professional Services
Public Relations
Publishing
Real Estate
Recycling
Retail
Self-development
Semiconductors
Sports
Tech, enterprise
Tech, startups
Telecommunications
Translation
Travel & Tourism
Venture Capital

Most Common Alumni and Student Job Titles

1. Marketing manager
2. Director of marketing
3. VP of Marketing
4. Small business owner
5. Product manager
6. Project manager
7. Operations manager
8. Head of operations
9. Freelancer
10. Software engineering
11. Designer/ senior designer
12. CEO/ founder
13. Director of client services

“Will this be on the test?”

Rethinking online education

BY SETH GODIN

The first generation of online learning came with a lot of hype but didn't fully deliver on its promise.
What does the future hold?

A few years ago, a computer science course online broke records and signed up 100,000 students. It was a revelation. Students from all over the world, without regard for their ability to pay, formal schooling or connections, were all able to take an advanced course from a world-class professor.

At a time when tuition at an Ivy League school is more than \$40,000 a year (\$5,000 a course), this online course delivered more than three billion dollars worth of higher learning aggregate value for free.

This is the sort of mammoth economic and access transformation that the internet enables.

The media was abuzz. Net theorists, teachers and organizations were excited because this was the beginning of a mammoth shift in the way everyone would learn everything. Not only a college education, but corporate training and everything in between.

Not mentioned in most of the articles was the fact that nearly 99% of the students that enrolled dropped out of the course. One thousand students graduated—an astonishing number, a huge contribution, but the tiniest fraction of the number that began the course.

In real life, a dropout rate of 99% endangers even a tenured professor's career.

But, you might say, it's the internet. We've come to associate the internet as low-engagement, a drive-by experience. We take for granted that the internet offers us things that are slightly flaky, or easy. So we're not surprised when the drop out rate is so high. Easy in, easy out.

But it doesn't have to be this way.

The course was as well-designed as a real-world lecture and the teacher was qualified and engaging, but it's not a surprise that the dropout rate was so high: As soon as education gets difficult (and useful education always gets difficult) it's social pressure, peer pressure and our own need to fit in and achieve that often keeps us going. The typical online course provides precious little of any of these elements.

*Your peers can't see
you, which makes it
difficult to see yourself.*

It's not surprising that traditional universities embraced online learning—it's at the heart of their charter. And countless organizations jumped in as well, because it appears to be not only a public good, but also a cheap way to train your people, with zero marginal cost and plenty of upside for everyone.

Centralized content, top-down control of the syllabus, the ability to approve every interaction—these are the hallmarks of a process that fits most bureaucracies.

Here's the thing: Large universities have built their institutions around lectures, tests and accreditation. So have many internal training functions.

Lectures are at the heart of the last century of higher learning. A proven scholar orates in front of a class of selected students.

Tests are the way institutions enforce compliance. They're the stick.

And **accreditation** is the carrot. Put up with the lectures and the tests and we'll give you the certificate, the scarce piece of paper that is (supposed to be) worth far more than the effort you went through to get certified.

In one question, then, an easy way to understand modern education: “Will this be on the test?”

The student absorbs, the student regurgitates, the student gets the prize of a degree (and a job).

Modern industrialized education is like a job because, in large measure, it's funded by the very same folks who offer jobs. It's like a job because school was invented to train us to be compliant in our jobs. And it's like a job because compliance is easy to scale.

We've seen that when knowledge jobs meet the internet, they change. And now we're seeing that online education is having trouble acting like a job as well.

Online courses can't offer too much in the way of credit (because there's too little scarcity) and online tests are difficult to administer in high-stakes situations. Worst of all is the fact that few people in the age of a TED talk will eagerly sit through a traditional lecture when there's little at stake.

This has led to an explosion of low-stakes, as-much-fun-as-vocational online courses like the well-executed ones offered by Skillshare and Udemy. But because the stakes are lower, the amount of transformative learning that goes on is lower. It's possible for a semester at Harvard Business School to change a life—but less likely it will happen in a lecture course online.

Traditional schooling is based on top-down power, fear and an elusive carrot. It uses brute force to move large numbers of people down a straight line of education toward a norm.

And the challenge for traditional educators is that when they go online, they have very little power, the fear that comes from hard work causes dropouts and the carrot feels very far away indeed.

Last year, I set out to try to find a different way to teach online. I decided that I wouldn't create an analog of real-life learning online, but instead create a fundamentally new way to cause change to happen.

I'm sharing the results of that process here, because I believe we're entering a new generation of online learning. **This is how we built the altMBA.**

At its core: enrollment, not tests. Experiences not media consumption. Peer to peer, not top down.

Enrollment is a simple concept: People are there because they want to be, eager to move forward, on precisely the same road that the course is. They are moving forward, and the job of the course isn't to cajole, it's to transform.

Students are on this bus because they want to be.

Experiences are at the heart of change. We change when we do something, when we interact with the world. Lectures weren't chosen as the default in traditional real-world courses because they maximize educational outcomes. They were chosen as the default because they are the best way to efficiently control 45 unenrolled students.

It turns out that the best way to cause change is for people to actually change someone or something else. We learn what we do, not what we're told.

Peer-to-peer scales. We have learned this from Facebook and from eBay and from Etsy and from Kickstarter and from airbnb etc. But school hasn't learned it yet, because the existing bureaucracies in most industries (and yes, education is an industry) are built on the control that comes from going top down.

I began by imagining the opposite of the current system: Create a course that was small, not large. Relatively expensive, not free. Real time not asynchronous. Open to some, not to all. Experiential, not lecture based. With live coaches...

Enrollment—in the outcome and the process—is the secret of effective education.



THE ALTMBA, THE COURSE WE NOW RUN, HAS SOME SURPRISING ELEMENTS:

- The backbone is a hand-built, peer-to-peer learning environment, not a series of lectures. In fact, there are no lectures at all.
- Cohort-based, with groups of five to twenty people engaged constantly with each other (we use Slack as a surprisingly powerful peer-to-peer setting for experiential learning). There is very little time spent engaging directly from top down.
- There are no lectures, no proprietary videos, no secret lessons. Instead, there's a deep syllabus of materials (some required, some optional, most of them free or low cost).
- Almost all of the work happens through the 13 assignments the students complete during the month-long workshop.
- All of the final work is in public. A lot like real life.
- Every student reviews and then comments on several of the other students' assignments.
- Every student takes the five or ten comments received and turns them into a reflective script, detailing actual change, actual growth.
- Everything iterates, again and again.
- The students attending are from dozens of cities, more than a handful of countries, time zones around the world, but every admitted student shares the same mindset of seeking true growth. Self-selection plus curated admissions means that the support network is strong. Enrollment—in the outcome and the process—is the secret of effective education.
- A team of trained coaches engage with the students, holding office hours in videoconferencing software, cheering from the sidelines and holding people accountable—not to a system, not to a test, but to themselves.
- And so we set expectations. Again and again, about how we do things around here.
- The group is always on the edge of something—success, a breakthrough, exhaustion... and then they regroup and do it all again.
- Everyone makes promises, everyone shows up, everyone connects.
- The dropout rate is less than 2%. We graduate over 98% of our matriculated students, an almost symmetric reversal of the typical online course.
- Many of our students receive generous and direct feedback for the first time. And it sticks.

Online learning is no longer about the technology—off the shelf tech is already good enough. It's now about a series of choices that teachers and education impresarios can make (or shy away from).

"Is this voluntary or involuntary?"



"Am I doing this as a proxy for something else, as a payment to get the prize, or is the learning and the experience the prize?"

Transformational experiences almost always involve voluntary enrollment. Crossfit or running a marathon, a middle-aged man learning to play the cello, a teenager giving a TEDx talk. These aren't things we have to do, they are things we choose to do.

When a course begins with that voluntary mindset and then uses that enrollment to generously pile on expectations, connections and promises, the rules are different.

Consider that public school is also known as compulsory education. The posture of everyone involved is that this is something you must do, not something that is sought out.

"Will this be on the test," is a marker, an admission that few people involved in the process are actually willing participants. No test, no learning. No test, no credit. Few seek out tests, tests are something we do to people, not for them.

On the other hand, in the abundance-based economy of online learning, enrollment is essential. It's voluntary, after all. Voluntary like the Boston Marathon, voluntary like a course in public speaking.

Volunteers lean into their work, they gulp instead of sip.

Volunteers aren't given tests, they take an opportunity.

Volunteers don't want less, they want more.

The new generation of educators can now build courses that take these volunteers at their word, pushing them to do the hard work to actually make change happen.

If you want people to become passionate, engaged in a field, transformed by an experience—you don't test them, you don't lecture them and you don't force them. Instead, you create an environment where willing, caring individuals can find an experience that changes them.

The lecture doesn't go away from our culture, and neither do tests. But neither can be at the center of the online learning environment, not any more.

It's not easier to run a course this way, it's actually far more difficult. I'm not sure that matters. What matters is: Does the process work?

We're standing at a crossroads, even bigger than the one that the pioneers of public education saw a hundred years ago. Let's not waste it.

[This is the sequel to Stop Stealing Dreams, now reprinted on Medium.]



A MANIFESTO

For Small Teams Doing Important Work

We are always under tight deadlines, because time is our most valuable asset.

If you make a promise, set a date. No date, no promise.

If you set a date, meet it.

If you can't make a date, tell us early and often. Plan B well prepared is a better strategy than hope.

Clean up your own mess.

Clean up other people's messes.

Overcommunicate.

Question premises and strategy.

Don't question goodwill, effort or intent.

"I'll know it when I see it," is not a professional thing to say. Describing and discussing in the abstract is what we do.

Big projects are not nearly as important as scary commitments.

If what you're working on right now doesn't matter to the mission, help someone else with their work.

Make mistakes, own them, fix them, share the learning.

Cheap, reliable, public software might be boring, but it's usually better. Because it's cheap and reliable.

Yesterday's hierarchy is not nearly as important as today's project structure.

Lock in the things that must be locked in, leave the implementation loose until you figure out how it can get done.

Mostly, we do things that haven't been done before, so don't be surprised when you're surprised.

Care more.

If an outsider can do it faster and cheaper than we can, don't hesitate.

Always be seeking outside resources. A better rolodex is better, even if we don't have rolodexes any more.

Talk to everyone as if they were your boss, your customer, the founder, your employee. It's all the same.

It works because it's personal.

The altMBA Approach to Organizational Effectiveness

At the upper echelons of organizations, hard skills become a commodity. Access to information is no longer a challenge. Hard skills are easy to train for and therefore fungible. The engineers at Microsoft are as good at software development as the ones at Citrix and Amazon. The brand marketers at General Mills are similar to those at Unilever. Hard skills provide little differentiation.

I used to avoid risk at every junction for fear of failure. Now, I see risk as an opportunity.

—Elizabeth Phipps, Manager, Artist Marketing, Sony Music

EVERY TEAM IS CAPABLE OF DOING MORE

The altMBA believes that an organization's competitive edge comes from the motivation and the attitude employees bring to the workplace. We believe that every single person on the team has the ability to be a linchpin. Rising leaders can be taught to notice shifts in the market, to speak up and learn from tighter feedback loops, to communicate in a way that secures buy-in.

WHEN ONE PERSON DOESN'T CONTRIBUTE, THE ENTIRE SYSTEM LOSES IMPACT

Every time an A-player has to cajole a B-or-C player into doing their job, you are unnecessarily taxing your top talent. We give your A-players the tools to level up as change agents, so they stay engaged and inspire the teams around them to shift the culture in a positive direction.

THE STATUS QUO IS NO REASON TO SETTLE

Every day, there is an opportunity to do better. Teams can ship faster, and do so with more care and connection. We believe that the onus is on each employee to raise their hand and ask what more they can do for the company.

THE STRUGGLE ENABLES TRANSFORMATION

Educational programs often give participants too much flexibility to opt out. True learning is often accompanied by struggle and conflict. It is in this process of struggling that leaders learn to challenge assumptions, recognize their own behavior, and see perspectives they take for granted. The altMBA supplements in-house training by applying the right amount of pressure to keep rising leaders on the hook.

EMPLOYERS BENEFIT WHEN THEIR PEOPLE CARE ENOUGH TO SPEAK UP

A point of view is worth more than regurgitation, and learning how to think is more important than being told what to think. At the altMBA, we teach frameworks, not tactics. We have taken on the challenge of optimizing for stronger soft skills, critical thinking, and long-term behavioral change. The best employees don't await instructions—they use good judgment and take initiative. We take top employees and empower them to level up.

“Perhaps your challenge isn’t finding a better project or a better boss. Perhaps you need to get in touch with what it means to feel passionate. People with passion look for ways to make things happen.”

—SETH GODIN, *LINCHPIN: ARE YOU INDISPENSABLE?*

CHOBANI®

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



The altMBA changed my view on what can be accomplished in a day.

Jessica Lauria

SENIOR DIRECTOR OF BRAND COMMUNICATIONS, CHOBANI

Company: Chobani

Title: Senior Director of Brand Communications

Current city: New York, NY

Industry: Consumer goods

Function: Marketing and Communications

After the altMBA, I don't think I can ever make up an excuse again.

The altMBA taught me that you really can do anything you put your mind to, regardless of your parameters.

altMBA grads are going to run the world one day.

The best part of the altMBA was getting recognition for the time and effort you put in.

The altMBA inspired me to keep pushing—don't stop at your first idea. You can, and will, make it better.

Because of the altMBA, I have more focus and intention in my life—I am trying to think about life in a more goal-oriented way. No more vague statements that randomly get thrown out into the world.

The altMBA surrounded me with support I never imagined possible.

The altMBA changed my my view on what can be accomplished in a day.

The altMBA community is shockingly talented.



SONY MUSIC

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



The altMBA community is full of the most inspiring group of people I have ever worked with. There wasn't one individual I crossed paths with, who I didn't learn something from.

Elizabeth Phipps

MANAGER, ARTIST MARKETING, SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT

Company: Sony Music Entertainment

Title: Manager, Artist Marketing

Current city: Toronto, Canada

Industry: Music

Function: Marketing

After the altMBA, I found myself in withdrawal. Withdrawal from the intensity of brain power, emotion and stamina that I leaned on over the previous five weeks. After the altMBA came to a close, after the last project had been posted and we had said our farewells, I found myself pining for this unbridled energy in all of its forms.

And so I asked myself, even though the formal education had ended, what was stopping me from living my life with a bit more (or a lot more) altMBA character from here on out? The answer was: Nothing and no one. And this is what I strive for every day. Even if it's only a glimpse, it has the power to shed light on potential.

The altMBA taught me that achieving perfection is not a real thing. Nor is it something that we should aspire to. I learned that where the good stuff really flows is in the space that fills out when you allow yourself to make mistakes, to thrash, and to struggle.

I used to avoid risk at every junction for fear of failure and embarrassment. Because of the altMBA I have realized that my relationship with risk has a lot to do with the story I tell that surrounds it. And the realization that I have the capacity and the responsibility to change how this story is told. Now, I see risk as an opportunity.

The best part of the altMBA was... how do you name just one? The obvious answer is the people. I have never worked with a more inspiring group. The less obvious answer however is the pace. Even after several days of leaning on the rhetorical question "I can do anything for 5 weeks, right?", I still didn't fully comprehend the intensity of the altMBA sprint. I describe it as having the power and momentum of a race horse's gallop. And you learn to love this pace. To thrive on it in fact. It's what pushes you out of bed in the morning and keeps your stamina intact until your last project has shipped.

DHL	Blezoo	Lumileds	Backup CEO	LaFon & Hall	Vida Pluss AS	Eva Rubin, LCSW	John Wiley & Sons
HNI	Ecolab	Lystable	CampHacker	Malwarebytes	YouCaring.com	ExtensionEngine	Los Angeles Times
IBM	EverFi	P&N Bank	CGConquerX	Missing Link	City of Zurich	Fourcast Health	Microsoft OneNote
BTS	Gokoni	Petzilla	euNetworks	One Acadiana	Design Senator	Giant Leap Fund	Miss Lisa's Music
CEB	Intuit	Polycom	Fishpeople	Selectbidder	Eclectic Music	Heyman Partners	Red Sky Solutions
Geo	Medtel	Spriteli	Geckoboard	SimpliFlying	Fleur de Sucre	Monitise Create	Walt Disney World
GSA	Overit	Unilever	GhettiFish	Tanner Goods	Hands 4 Others	NLand Surf Park	Web2Print Experts
NPR	Pfizer	Zipwhip	IntelliPhi	Teach Action	JGK Consulting	OnderwijsShelden	WhatTheyThink.com
OMD	SAP SE	Automatit	Leolandia	Turner Group	Lisi Aerospace	Operation Smile	Words by Sørensen
P&N	Seedrs	Brookdale	Ninja Zone	VentureScout	Possibilate Ltd	Signal Sciences	Youth Specialties
PwC	Trek10	Coca-Cola	Plug Smart	Warby Parker	Marin Software	Simon Sinek Inc	Amplify Governance
AIPE	Trello	Enlighted	SketchDeck	White Rabbit	Mike Toy Magic	The CBORD Group	ANI Communications
HERE	TRIUMF	eskpertos	Thinslices	Adagio Music	Portland Track	The Influencers	Automatic Handling
Huge	UXPlus	Experient	TNS Global	ARI Products	Prudential Plc	The Prism Group	Bodine Enterprises
IMBU	Vmware	Fab Fours	TOMS Shoes	BhuFoods.com	Statement GmbH	The Slocum Firm	Customer Boomerang
Kiip	Bay.org	Full Wild	Vendorable	Dot Point Co	The BTS Center	Alchemy of Ideas	Dash Digital Group
Kiva	buildOn	Full-Race	Wondermall	Epic Systems	The LEAP Guide	Blenheim Chalcot	Griffin Technology
Nike	Chobani	Kool Foam	AppDynamics	Gemini Media	Veson Nautical	Cricket Wireless	Johnston Press Plc
PBJS	Digitas	Lynda.com	Arena Media	la mera mera	Wine Australia	CrossFit Notch 8	Occidental College
AT&T	HubSpot	Microsoft	Citizengage	p.s. mister	Chiefoutsiders	Emory University	Pencils of Promise
CHEP	Jetstar	Northlich	Divine Play	Pagus:Africa	City of Hobart	General Electric	Royal Blind School
HIVE	JPhrase	Our Crowd	EYE BUY ART	SapientNitro	City of Regina	KPI Therapeutics	Shelley Media Arts
Just	KiwiJar	Placester	F5 Networks	Sheltergroup	Columbia Grain	Kress Foundation	Thousand True Fans
R/GA	Milhaus	Redjamjar	Iora Health	Solid Change	Crush & Lovely	Little Big Words	Thrivent Financial
Sumu	MyLikes	Seabounce	Juicy Audio	Symphony EYC	Dimension Data	LMI Technologies	University Laundry
WWOZ	nuBound	SparkPath	Kickstarter	Truth Coffee	Dynamic Trades	Neon Breadsticks	Whidbey Eye Center
Apple	SheWorx	Techstars	Kira Talent	Virtusa Corp	Etnereta Group	PeopleResult.com	Whole Foods Market
Crave	Syndctd	TimeTrade	Live Nation	VSA Partners	Fair Trade USA	Scoala de Valori	Wild Friends Foods
DAAKE	Taboola	TravelPod	Pearl Izumi	BRIX Holdings	FoundersWanted	The Garage Group	Baptiste Institute
Fjord	Verizon	Undertone	PMXcellence	caminstructor	Gotham Produce	White Coat Group	Belvedere Trading.
Kayco	WeSpire	Youth Gas	RMB Capital	Court Theatre	Hallmark Cards	Barill & Company	Bread Alone Bakery
ONEOK	Caphyon	BlackRock	Snapdata.io	Dell Software	Impact Hub NYC	Canadore College	Canoa Eastern Cape
Pixio	Influxr	Copy Dojo	Tech Teague	Deutsche Bank	KSM Consulting	GOCO Hospitality	Contrail Logistica
Roche	Mijente	Edgewater	The Retreat	Ernst & Young	Layfield Group	Heimdal Security	Dr. Robert Zeitlin
Twyla	NT Next	Fima S.A.	TripAdvisor	Escuela Verde	OLLY Nutrition	KEYW Corporation	FreshFarms Markets
Cisco	Numerai	Freelance	Amarok sprl	FedEx Express	Oohlala Mobile	Man Alive Nation	GenWise Healthcare
Civeo	Plus 39	HeartWare	City Winery	FMT Worldwide	Recharge Class	Qualifirst Foods	Greenbank Pharmacy
Intel	Q Ideas	HIVE/UCSF	Continental	Food Building	Sasha Nicholas	Reedy Industries	One Positive Place
Shell	Synacor	Leolandia	Cymatics.fm	Honeyfund.com	Shoreline Copy	Swedish ME Steel	Radley Yeldar (RY)
Stara	US Bank	mindfresh	Gammadia SA	Label Insight	Squared Online	Tec de Monterrey	Red Sky Solutions,
Tesla	Citibank	Multimek	Grupo Trigo	Louis Vuitton	Marinas Toldeo	The Abraaj Group	See Me After Class
Wipro	Etisalat	Plasco ID	Koshertopia	Magellan Jets	TBWA\Chiat\Day	The Dutch Abroad	Slack Technologies
Amazon	giffgaff	Red Mango	Marmontvale	McBeard Media	The Pigeonhole	Uncommon Schools	TekSavvy Solutions
AWeber	Hill-Rom	Redington	p.s. mister	Melanie Mills	Advantage Signs	A Glimmer of Hope	The Cerulean Group
Bounce	LinkedIn	Spherical	Pearson plc	Neuhaus Ideas	Arnold & Porter	Action and Theory	The Milsop Project
Brolik	Meditech	SpotterRF	Pluralsight	Spring Domino	Aspire Pharmacy	Boomer Web School	The Mosaic Project
Citrix	MissionU	Sungevity	Possibilate	The Old Globe	Banana Republic	Buffelshoek Trust	Thrive Agriculture
Coplex	MobiKwik	TalkTools	Some_Things	The Red Cross	Bounce Exchange	Burton Snowboards	University of Iowa
Dieste	Mondelez	Walgreens	Surge Homes	141Properties	Brook & Whittle	Charity Navigator	Unleash Myself Co.
Dovico	Mycheft	YouCaring	Trado Verso	Adagio Music.	DoSomething.org	Cherwell Software	Amazon Web Services
Evojam	Netscout	72andSunny	White House	Better Future	Emergent Events	Enaxis Consulting	Archangel Aerospace
GitHub	New Kind	Burstworks	Woods Bagot	Beyer & Söhne	Estevez Markets	Golden Consulting	Awake Entertainment
Google	Outbrain	Catchafire	Xcel Energy	Casa de Ideia	Grit Consulting	Lighten UP Global	Deloitte Consulting
Honali	Qualcomm	DuckDuckGo	Aviate Group	Charity:Water	Hawaiian Telcom	Mlive Media Group	Destination Justice
Jumbiz	Sendence	Flow Foods	Bayview Glen	Copy Dojo Ltd	Hootsuite Media	Penguin Group USA	European Commission
Khorus	West Elm	Futuretech	Bells Design	Eric Anderton	laurentmemmi.fr	Phorel Consulting	Global Citizen Year
Kwiziq	Winspire	Info Media	Benefit Link	Gemini Media.	Sterne Agee CRT	27th Letter Media	Green Zebra Grocery
Oracle	3Doodler	INSYS icom	BRANDfluence	Hunter Vision	The Go! Program	Ahead of the Wave	Holcroft Healthcare
POCPAN	AppNexus	Lil Helper	Brown-Forman	LafargeHolcim	The Mother Love	Al Huda Institute	Lululemon athletica
SoulCo	Calabrio	Salesforce	Codec London	Moonfrog Labs	The Produce Mom	Benchic Chocolate	Mediavest Australia
STOPTv	Calexico	Scotiabank	Detroit Labs	Plaster Group	Two Poles Apart	Combahee Creative	Real Life-Real Time
Telkom	ConquerX	Siemens AG	Flashtalking	Radley Yeldar	Affinity Global	Hack Reactor Core	The Financial Times
Vitara	Consilio	Sole Focus	FLG Lacrosse	Replenish PDX	Converticulture		Zwift International
XPLANE	Ficosota	Teco, S.A.	Gradus Group	TetraMap Intl			Arc'teryx Equipment
Acumen	Localist	Wavestream	King of Pops				Build-Your-Business


CLP Power Hong Kong
 Concierge Home Care
 Faust International
 Gershburt Law, P.C.
 Jain & Company CPAs
 Playback Experience
 Sell My Comic Books
 SPACE on Ryder Farm
 Stilleto Spy School
 TekSavvy Solutions.
 The Cerulean Group.
 The Slocum Firm, PC
 Underground Network
 Andra Weber Creative
 Arabesque Production
 Embroidery Unlimited
Fidelity Investments
 Jacobs Entertainment
 Jeff Johnston Writes
 Magic City Analytics
 Promethean Community
 The Qualfirst Group
 AMAG Pharmaceuticals
 Bounce International
 Crown Equipment Corp
 Floream Asia Pacific
 Grupo Trigo / Gokoni
 Osborn International
 PLOT Managed Futures
 Qualfirst Foods Ltd
 Spark the Difference
 Tekkindo Centra Daya
 The Campbell Academy
 The Reserves Network
 Allenby Concept House
Baker & Hostetler LLP
 Cricket Genie Limited
 Cultural Change Group
 Cypress Semiconductor
 Fischer Connectors SA
 Gale-Cengage Learning
Heine Brothers Coffee
Hyundai Motor America
 Incitec Pivot Limited
Lexmark International
 Malya Scented Candles
 Myers and Stauffer LC
 Opportunity E-Cycling
 Stomping Ground Photo
 Three W International
University of Alberta
 Western Manufacturing
 Bromley By Bow Centre
 Clinical Psychologist
 Crown Equipment Corp.
 Gama Point Consulting
 Guided Guitar Lessons
 Honey Bunny's Kitchen
 Inspire Digital Media
 Koshertopia marketing
 National Public Radio
Nielsen IT Consulting
 Summit Point Services
 Trapdoor Technologies
 Alfa Wassermann S.p.A.

Korin Japanese Trading
 OPTION Model and Media
 Rehrig Pacific Company
Sony Music Masterworks
 Studio of KUNG PIK LIU
 Blue Ridge Fly Fishing
 Cadence Design Systems
 flex-pos GmbH & Co. KG
 Prospect Sierra School
 Public Speaking 4 Kids
 Sanofi pharmaceuticals
 TetraMap International
 The Conversion Company
 The Reserves Network,.
 University of Tasmania
WeWork-University Park
 Windsor Wholesale Bait
 Apricot Video Marketing
 GSK Consumer Healthcare
 Kashoo Cloud Accounting
 numberoneson Management
 The Montessori Notebook
United States Air Force
Central Bank of the UAE
 Food Fund International
Herschel Supply Company
 J R Sales and Solutions
 La Molienda Middle East
Northwestern University
The Cleveland Playhouse
 Adaptive Learning Center
 Développements Brookline
 Edgen Murray Corporation
 Einstein Marketing Group
 European Metal Recyclers
 New York Elegant Fabrics
Price Waterhouse Coopers
 Solnet Solutions Limited
Sony Music Entertainment
 Total Customized Fitness
 UNIQA Insurance Group AG
 Blue Dinosaur Paleo Bars
 Cadence Consulting Group
 Elite Enterprises Global
 London Meditation Centre
 Long Term Stock Exchange
 Re/Max Alliance Downtown
Rocky Mountain Institute
 State Street Corporation
 The Little Middle School
University of Washington
 Walgreens Boots Alliance
 Advanced Solar Industries
 Carrot Eye Surgery Clinic
Duke Integrative Medicine
 Thatcher Technology Group
 China Light & Power (CLP)
 Dominion Technology Group

Espace Expression Gallery
 Export Development Canada
 Northwind Pharmaceuticals
 Swift Worldwide Resources
 UL Information & Insights
 Zinc Educational Services
 Aloha Dental & Trybz Media
 Helen Sanderson Associates
 HotSpot Merchant Solutions
Optum (UnitedHealth Group)
 WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff
 Barrie D'Rozario DiLorenzo
 Biotics Research Northwest
 ExtensionEngine / Spriteli
 Hubis Technical Associates
Michael Green Architecture
 New York Meditation Center
SABMiller Procurement GmbH
 The Business of Performing
 The Lanier Property Group.
 Alive and Healthy Institute
 Catholic Health Initiatives
 Grantek Systems Integration
 Les Cahiers de l'imaginaire
 Open to Grow and Emancipate
Thomas Witt Consulting GmbH
 Albury Sayle Primary School
 Colin Beavan/ No Impact Man
 Premier Leadership Coaching
 RP Barnes Associates (RPBA)
 Timeless Changes Foundation
 TNS Global -- North America
 Income Research & Management
 Mibstar Technologies Limited
 Anglicare Central Queensland
Council on Foreign Relations
Kellogg School of Management
 Parelli Natural Horsemanship
 Premier Leadership Coaching,
 Shhivika Chauhan Photography
 Capitol Christian Music Group
 Digital Transformation Office
 Nelson Capital at Wells Fargo
 Princeton Leadership Services
 ShineOn Educational Solutions
 #Not1MoreDeportation campaign
 Accomplice Content Supply Co.
Bank of America Merrill Lynch
 Beehive Sport and Social Club
 Hemminger Law Group Westshore
 McPherson's Consumer Products
 Innovations for Poverty Action
 Sapphire Compliance Management
 University of British Columbia
 Business Marketing Association
 Department of Veterans Affairs
 innovateandgrowconsulting gmbh
 American Translator Association

Hudson County Community College
 Ministerio de Educación, España
 Peloton Coaching and Consulting
 Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin
University of Colorado, Boulder
 La Mera Mera / Tec de Monterrey
 Licensed Clinical Social Worker
 Transformation Consulting Group
 Australian Broadcast Corporation
Bright Horizons Family Solutions
 Portland Underground Grad School
 Engineers Without Borders Canada
 Practicing Perfection Institute
 Serenity Therapeutic Reflexology
 Weiniger Group and RE/MAX Premier
Louisiana Department of Education
 International Management Education
 National Outdoor Leadership School
 San Francisco Emergency Management
 Southern California Edison Company
 The Sound of Music Australian Tour
 Medical Device Management Services
 Renaissance Association Management
 Total Environment Building Systems
 TUBA (Division of Dovico software)
 Orbis Investment Management Limited
SALT by American Student Assistance
 ANINIA Grinberg Method Practitioner
 Aqua Online/ Wunderman South Africa
 Renaissance Association Management,
 Transformation Consulting Group P/L
 Arthur M. Blank Family of Businesses
CohenTaylor Executive Search Services
 California University of Pennsylvania
 Privilegio Inmobiliarios
 Ronit Kfir Interior Planning & Design
 Squared Online / Floream Asia Pacific
 Miss Lisa's Music, formerly SoundSteps
 Web2Print Experts. / WhatTheyThink.com
 Home Care and Hospice Association of NJ
 Taut Body and Artcaffe Restaurant Group
University of California, San Francisco
 Diego Springs Academy-Learn4Life Network
 Replenish PDX and Holistic Nutrition Lab
 International Solidarity for Human Rights
University of Denver Sturm College of Law
 Revo Physiotherapy and Sports Performance
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
 Sweet Spot Marketing and Brockton agencies
 Jazz Maastricht, Maastricht Guitar Society
 Discovery Communications, US Hispanic Group
 International Network of Children's Ministry
 Sky International A.G. (subsidiary of BSkyB)
Council on International Educational Exchange
 Royal LePage Commercial Real Estate Brokerage
 The Australian Football League-www.afl.com.au
 The Shenbaum Group (dba Jennifer Buys Houses)
 Better Homes & Gardens Real Estate - Go Realty

We're proud of our alumni and the organizations where they lead



The altMBA taught me that almost every good idea can be made better by asking a better question.

—KACI LAMBE,
[FORMER] SENIOR WEB DESIGNER, **WHOLE FOODS MARKET**

"I applied to the altMBA with three expectations: to learn how to ship my best work, to learn how better provide and accept feedback, and to discover catalysts that would help me influence change. I'm grateful that the altMBA helped me achieve those things. It was time and energy well spent. It opened my eyes."

—CAMILA NARANJO, DIRECTOR ISV CO-SELL LEAD,
MICROSOFT

"I embraced and understood abstract ideas like problem framing, constraints, and sunk costs more than I'd ever been able to from a textbook or lecture."

—ANGELA PHAM, MANAGER, THOUGHT LEADERSHIP
INSTITUTE, **PWC**

"What I learned in the altMBA contributed to my leadership. It contributed to my understanding of business and entrepreneurialism. I'm able to more strategically and specifically lead my team after having been through the altMBA experience."

—LAUREN EVANS, STORE MANAGER,
LULULEMON ATHLETICA

“After altMBA, not only do I accept meaningful feedback, but I go looking for it. My approach to having others critique my work has completely changed and I do not say that lightly.”

—James Murphy, Marketing Manager, Live Nation



Camila Naranjo

DIRECTOR, ISV CO-SELL AMERICAS LEAD, MICROSOFT

It's a growth mindset based approach where you get better at every deliverable.

Tell us what you do and what your work typically entails.

Across the Americas, I work with our enterprise and midmarket sales teams to help solve customer problems, optimize their operations and maximize their business potential using the power of the cloud. How? by leveraging infrastructure and vertical software solutions that work on Microsoft's cloud platform: Azure.

What's the thing you liked most about being part of the altMBA?

"Like-mindedness." I was delighted to be around people who shared a strong passion for helping others and strong determination for being their very best self.

What's something you approached differently recently because of what you learned during the altMBA?

Everything in my personal and professional life. In the past, when meeting a different opinion, one that I didn't necessarily share, I usually opted to persuade.

Today I ask: What is she/he seeing that I'm not?

How has the altMBA helped you level up?

I now operate in quick, rich cycles to optimize learning and strong deliverables.

By shipping thoughtfully yet quickly, I am able to gather broader worldviews and richer feedback very early in the process.

The outcome is a cohesive and inclusive approach to a strong deliverable. By the time it's completed, everyone involved has weighed in.

The altMBA helped me realize that learning happens in cycles. I was constantly motivated to deliver my best work and further develop the concepts of "perfect enough" and "no right or wrong answers."

I was encouraged to help others deliver their best work and share what I thought they could have done differently using questions rather than statements.

It's a growth mindset based approach where you get better at every deliverable. I was asked to reflect and humbly share what I could have done differently.

In the process, not only did I discover how I could sell better by looking at the process from a different angle but, I learned about world views and empathy which are crucial concepts in the business world today.

Any other comments or recommendations about the altMBA?

The altMBA presents a very different educational concept. Rather than to lecture, it provides a space to learn.

Students are guided by coaches, not teachers, who strive at making you uncomfortable by providing just enough direction.

Their intent is that you can figure your way through the process and have an open path for self-discovery in a safe and generous environment. To me, this was extraordinary to have!

The program is demanding and the rhythm is very active. Since there are no teachers, no certificate, no grades, think this program may be best suited for someone who demonstrates solid initiative and commitment to self-learning and development.

Someone who has a strong interest in developing how to provide and receive feedback would also benefit strongly.

I expected traditional marketing and sales concepts to be presented and developed through the course. The program does nothing of that sort.

You will be asked to prepare a post on a given set of questions. The project will involve business and marketing concepts such as creating marketing campaign or a sales pitch but, it will do it from an innovative perspective.

Rather than ask me how to improve my pitch, it will ask me to explain why I would purchase from my competitor.

In the process, not only did I discover how I could sell better by looking at the process from a different angle but, I learned about world views and empathy which are crucial concepts in the business world today.

I LOVED it. I'm a big fan. In marketing terms: I'm an advocate.

In case you are interested: Seth doesn't chime in much. No grandiose opening or closing, no continuous encouragement, no validation.

The interesting takeaway is that the content and rhythm are so strongly marked by his creativity and influence, that such expectation becomes irrelevant a few days into the course.

Why? Because you will figure out there's a tremendous amount to be learned from the least expected players in the course...

ALUMNI INDUSTRIES

Art	Media
Fitness	Construction
Consulting	Finance
Design	Food
Grocery	Healthcare
Ecommerce	Law
Technology	Marketing
Medicine	Photography
Education	Retail

ENTREPRENEURS ARE EMPOWERED BY THE ALTMBA

The altMBA is a springboard for new ventures and new ideas. Over half of students are freelancers, entrepreneurs, and business owners who are making an impact.

I signed up for the altMBA chiefly because I've been reading Seth for years and instinctively knew that this would be an amazing opportunity. I'd just set up a new business and felt sure I'd learn the missing pieces that I'd need to be successful. The reality turned out to be so much more than that. I instantly had chance to bring all the learning into my business. I got incredible constructive, supportive and honest feedback from fellow students and my coaches. Above all... I made friends. I found my tribe. And I'm part of a group of people intent on making a positive impact on this world. The best is yet to come.

—GRANIA MURRAY, FOUNDER, THE RETREAT

FOUNDERS

Keely Tillotson
Co-Founder and CEO
Wild Friends Foods

Adam Braun
Founder
Pencils of Promise

Mark Skaggs
Director
Moonfrog Labs
Creator of Farmville
[Former] SVP at Zynga

Mike Mays
Co-Founder and president
Heine Bros Coffee

Dan Leader
Founder and CEO
Bread Alone

David Vendley
Co-Founder
Calexico restaurants

Luke Miner
Co-Founder
YouCaring.com

SMB/ BUSINESS OWNERS

Yasser Khan
Surgeon, Business owner
Carrot Eye Surgery Clinic

Cory Boehs
President
Kool Foam

Chris Durban
Co-Founder and Translator
Trado Verso Translation

Tom Vein
Audio Engineer
Freelance for the Smashing Pumpkins
and Blink-182

Adam Lemmon
Owner and Founder
Badass Backpacks

Michael Mequio
Ophthalmologist
Whidbey Eye Center

Robin Estevez
Owner of grocery chain
Vice President at Estevez Markets Foodtown

If you're thinking of a career change, join the ruckusmakers who've done it before:

Jesus Roalandini, freelance **filmmaker**, former **senior art director**, digital imaging at **Kate Spade**

Ryon Lane, freelance **producer**, former **lawyer**, working on 3-year project with **Salesforce**

Rachel Landers, freelance **designer**, **founder** & creative director, formerly senior UX designer at **Whole Foods Market**

Josh Warman, now at a stealth **startup**, formerly a Project Executive at **IBM**

Karen Diaz, **founder** at Igniting Lightmakers, formerly a Client Executive-Education and Government at **IBM**

Eric Moeller, **managing director** at Copy Dojo, formerly Director, **Global Service Portfolio Management** at **SAP**

Nikole Batista, **owner and creative director** at Cloth/Curios, formerly **Brand Design Manager** IMBU/AirDye Solutions

My creative confidence is growing immensely. This process confirmed for me that I could map out taking on a big project, stick to the plan, and have a completed product when I'm done with altMBA. Community feedback, peer support, shared beliefs in personal potential, and the right to pursue happiness make the altMBA a perfect place to prepare to leap.

—RYON LANE, PARTNER/PRODUCER, WHITE RABBIT

What a great way to start the new year! The altMBA was the challenge, structure, and community I needed to learn how to successfully create meaningful change. Through the learning, assignments, discussions, and reflections, I realized I am capable of so much more. I am convinced that the altMBA has re-wired my brain.

—BRADLEY SPITZER, FREELANCE PRODUCER AND PHOTOGRAPHER

I feel insightful, integrated, & energized to challenge the status quo.

—PAM ROSAL, NATIONAL OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP, RIVER PROGRAM MANAGER

Freelancer



Tom Vein

AUDIO ENGINEER, THE SMASHING PUMPKINS

*I didn't know
if this was for me...
I was in a seemingly
unrelated industry...*

How has the altMBA helped you level up?

The altMBA has changed the fundamental way I understand and interact with others. It has taught me to live with a deeper sense of empathy and compassion, to look at life from a new point of view.

The altMBA has helped me understand that every person has a unique underlying story that leads and guides the way they live. That even though someone may have the opposite opinion doesn't mean they are wrong or misinformed in their thinking or reasoning. But that their story is correct, and if you can begin to understand that story you can start to make change happen.

Tell us what you do and what your work typically entails.

I'm an audio engineer, more specifically I'm a monitor engineer. A monitor engineer helps the musicians at a concert hear what they want to hear. I am the point person off stage that the artist communicates to.

I help musicians feel more comfortable performing on stage. In these stressful and vulnerable environments, I pay close attention to the artist and make sure they are taken care of so they can do their job properly.

Though a solid knowledge of audio fundamentals is necessary, the more complicated requirements are the capacity to interpret the subtleties of the musician on stage and the ability to immediately solve problems in very stressful situations, all while remaining calm and collected.

“I’ve been reading Seth’s blog and books for years but didn’t know how I could actionably apply a lot of this information into my life.”

What’s the #1 thing you liked about being part of the altMBA?

The number one thing I liked about being in the altMBA is the format of the course. From the very first meeting over video chat, I instantly knew this was the future of education. The way the subject matter is assembled, and how the interactions took place, you realize that this platform was something unique and groundbreaking.

You are given real-world, actionable projects in an environment of like-minded people. Peers that wouldn’t put up anything but first rate work. You were instantly called out and probed for not going deep enough, not trying hard enough and not being honest enough with yourself. It made it challenging in a way that I had never experienced before.

What’s something you approached differently recently because of what you learned during the altMBA?

Since the altMBA I’ve approached criticism as a welcomed gift, an opportunity to learn more about myself. It’s easy to feel like comments and criticism are a personal attack, but now I seek them out. Change in yourself doesn’t happen when you can only interpret from your own comfortable perspective. When you welcome criticism and allow yourself to be uncomfortable and fully process it without getting defensive, you get to see a side of yourself you may usually be blinded to. You may just find an answer you’ve been seeking out.

Any other comments or recommendations about the altMBA?

I didn’t know if this was for me, I didn’t actually think it was, but I applied anyways. I’ve been reading Seth’s blog and books for years but didn’t know how I could actionably apply a lot of this information into my life. I was in a seemingly unrelated industry at the time of application and took a chance, made a leap and it changed my life. This course thoroughly and thoughtfully combined and distilled the essence of Seth’s teaching on leadership and change-making into one-of-a-kind groundbreaking exercise that penetrates deep and leaves a lasting impression.

*I took a chance,
made the leap
and it changed
my life.*

What is it for ?

What is it for ?

What is it for ?

What is it for ?

What is it for ?

DESIGN THINKING, ALL THE TIME

“Every element has a purpose. If you don’t know what it is, how will you achieve it?”

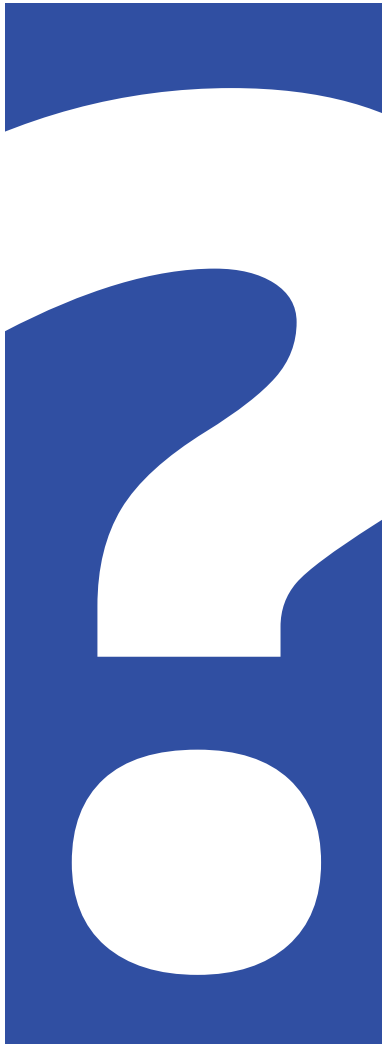
WHAT ENGINEERS KNOW

Everything has a function. Every element of the bridge or the spaceship is there for a reason, even if the reason is decorative.

When NASA engineers put together the payload for an Apollo rocket, there was real clarity about trade offs.

Everything weighs something, everything takes up space. Nothing goes on a lunar module unless there’s a really good reason.

And the same thing is true of the way you will spend your next hour, the question you will choose to ask or not ask, the people you will seek out on your journey: **What is it for?**



THE RESET

Every time we spend (spend time, spend money, spend trust, spend attention) we do it in the hope of getting something in return.

Sometimes, all we seek is the satisfaction of having done something well. Or amusing ourselves. Or contributing in some way.

Along the way, we’ve gotten so good at spending that we do it out of instinct. We spend our time and our money and our trust on things because we always have.

But the world changes, faster every day. What we seek is transformation. The external and internal pressures on us keep changing as well.

There’s a simple way to reset.

We can ask, “what’s it for?”

In an organization that understands what it’s for, the thing we want is the change we seek. Everything we do has that in mind.

That announcement before the flight, where they teach people how to put on their seatbelts... what’s it for?

Resumes, job interviews... what are they for?

Working in the office instead of remotely... what’s it for?

Spending 30 extra hours looking for typos... what’s it for?

That’s the essence of design thinking and a fundamental part of the altMBA: Exploring what it means to build with the end in mind, to be clear with ourselves and others about what it’s for.

By **STEPHANIE HABIF**

Behavioral Scientist doing ux research+ behavior design strategy
for consumer engagement. Lecturer @stanforddschool;
Affiliate of Stanford Persuasive Tech Lab.

How to Design an Online Course with a 96% Completion Rate

Online education is a \$100+ billion dollar industry and growing. Easier access to education makes the world better, and, according to MIT researchers, people who finish online courses end up with the same learning gains as those who physically attend class. Trouble is, to reap the benefits, students have to finish the course. Too bad studies show **the average completion rate of online courses is 4%.**

So where is the other 96%?

I found it at the altMBA.

The altMBA—one of the most successful online learning experience to date—has a 96% completion rate. It's an online leadership and management workshop founded in 2015 by Seth Godin. The program uses digital tools like Slack, WordPress and Zoom to engage more than 100 students at a time in an intense four-week course. In 2016, students from 27 countries and 85 industries worldwide participated.

In a domain that suffers, let's say, opportunistic engagement statistics, what is the altMBA doing to defy such odds?

As a behavior designer and teacher, I'm constantly curious about initiatives that impact students and push the edge in education. For the past few years I've been teaching several courses at the d.school at Stanford, including the popular course "The Consumer Mind and Behavior Design" with bestselling author Nir Eyal. We bring into our classroom the latest and greatest ways to design for consumer engagement.

So I reached out to Wes Kao at the altMBA, and asked for all her secrets. It wasn't just the completion rate that impressed me, but the rigor of the program: altMBA students voluntarily opt-in to the ~3-5 hours of work per day everyday on top of their full-time jobs during the four week program.

Wes and I discussed the program evolution, how the altMBA leverages technology to bring people closer, and how she uses design-thinking to maximize online student engagement.

SH: You accept around 100-130 students per session and employ a total of 15 coaches. How did you determine this number/ratio?

WK: At the heart of every learning engagement is the ratio that the organization chooses. From Socrates tutoring one or two people to a MOOC with 100,000, choosing this number determines so much else—and so it was one of the first decisions we made.

We begin everything we do (and teach) at the altMBA with the question, "what is it for?" Our answer for the workshop itself is: To change people. To fundamentally alter the way that they see, the way they make decisions, the way they engage and enroll others in their journey.

We spent months looking at different combinations on the x-y axes spectrum and what the trade-offs and gains would be. Some questions we considered:

*10 people or 10,000 people per session?
In person or online?
Synchronous or asynchronous?
High touch or low touch?*

Free or expensive?
Content consumption or production?
Dreamers or doers?
Seth-centric or separate entity?
Easy or difficult to complete?
10 people or 10,000 people per session?

One of the guiding principles that came out of this questioning was this: Scale isn't the point. Change is the point. And once we discarded scale, we added coaches into the mix (because you can't have 10,000 coaches in a 100,000 person course).

From there, finding the platonic ideal of 10 coaches, 10 students per coach seemed a natural place to settle.

SH: How do you touch people in an effective way by replicating the experience of working with Seth without really having him there?

WK: Seth is a non-scalable asset. Students are learning his material, for sure. But when you go to college, it's not just what you are learning—it's physically being in lecture hall and being in dorms and being with other students.

We wanted to tap into mechanisms to enable people to be more accountable. We kept asking ourselves: Is there a way to use online tools in a way in which students won't give up so easily?

For instance, like a traditional university experience, we decided to enable students:

a) to see each other during learning sessions, so we use Zoom;

b) to learn on a synchronous schedule, so we have students meet in real-time Tues/Thurs/Sunday;

c) to receive coaching support, so we use Slack for coach/student interactions.

Synchronous times for students getting together is critical, and students are required to attend. People push back in the beginning, but then they do very well.

SH: How do you know whether or not something is working?

WK: People want to succeed, so finding that sweet spot around how much structure to build in versus how open to leave it is something we are constantly observing.

We rarely ask people for feedback in the traditional way, after the fact, with structured surveys. Instead, we observe behavior and watch how people interact to see if they are acting the way we designed for or not.

Along the way, we explored not only how to teach a concept, but how to engage students more deeply, how to encourage honest and rigorous peer feedback and how to create a platform that was both safe and in public. We didn't get any of this right at first, but having a posture of rapid evolution helped us turn the workshop into what it is now.

SH: Was there a formal job description for your role when you left SF for NYC to work with Seth? If so, would you be willing to share the altMBA Director job description to highlight what you regularly do?

WK: I joined the team as Special Projects Lead in the fall of 2014. There wasn't a formal job description.

Half of my time was helping to launch and lead the go-to-market roll out for various projects, including launching Seth's Udemy course, the Your Turn Challenge, Ruckusmaker Workshop, design prototyping days, Seth on Instagram, etc.

The other half was ideating with Seth and building a case for what projects he should do next. This included identifying market opportunities, seeing where we had leverage, and analyzing how different business models and distribution channels could work. This eventually led to the start of the altMBA.

I'm fortunate to work with an amazing team and community. Again, there's not a formal job description, but I can share some of how I spend my time:

Making sure our team is highly-leveraged, fulfilled, productive.

Planning our short and long term growth strategy.

Prioritizing where we invest our attention, which includes identifying what we could and should be doing, then working with folks on the team to get things done.

Deciding what problems we should be solving. Is it actually a problem? What's the impact? To whom? Is it worth solving? Then, finally, how should we solve it?

Finding ways to reach people who would be glad to know we exist and be glad that they did the workshop, using approaches that we'd be proud of down the line.

Working with organization who realize that soft skills are the difference between A-players and everyone else, and helping them pick which employees should take the program.

Experimenting, which sometimes feels like getting punched in the face repeatedly.

SH: Who do you consider competitors to altMBA?

WK: Inertia, fear of the unknown, fear of change, fear/dislike of hard work. It would have been significantly easier to build a workshop like the altMBA if we had direct competitors. Easier to build and easier to find the right students. But our instinct is to pioneer, not to grow market share.

In summary,
takeaway design guidelines
for making or sponsoring
an online learning
experience include:

1: Clarify a specific purpose in the form of an answer to the question "What is it for?"

2: Steer clear of already existing online learning programs during the ideation/design phases of your program build.

3: Identify what elements of in-person learning are critical to incorporate for engagement. For instance, altMBA students must be able to see and hear each other when they interact. They must sync to interact at the same mandatory times every week. And students have constant support from their peers and coaches.

4: Design an application process that reveals what you need to know about the kind of people you want. For example, traditional education places a lot of emphasis on criteria and less on spirit of eagerness. The altMBA looks for how ready the applicant is to work hard and commit, as well as track record.

5: Stick to the integrity of your design. The market will constantly push you towards cheaper, easier, less difficult to accomplish. It does not always pay to customize an experience.

Six Common Questions About the altMBA

1. What kind of people do well in the altMBA? What will my classmates be like?

Your classmates will be from 85+ industries, hundreds of cities, and dozens of functions. With only 100-140 spots per session, we spend a lot of time curating the right mix of leaders. Because the program is so much about learning from one another and group work, the program is built to expose you to as many new perspectives and personalities as possible.

What we hear the most:

Everyone is far more generous and engaged than I expected...

People discover two things at the same time—everyone is smarter than they expected, and yet, everyone is open and appreciative for the contributions that each student makes.

Just about everyone who is admitted tells us that they were surprised we chose them, and then adds that they are glad they took the leap. Go ahead and apply... you might surprise yourself.

2. What is the time commitment?

The altMBA is designed to be a part-time program that fits into the work schedules of busy professionals. Our students put 20 to 30 hours a week into the workshop, all while maintaining commitments at high-profile day jobs. This comes out to about 3-4 hours per day on average, including weekends. It's intense, but as our alumni say: "You can do anything for a month."

We put students into class times based on your time zone. You can choose from Pacific, Central, Eastern, or London. Group meeting days are Tuesdays and Thursdays 6-9pm, and Sundays 10am-6pm as a time block, though you may not use up the entire time.

3. I work full time and have a family. Will I have time to do the altMBA?

The altMBA was designed for full-time working professionals. Over 90% of our students work at fast-paced companies or are busy freelancers, and many have families.

Most of the workshop is project based. This means that there's solo time (doing the research, digging in deep) as well as group time. We have found that dedicated students find the time to do both, no matter what else is going on around them.

Here are what some of our alumni are saying:

"That entire month was probably the busiest I've ever been professionally, on top of doing the altMBA. I would say ironically, the busier I got, the more productive I actually was." —Ian Scott, Director of Product at Start With Why/ Simon Sinek, Inc, formerly product manager at Kickstarter

"The altMBA changed my view on what can be accomplished in a day." —Jessica Lauria, Senior Director of Brand Communications, Chobani

"The altMBA is a herculean task. It is exhausting. But it's worth every iota of time and effort you invest. If I could do the altMBA again a year from now, I would."

—Max Kramer, Product Manager, Trello

4. The workshop is project-based.

Can you share what the projects are like?

There are three projects per week, all created so they can be completed within a few hours on days where you have class. **The projects are meant to mimic the types of work you might need to do in real life at your workplace.**

There's a mix of individual vs group work. Some projects are solo, others are entirely group-based, others you split up the work and come back together.

Almost all of the content you consume (about 25% of your time) is material that you can find in other places. The altMBA isn't about secret recipes—instead, we focus on **the extraordinary power of experience.**

There are different multimedia formats, including blog posts, written analyses, filming a two minute video of yourself talking into the webcam, or presentations. And for the type of thinking involved, the projects include analysis, critical thinking, creativity, ideation, brainstorming, and practicing how to implement frameworks until they become second nature.

5. Is the altMBA for people who know what they want to do, or for people who are figuring out their path?

Both. The common thread is that leaders arrive in the altMBA with a fire in the belly and an eagerness to do more.

We have corporate students who are happy in their current roles, but have side projects or are curious to learn better ways to lead initiatives within their organizations.

We have students in transition: startup operators figuring out the path forward, people venturing out to start their own business, freelancers who see a trajectory and want to get to the next level.

Change can be unpredictable so it helps to come with an open mind. We've had plenty of alumni say they came in with a specific tactical idea of what they thought they wanted. Through the process of the four weeks, they came to realize that they actually wanted something completely different.

The act of doing the projects and getting peer feedback can provide clarity. It can give you a better understanding of where you have leverage, what your constraints and assets are, how to be resourceful, and how to move past roadblocks.



6. What happens after the altMBA?

Do people keep in touch?

For most workshops, nothing happens once it's over. When an event ends, everyone is on their own.

With the altMBA, after the intensive month of the workshop, we make it easy to stay connected.

On your last day, we will invite you to our exclusive alumni platform Forward Link, where the altMBA alumni are waiting to meet you. You'll be joined by leaders hailing from 74 other countries, and invited to discussions with graduates of the Akimbo workshops as well (more than 10,000 so far).

There are project groups, book groups and industry-specific conversations as well. We offer weekly prompts, impromptu discussions and a chance for deeper connections with people from each of our previous sessions.

We have an alumni-only Facebook group, LinkedIn group, newsletter, directory, and informal meetups in the real world. We also have a weekly job newsletter and we're constantly building and testing new ways to engage with our alumni family.

Time after time, we hear from alumni that the best part of the altMBA is the people that become connected to one another. We hear about alumni becoming friends, going to a fellow alumni's wedding, hiring each other, doing mastermind groups together, grabbing coffee when they're flying through another alumni's city.

We open the doors. The connecting is up to you.

Want to know more?

*Visit altmba.com or drop us a line at
hello@altmba.com. We'd love to hear from you.*





