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Management

Re-solutionary Learning:
preparing challenge managers to lead with impact

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Diseño gráfico: Seteseoito

Prologue

By **Jaime Castelló** – Academic Director, Advantere School of Management

Before I became a professor, I spent years in the corporate world – leading teams, managing crises, and struggling to make decisions under pressure with little time and even less information. I had built my career as an executive realizing that management, always a better word than business, was about solving problems, driving innovation, and striving to create a positive impact. At that time, I also believed –perhaps naively – that, for all my struggles and those that I witnessed in my competitors and colleagues, academia held the answers to the challenges we faced in the real world.

When I finally had the opportunity to further my education with an MBA at a prestigious school, I sought insights from research, looked for guidance in business texts, and turned to academic frameworks, hoping they would help me navigate the complexity of managing a business. And yet, I seldom found what I was looking for.

Academia seemed detached from the complexity of real decision-making. The models were elegant but abstract, the case studies were informative but narrow and often outdated and the theories were interesting but hardly actionable. While I respected the intellectual rigour of business schools, I couldn't help but feel that they were focusing on the wrong problems – or at least, problems that had already been solved.

Eventually, I crossed over from the corporate world into academia, specifically into executive education, determined to help bridge this gap. But as I taught and struggled to develop programs and courses for students eager to learn how to navigate an increasingly uncertain world, I realized that traditional management education had changed very little from when I was a student.

In the early 2000s, we were still teaching students how to manage stability when disruption was the new norm. We were preparing them to optimize existing systems when what the world needed were leaders who could develop new ones, using the innovations that technology was producing and taking advantage of a "flatter" and more open world. We were training them to analyse past successes when their future would demand solutions that had never been imagined before.

The opportunity to finally change all this presented itself with the creation of the Advantere School of Management and with the idea of 'Re-solutionary Learning,' a different approach to management education. When I was asked to join the nascent initiative, I felt like this was an opportunity to do something different.

One of the elements of the 'Re-solutionary Learning' method that I found most appealing was that it was built not on the assumption that students should absorb knowledge but on the belief that they should actively create it, making them active participants in their learning process. The idea behind this was to develop leaders who could manage uncertainty, embrace complexity, and design solutions for problems that don't yet have a 'playbook' on how to solve them.

One of the greatest failures of traditional business education is that it often separates knowledge from action, as it treats management as an abstract discipline rather than an evolving challenge that demands constant learning, adaptation, and reinvention.

I have experienced this firsthand. As an executive, I faced problems that couldn't be solved with formulas. Decisions had to be made with incomplete information in environments where ambiguity was the only certainty. I had to navigate crises, inspire teams, balance conflicting priorities, and rethink strategies in real-time.

'Re-solutionary Learning' seeks to change traditional business education as it challenges the idea that business education should be confined to the classroom. It demands that students face real challenges, work with real organizations, and engage with the world in real time. It strives to equip them with the ability to think critically, act decisively, and lead with purpose –not through memorization but through experience.

Besides helping them become resolutive and flexible managers, at Advantere, we do not ask our students, "What kind of job do you want?" Instead, we ask, "What kind of problems do you want to solve?"

We believe that the world does not need more managers who merely follow instructions, execute plans, or optimize systems. It needs leaders who challenge the status quo, create what is missing, and redefine what success means in business.

For us at Advantere a 'Challenge Manager' is someone who thrives in uncertainty. Someone who is not afraid to question outdated assumptions, experiment with new models, and take risks in pursuit of meaningful progress. Someone who sees business not just as a career but as a platform for impact, innovation, and change.

This is not just a theoretical ideal. It is the reality that organizations, societies, and economies are demanding. Companies today are not looking for professionals who can simply execute a plan – they are looking for problem solvers, system thinkers, and adaptable leaders. They are looking for individuals who understand that profitability and purpose are not opposing forces but necessary partners.

This book offers more than a description of a new learning approach. It is a proposal for change.

If you are a student, I urge you to ask yourself whether you are seeking an education that merely gives you a credential or one that will allow you to make a difference. Do not settle for passive learning. Demand an education that challenges, transforms, and prepares you for the real world.

If you are an educator, I urge you to think about how you are preparing your students for the reality they will face. Are you giving them the tools to navigate uncertainty, or are you simply passing down outdated knowledge? It is time to shift from teaching as transmission to learning as transformation.

If you are a business leader, I invite you to be part of this change. You, too, have likely searched for answers in academia – only to find that the problems you face are rarely addressed in business schools. We are changing that. We want to collaborate, to bring real challenges into the learning process, and to ensure that the next generation of leaders is ready to face the world not just with knowledge, but with capability, courage, and conviction.

The future belongs to those who embrace uncertainty, act with purpose, and design solutions that go beyond what has been done before.

This is the future we believe in. This is the future we are building.

And we invite you to build it with us.

Content

I.
BACK-GROUND

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"The only thing constant in life is change." This common saying has often been attributed to the Greek philosopher Heraclitus. Despite doubts about the true origins of this popular phrase, society is undoubtedly undergoing significant changes at unprecedented speed. These changes are caused by various factors, such as information and communication technologies, the implementation of legal innovations, changes in prevailing habits and customs, geopolitical movements, or the emergence and disappearance of specific values.

Are the societal developments caused by these changes good or bad for humanity? Do the changes create better conditions for current and future generations to live in a better world? Unfortunately, the United Nations' 2024 report on global progress toward the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) presents concerning findings (United Nations, 2024). Although the last decade has seen improvements in key areas such as child mortality, electricity access, and renewable energy, critical negative trends remain in other development areas, including hunger, peace and security, education, and income equality between countries.

The worrying lack of progress in the SDGs should, of course, be seen in the light of recent global crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic, regional conflicts, and bleak economic outlooks. Beyond question, crises result in economic, social, and psychological decline, yet it is not uncommon to hear that a crisis also opens the windows to new opportunities. Governments, financial agents, companies, and social organizations are responsible for making progress in creating better conditions for current and future generations to live in a better world, regardless of temporary crises. And they should be unwavering in this responsibility.

For any organization – whether governmental, for-profit, or not-for-profit – to fulfill that responsibility, its members and leaders must adopt a proactive and action-oriented outlook on the world, rather than one of reaction and resignation. They need to be prepared for the uncertainties that societal development brings. They must acknowledge that fair and equitable models are neces-

sary for both the economic and educational spheres. Factors such as gender, nationality, income, or sexual orientation must never explain marginalization in terms of development.

Management education plays a central role in preparing the leading members of organizations for that responsibility. More than ever, management education must educate graduates capable of facing uncertainty and creating unexpected solutions to challenges that no one anticipated. Learning by solving or analyzing past organizational problems is insufficient in today's environment. While repeating past solutions can be effective for managing risks, it falls short when the goal is to create innovative solutions and navigate uncertainty. Management education must foster creativity and adaptability to address these evolving organizational and societal needs.

This publication introduces Advantere School of Management's approach to preparing the leaders of tomorrow. Leaders who are ready to lead under uncertainty and to lead with purpose. Managers who act as agents of change in the quest for creating a better world for current and future generations. Managers who are not only competent executives but also visionary leaders who tackle society's grand challenges. We call our approach to management education: **Re-solutionary Learning**.

CHAPTER 1

THE PRESENT AND FUTURE OF MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

The traditional business school model, once the gold standard of management education, faces mounting pressure from multiple directions. Intense global competition, the growing popularity of shorter certification programs, and employers increasingly hiring candidates without traditional degrees are reshaping the business and management education landscape. Meanwhile, the rise of accessible knowledge – driven by technological advancements and accelerated by AI – further challenges the relevance of conventional business schools (Naidoo and Enders, 2022; Berwick, 2023; Uche and Beagle, 2024).

Critics argue that many graduates lack the competencies needed to navigate the high uncertainty and complex societal dynamics organizations face today. For instance, business school alumni are frequently perceived as underprepared for adaptive leadership, systems thinking, or sustainability-driven decision-making – skills increasingly demanded in the modern workplace (Hoffman, 2024). These shortcomings arise from both the traditional structure and paradigm of higher education as a global industry and the limitations of its content and teaching methods.

This chapter explores the core of these challenges, examining the traditional business school model's business structure, curricular focus, and pedagogical approaches. It also considers the impact of external forces, such as rankings and accreditation systems, on perpetuating the status quo. Ultimately, it sets the stage for a new paradigm – one that redefines what is taught, how it is taught, and the broader role of management education in shaping the leaders of tomorrow.

1.1. The Business Model of Business and Management Education

Business and management education is a global industry that transcends borders. With more than 17.000 institutions offering business degrees worldwide (AACSB, 2024), it prepares millions of individuals annually to join organizations that address societal, environmental, and humanitarian challenges in today's complex business landscape. By and large, the industry operates on

a standardized and multifaceted business model characterized by a transactional, market-driven approach to its core activities (Alajoutsijärvi et al., 2014; Kociatkiewicz et al., 2022).

Central to this industry is its value proposition, which offers education and training designed to develop the knowledge and skills essential for careers in management and leadership. Programs cover general management degrees and specializations in traditional areas such as strategy, finance, marketing, and operations, alongside emerging fields like sustainability and digital transformation. Business and management schools also create opportunities for professional networking and access to extensive global alumni communities. These networks often serve as platforms for career advancement and knowledge exchange, highlighting the continued relevance of these programs in fostering employability. Despite evolving trends, the credentials earned through these programs – whether degrees, certificates, or other qualifications – remain significant in the job market, serving as vital signals of competence and employability (Newton, 2023).

Business and management schools also play a vital role in advancing research on organizational practices. Research efforts often focus on producing discipline-specific, peer-reviewed publications that advance theoretical understanding within business and management. While this enriches academic discourse and strengthens institutional reputations, the prioritization of journal publications can limit the practical applicability of research findings for business practitioners, creating a gap between academic insights and the needs of practitioners (Wilson and Thomas, 2012; Jack, 2024). Research that only superficially engages with real-world business contexts risks becoming disconnected from societal impact, undermining its potential to address contemporary challenges. Furthermore, when research is prioritized above teaching excellence, institutional resources and focus may shift away from improving the quality of education and fostering meaningful student engagement. Conversely, neglecting quality research can weaken the legitimacy and relevance of business schools. Institutions that effectively integrate research with practical applications in teaching and beyond remain the exception, underscoring the need for balanced priorities that address academic rigor, educational excellence, and societal impact (Redgrave et al., 2023).

In most parts of the world, the financial backbone of business and management education relies primarily on tuition fees, particularly from flagship programs such as MBA and executive education offerings (McLeod and Perez, 2023). These programs often command premium pricing due to their perceived value and market demand. Additionally, many institutions diversify their revenue

streams through corporate partnerships, frequently involving customized training programs, research collaboration, and sponsorships. Grants and philanthropic contributions also support long-term sustainability and allow institutions to fund research initiatives and scholarships (Peters and Thomas, 2021).

Globalization plays a significant role in the business model of management education, as institutions establish international campuses and forge global partnerships to attract a diverse student body. These strategies aim to enhance institutional reach and expose students to multicultural perspectives, which are increasingly valued in globalized industries. However, globalization presents significant challenges. The emphasis on using English as the primary language of instruction often reduces sensitivity to regional differences, potentially marginalizing local perspectives and undermining the cultural relevance of programs. Additionally, ensuring consistent academic

quality across diverse campuses and adapting curricula to meet the unique needs of local markets remain significant hurdles (Alajoutsijärvi et al., 2014). In addition, internationalization must evolve to address the realities of today's world. While global challenges demand collaboration across borders, the environmental impact of extensive international student mobility – such as the carbon footprint associated with travel – requires institutions to rethink how they facilitate global engagement more sustainably. Digital technologies and online platforms present opportunities to foster international collaboration while reducing the environmental costs of traditional mobility programs (Peters and Thomas, 2021).

The business model of business and management education is under growing scrutiny as it struggles to keep pace with the changing demands of society and the evolving needs of students, employers, and the research community. Notably, the paradigm needs to shift from being transactional – focused on traditional, theory-led instruction and discipline-based research – to transformational, emphasizing experiential learning, transdisciplinary research, and significant collaboration with industry, government, and communities. This shift seeks to drive tangible business and societal impact through collaborative and adaptive teaching and knowledge creation. This publication focuses on the educational side of management education, and the following sections will explore the current state and trends in program content and teaching methods.

1.2. What is Taught in Business and Management Schools

At the heart of traditional management education is a highly standardized curriculum, with business and management schools worldwide offering remarkably similar content. Historically, these curricula have been rooted in disciplines such as finance, marketing, strategy, and operations management. These core subjects continue to form the foundation of most programs, providing students with essential technical expertise and analytical skills (Nisula and Pekkola, 2018). Globally, the curriculum is often shaped by a neoliberal, market-led view of management (Christopher et al., 2017). Much of its content is derived from a relatively narrow set of managerial theories and widely cited academic papers and case studies, many of which originate from prestigious American institutions like Harvard Business School and Stanford Graduate School of Business. As a

result, business education primarily reflects a Western-centric perspective on business practices and management theories (Peters and Thomas, 2022).

While the mentioned core subjects remain essential (AACSB, 2024), curricula increasingly integrate topics that reflect the modern business environment. Sustainability, digital transformation, social responsibility, and entrepreneurship are gaining prominence (QS, 2024). For instance, a growing number of institutions are joining the United Nations Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME) initiative, which aims to align management education with the values of sustainability, responsibility, and ethics (Stoten, 2020). The initiative seeks to transform management education by developing capabilities for sustainable value creation and embedding global social responsibility at the core of teaching, research, and institutional strategies (PRME, 2025).

In addition to technical discipline knowledge, programs are paying more attention to developing professional and interpersonal skills (Wylie, 2024), such as critical thinking, adaptability, collaboration, creative thinking, and empathy, a trend particularly visible in European management schools (Peters and Thomas, 2022). According to the World Economic Forum's 'Future of Jobs Report,' these skills are now often more valuable than technical knowledge and management expertise alone (World Economic Forum, 2025). However, despite progress in introducing them into programs, they are still frequently treated as add-ons rather than core elements of the curriculum. As a result, graduates remain underprepared for the complex and collaborative work environments they will encounter (Stoten, 2020).

Professional and interpersonal skills are often more valuable than technical knowledge and management expertise alone

This challenge is further exacerbated by a tendency to teach subjects in isolation without fully exploring how they connect (Nisula and Pekkola, 2018). Addressing this issue would mean focusing more on how different traditional and modern topics work together, creating a deeper and more cohesive understanding of business and organizations. These challenges highlight the need for business schools to align their programs more closely with workforce demands and ensure that contemporary topics, technical expertise, and soft skills development are treated as core components of management education.

1.3. Teaching Methods in Business and Management Education

The first MBAs were introduced in the United States in the early 20th century to meet the needs of industries seeking managers trained in 'scientific management.' These programs aimed to equip future managers with the skills and knowledge necessary to improve efficiency and productivity, particularly in labor–management (Kaplan, 2014; Applegate, 2022). At the time, this hands-on, practical approach aligned with companies' priorities for seeking systematic methods to optimize operations (Kaplan, 2018).

By the mid-20th century, however, this vocational focus faced criticism. Two landmark reports –the Ford Foundation Study (Gordon and Howell 1959) and the Carnegie Corporation Study (Pierson 1959) – found that business education lacked academic depth and relied too heavily on practical training. This prompted a shift toward a more analytical and research-based approach, emphasizing disciplines such as finance, marketing, operations, and strategy (Schoemaker, 2008; Purohit and Dutt, 2024). Schools also began hiring faculty with doctoral degrees to elevate academic rigor, moving away from the earlier reliance on industry practitioners (Farashahi and Tajeddin, 2018).

However, this shift drew criticism from influential figures in management studies like Peter Drucker and Henry Mintzberg, who argued that business schools increasingly failed to prepare graduates for the realities of managerial work. Mintzberg famously noted, "The management school… does not in fact teach them how to manage, and the world is full of highly competent managers who have never spent one day in a management course" (Mintzberg 1973, p. 187). He maintained this critique well into the 21st century, highlighting that MBA graduates often lacked the skills required to practice management, an issue he described as unthinkable in professions like medicine or engineering (Mintzberg, 2004). Critics argue that business schools place too much emphasis on theoretical concepts and case studies, which often fail to capture the complexities, uncertainties, and interpersonal dynamics of real-world management. This critique underscores the ongoing challenge of bridging academic depth with the practical skills required to navigate contemporary organizational environments – a tension that remains at the heart of debates on management education.

Today, most educators agree that effective management education requires a balance between theory and practice. A special issue on pedagogical innovations in the *Journal of Management*

Education emphasized that teaching should *"involve the complete learning cycle, from 'knowing' to 'being' and 'doing,' incorporating intellectual, reflective, active, and experiential approaches*" (Christopher et al., 2017). However, despite growing recognition of the need for innovation, traditional methods still dominate. Lectures, where professors share their knowledge as subject-matter experts, remain the most common approach (Farashahi and Tajeddin, 2018). While thoughtfully designed lectures can promote active learning by encouraging students to analyze and integrate information meaningfully (Offstein and Chory, 2019), many lectures rely on slides and minimal interaction, fostering passive learning and contributing to a skills gap. These formats often fail to develop the critical thinking, creativity, or practical problem-solving skills essential for managers today. In contrast, methods like the case study aim to bridge this gap by making theoretical knowledge more applicable to real-world scenarios, though they, too, have limitations.

The case study method, introduced at Harvard Business School in the early 20th century, offers a more practical alternative to traditional lectures. This method immerses students in real-world business scenarios, encouraging them to analyze dilemmas, discuss potential solutions, and make strategic decisions. At its introduction, the case method represented a groundbreaking shift from passive learning to active engagement, fostering critical thinking and decision-making skills. Over the decades, it has become a cornerstone of business and management programs and remains the second-most popular teaching method after lectures (Farashahi and Tajeddin, 2018).

While the case method effectively integrates theoretical knowledge with practical application, it is not without limitations. Its reliance on hindsight analysis and predefined scenarios can make it less effective for addressing 'wicked problems' – the ambiguous, systemic challenges that lack clear solutions and are increasingly common in today's business environment. These problems demand interdisciplinary and adaptive thinking, which the structured nature of case studies may struggle to develop. Moreover, many case studies focus on large multinational corporations, leaving students aspiring to work in startups, social enterprises, or non-traditional sectors feeling disconnected from the material. The method may also prove less effective in introductory courses, as students without foundational knowledge often require a more didactic approach (Bridgman et al., 2016).

A final critique of traditional teaching methods lies in their standardized, one-size-fits-all nature. Large lecture halls and uniform delivery methods are increasingly out of step with student demands for flexibility, personalization, and relevance. Students now seek education tailored to their individual

goals and interests, pushing business schools to adapt their offerings to enhance engagement and learning outcomes (GMAC, 2023). Meeting these demands requires a shift from treating students as a homogeneous audience to recognizing them as individuals with diverse aspirations.

1.4. The Impact of Ranking and Accreditation Systems

Accreditation and ranking systems are crucial in maintaining quality standards and shaping the global reputation of business and management education. However, their rigid frameworks often inhibit the innovation necessary to address contemporary and evolving business challenges.

National and international accreditation bodies, such as the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), the EFMD Quality Improvement System (EQUIS), and the Association of MBAs (AMBA), set strict benchmarks for faculty qualifications, research output, and curriculum design, ensuring a baseline level of quality across institutions (Alajoutsijärvi et al., 2018). These standards ensure consistency and credibility but often emphasize academic norms at the expense of practical and interdisciplinary approaches. For example, institutions aiming to experiment with innovative teaching methods or address emerging issues like sustainability and digital transformation may face challenges, as accreditation criteria are slow to adapt to evolving educational needs. Consequently, many institutions focus on maintaining compliance rather than pursuing meaningful pedagogical advancements. In recent years, accreditation bodies have started incorporating societal impact into their criteria, signaling a gradual shift toward addressing broader challenges.

While accreditation systems focus on internal consistency, ranking systems create external pressure by shaping public perception and competitiveness. Rankings by *The Financial Times*, QS (Quackuarelli Symonds), and *The Economist* significantly influence business and management schools. Designed to improve transparency and comparability, rankings drive competition by rewarding performance metrics such as faculty research, graduate salaries, and international diversity (Hazelkorn, 2015). These metrics incentivize certain forms of excellence but often skew institutional priorities toward short-term gains, such as graduate earnings, over long-term educational innovation. For example, rankings heavily emphasize graduate earnings and international reach, reflecting a neoliberal, market-driven paradigm that broadly equates success with economic outcomes.

This tension between external visibility and substantive improvement reflects a systemic challenge business schools face. This dynamic is explored in Gioia and Corley's article, *'Being Good Versus Looking Good'* (2002), which critiques the detrimental effects of business school rankings. The authors argue that as rankings have grown in importance, institutions have increasingly shifted their focus from providing a substantive education to prioritizing their image and perception in the eyes of stakeholders. They claim rankings have become a dominant force driving decision-making in business schools, leading to what they call a 'Circean transformation' – a reference to the enchantress Circe in Greek mythology, who transformed humans into animals. In this context, schools risk being 'enchanted' by the allure of rankings, losing sight of their core mission of delivering meaningful education. One illustrative example is the emphasis on salary outcomes as a significant success metric. While this focus is understandable – students investing heavily in tuition fees expect guidance on the return on their investment – it often comes at the expense of other valuable outcomes of graduate education. Broader measures, such as social impact, ethical leadership, and long-term contributions to industries and communities, receive comparatively less attention, perpetuating a narrow view of what constitutes success in business education.

Business schools risk being enchanted by the allure of rankings, losing sight of their core mission of delivering meaningful education

Efforts to integrate social and environmental considerations into rankings are advancing but remain limited. For instance, while the Financial Times introduced two ESG-related indicators in 2023 (Morris, 2023), QS took a different route by launching the "QS World University Rankings: Sustainability Methodology," which evaluates institutions based on social and environmental performance. However, many institutions face systemic challenges in integrating these factors, such as rigid journal rankings that deprioritize sustainability-focused research, fragmented institutional efforts, weak stakeholder engagement, limited faculty interest, inadequate funding, and HR policies that overlook sustainability in recruitment and promotion processes (Wigmore-Álvarez et al., 2020). Indeed, the Financial Times recognizes the limitations of the current ranking system in driving profound change and has, as a supplement, introduced the 'FT Responsible Business Education Awards' to identify, highlight, and incentivize examples of best

practices of business school initiatives that go beyond profit-making to create genuine positive societal impact (Jack, 2024).

Table 1. Examples of ranking criteria from QS and Financial Times

QS Business Master's Rankings: Management	Financial Times Masters in Management Ranking
Employability (35) » Employer reputation » Employment rate **Alumni outcomes (15)** **Value for money (20)** » Return on investment » Payback month **Diversity (10)** » Academic reputation » Research impact » Staff with PhD **Thought leadership (20)** » Women student ratio » Women faculty ratio » International student ratio » International faculty ratio **Environmental sustainability (5)**	**Career progression** » Weighted salary US$ (16) » Salary percentage increase (10) » Career progress rank (6) » Aims achieved % (5) » Careers service rank (4) » Employed at three months % (5) **Program assessment** » Value for money rank (6) **Diversity assessment:** » Female faculty % (5) » Female students % (5) » Women on board % (1) » International faculty % (5) » International students % (5) » International board % (1) **International opportunities** » International work mobility (6) » International course experience (6) **Faculty expertise** » Faculty with doctorates % (4) **General** » Alumni network rank (3) » ESG and net zero teaching (3) » Carbon footprint (4)
Weights for ranking criteria are shown in brackets as percentages. (QS, 2025)	*Weights for ranking criteria are shown in brackets as percentages.* (Cremonezi et al., 2024)

Together, these accreditation and ranking systems shape not only the standards of business schools but also their strategic focus. They risk marginalizing broader social and environmental goals by prioritizing metrics that emphasize economic outcomes and global competitiveness. Good management today must transcend economic efficiency and effectiveness to address wider social, environmental, and ethical challenges. Yet, rankings seldom account for these dimensions, maintaining a narrow view of managerial success rooted in traditional paradigms. While some progress has been made, the pace of change remains slow, and the impact on the industry has yet to match the urgency of the challenges.

1.5. A New Paradigm for Management Education

Management education stands at a critical juncture. The traditional paradigm, rooted in standardized curricula, theoretical instruction, and economic-centric goals, has produced competent managers for stable and predictable environments. However, the dynamic challenges of today's business landscape – marked by technological disruptions, societal inequities, and environmental imperatives – demand a fundamental rethinking of what and how we teach future leaders. Management education must evolve from a transactional model focused on compliance and metrics to a transformative approach that cultivates adaptability, innovation, and purpose-driven leadership. This evolution is not just a response to changing market demands but a moral imperative for addressing the multifaceted challenges of our times.

The dynamic challenges of today's business landscape demand a fundamental rethinking of what and how we teach future leaders

The table below highlights key contrasts between the traditional and emerging paradigms of management education, underscoring the shift required to prepare leaders who can navigate complexity and drive meaningful change.

Table 2. Principles of a new paradigm for management education

Aspect	Traditional Paradigm	Emerging Paradigm
Curriculum Focus	Discipline-specific knowledge rooted in Western theories	Interdisciplinary, global perspectives emphasizing sustainability and social impact
Teaching Approach	Passive learning (lectures, static case studies)	Active, experiential learning with real-world problem-solving
Metrics of Success	Graduate salaries, faculty research output, internationalization	Societal impact, ethical leadership, long-term value creation
Role of Accreditation and Rankings	Compliance with standardized criteria	Driving quality, innovation, inclusivity, and adaptability
Purpose of Education	Producing managers for efficiency	Developing leaders for transformation and societal impact

By embracing these shifts, business schools can reclaim their relevance and fulfill their responsibility to society, shaping leaders who not only excel in their careers but also contribute meaningfully to a better and more sustainable world.

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CHAPTER 2

FROM EXECUTIVES TO CHALLENGE MANAGERS

For decades, management education has prepared leaders to optimize operations and execute strategies in relatively stable environments. But as the world grows more interconnected and unpredictable, the assumptions underpinning these roles – and the education that supports them – need to be updated. Traditional management models, built for predictability, struggle to address the complexities of a world shaped by technological disruption, environmental crises, and shifting societal expectations. Organizations now demand leaders who can move beyond execution to embrace uncertainty, foster innovation, and address challenges that span profit, purpose, and impact (Raich et al., 2024).

This chapter introduces the concept of the 'Challenge Manager,' a new archetype for leadership that aligns with these shifting demands. It begins by outlining the societal changes that have reshaped the expectations placed on managers, setting the stage for a deeper exploration of the core characteristics that challenge managers embody: uncertainty management, change agency, and purposeful leadership. Finally, it identifies the specific skills and competencies these leaders must cultivate, offering insights into how management education can better prepare future leaders to thrive in an era where adaptation and purpose are paramount.

2.1. The World We are Facing (by Pedro César Martínez Morán)

2.1.1. Technology, Change, and Uncertainty

Change is an inevitable force shaping human existence. In the flow of life, uncertainty serves as its constant companion. Nevertheless, discussing risk is always necessary when uncertainty is mentioned. Frank Knight (1921) helps unravel the differences between risk and uncertainty. Risk is

a measurable uncertainty, while uncertainty itself is not quantifiable due to insufficient information to estimate the outcome of the action to be taken and, thus, to anticipate the possible future. If an agent decides to make a change, it should consider the risks to manage and the consequences of these decisions.

The massive emergence of information and communication technologies, primarily since the last decade of the 20th century, has shaped a new style of interaction characterized mainly by immediacy and a high number of daily interactions. The mobile phone, a reference at the end of the 20th century, was replaced in the first decade of the 21st century by the smartphone, a device used for various purposes, not only informational or relational but also as a means of payment, sharing voice, images, and data. All the mentioned devices, including personal computers, desktops, or tablets, are widely used privately and in the workplace.

It is the first time for humanity that such a considerable change affects every corner of the world

Applications for personal and work use generate thousands of data per minute. Among the various existing options, here are some examples of usage (domo.com, 2023): on the YouTube platform, 500 hours of video are uploaded; on Twitter, 347,200 tweets are shared; on Facebook, 1.7 million messages, and email is used to generate 231.4 million messages in the mentioned timeframe. The use of various applications and devices, while greater in men than in women, shows signs of progressive equality (ITU, 2021) in a time congestion that requires meticulous management of their different uses, especially if, as in the case of women, responsibilities pile up.

Nevertheless, the consequences of this massive use of information and communication techniques are always unknown. It is the first time for humanity that such a considerable change affects every corner of the world. Asch (1955) already anticipated social pressure as a factor when people make their own preferences regarding their future decisions. The context of social and economic transformation that has affected humanity in recent decades implies a substantial modification, both in the management of organizations and in lifestyle habits as a whole. Therefore, it also affects the work environment.

2.1.2. The Challenges of Organizations

Work serves as a means of socialization. The company appears as a vehicle for channeling and developing professional and personal skills, ultimately contributing to the employability of workers. Individuals aspire to have sufficient economic resources to alleviate hypothetical adversities and enjoy good health, physical and mental well-being, optimal psychosocial adaptation, and overall life satisfaction. Earning income as a result of engaging in work activities provides security, ensures certainty about the future, and encourages the setting of medium and long-term goals, as well as the assumption of a certain level of risk.

Furthermore, companies channel various sensitivities, concerns, and demands regarding improving the working conditions that society generates. Legislators seek to address existing social demands and transform them into normative imperatives that must be complied with to promote healthier and more positive coexistence. There has long been an effort by social actors to establish connections between individual needs, the structure of the households where workers usually reside, and the time demands of the working world. So far, the balance shows a detrimental bias towards women compared to men, as they bear a significantly greater workload than their partners in family groups composed of couples and children, sometimes adding the care of elderly family members.

The evolution of economies during the 20th century has led to the growth of services as a counterpart to products. Service economies operate from their own logic and interpretation of time. The business flexibility that allows services to be provided according to the client's requirements and requests, along with the dynamic that enables workers to participate or decide how to allocate their work time, has been an apparent disruption from the past. While it may not be accurate to claim that cities never rest, the coverage of certain services extends to twenty-four hours a day in an uninterrupted continuum.

The focal point is the time dedicated to daily work. The existence of the 9 to 17 work schedules, primarily in European and Anglo-Saxon countries, is undergoing debate and change (Zucker, 2021). The potential reasons for alteration range from the consequences of the pandemic to the structures of living spaces and the pressing need for a better balance between work and personal life.

The massive shift from the regular workplace to home, due to the need to avoid person-to-person contact to mitigate the harmful effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, affected millions of people worldwide. In May 2020, the International Labour Organization (2021) estimated that 94% of workers worldwide had restrictions on accessing their workplace before the pandemic.

Working remotely became a unique resource to prevent the paralysis of economic activity. Its massive introduction worldwide disrupted the organization of work time. The physical space for socializing outside the usual working hours disappeared as it was known until then. Suddenly, the work, family, and social needs of individuals sharing the same place of residence converged. This concentration negatively affected women (Lyttelton et al., 2020) and revealed activities and tasks more prone to using this method (Dingel and Neiman, 2020). However, not all professions have

had the privilege of remote work. Those without the possibility of using this resource are correlated with greater physical proximity to their clients and, therefore, have been more exposed to the possibility of getting sick and not enjoying certain privileges associated with remote work.

The six-day workweek from the early 20th century has given way to the five-day workweek or even the four-and-a-half-day workweek, as Friday afternoon marks the beginning of the weekend in many companies.

One consequence of the disruptive emergence of remote work is the debate about the four-day workweek. The platform 4dayweek.com aims to implement this measure in the United Kingdom. In June, 2022, a pilot project was launched (Simpson, 2022) in which employees who have opted for this initiative will work twenty percent less while maintaining their agreed-upon salary.

Talent management in organizations cannot be understood without minimizing discrimination in the talent cycle phases

The reduction of workdays and the current standard face the lack of disconnection from work. Mobile phones, emails, and instant messages do not rest on any day. Belgium, among other governments, adopted a law to regulate the digital disconnection of 65,000 public employees (Gill and Lázaro, 2022). There are two views on this matter (Secunda, 2019). France advocates for regulating electronic communication between the employer and the employee after the end of the workday. In Germany, there is a preference for voluntary self-determination, where private companies adopt policies tailored to their needs.

The difference in the use of remote work between men and women highlights the challenges of using reconciliation mechanisms that do not offer differences or biases, even though this work method has been a fundamental measure to balance personal and professional life.

As it is currently developing, talent management in organizations cannot be understood without minimizing discrimination in the talent cycle phases. Therefore, mechanisms that companies provide to their employees should affect and guide individuals without any gender distinction.

In the public sphere, certain corporate cultures do not encourage the promotion of women or even assume that women have less commitment to the company's goals (Beltrán et al., 2018).

Talent attraction has been fueled by positive discrimination in hiring women and has sought to eliminate existing differences. Equality biases affect women, as they only apply for a position if they are entirely sure they are the optimal candidates (Nicks et al., 2022), unlike men, who are more willing to apply for a job vacancy even if they do not meet all the requested requirements.

Women's remuneration outside the home provides them with economic independence, raises the income levels of the common living space, and boosts self-esteem. However, household work usually lacks recognition, payment, and, undoubtedly, the requirements of professional work, as it doesn't allow for promotions, progress, or improvements of any kind.

There is, however, a slowly progressing situation where some women earn a higher salary than their male partners. In response, some women choose not to disclose the truth about their actual

income to avoid breaking a social norm based on the assumption of higher salaries for men (Murray-Close and Heggeness, 2018). Paradoxically, women with higher remuneration than their male partners invest more time in household chores, have an unsatisfactory opinion about their marriage, and have a high likelihood of desiring divorce (Bertrand et al., 2015). This introduces the difficulty of overcoming millennium-old social conventions embedded in more advanced societies.

Indeed, the fact that women opt more than their male counterparts for reduced working hours or flexible schedules (Hacohen et al., 2021), in a ratio of two to one for mothers with children under their care (Londakova et al., 2021), confirms a certain degree of female acceptance of the inevitable. These decisions lead to specific moments in their personal development where they choose to prioritize family over their professional career (Hewlett and Luce, 2005), even leading, in some cases, to quitting their jobs (Wallis, 2004), reflecting their surrender to adversity and the impossibility of achieving a minimal beneficial situation for them.

2.1.3. The Aspirations of Professionals and the Future of Work

The evolution of the concept of work has led each generation to ponder over similar questions about their future. From the traditional ones, such as "What would I like to work as when I grow up?" to consider whether they will inherit their parents' occupation or choose a profession completely unrelated. However, more complex and profound questions arise, such as discovering what one is truly good at, what one's passion is, and what one's real vocation might be.

Another aspect to consider is forced migration in search of a better future. Those affected may ask questions from both groups but must acknowledge that the host society operates with different values and rules.

The concept of work has undergone a transformation, moving from individual work in primary and industrial activities to collective work where, despite task division, a common mission, shared values, and efficient time management are essential.

Three major megatrends underpin the future of work. The first is the rise of disruptive technologies like artificial intelligence, machine learning, robotics, and human-machine collaborations. Workers must learn to learn and unlearn to adapt to these constantly evolving technologies.

The second megatrend is the polarization caused by globalization and regionalization. The borders of work are becoming less important, but at the same time, disruptive forces like nationalism and fear of change are isolating people.

The third megatrend is the constant demand for creativity and innovation in a VUCA world (volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous). Companies can no longer remain dominant for long, as trends change rapidly due to innovation, climate change, social networks, and other factors.

These trends are part of the current work ecosystem, which has evolved from traditional profit-centered approaches to a more circular and inside-out methodology. Organizations must relearn and adopt new ways of developing strategies and embrace innovation.

2.1.4. The Challenges of Humanity

The years of desolation and death experienced in much of the first half of the 20th century have given way to an increase in the world population, an improvement in life expectancy due to substantial improvements in food and healthcare, the gradual aging of the population, migration to cities in search of better opportunities, or the emergence of new communication formulas that have influenced not only social but also work relationships. The United Nations (2023) established a series of goals to ensure that human development aligns with sustainable criteria. The monitoring dimensions have been specified as economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection.

The increase in the number of individuals born has been constant since the second half of the 20th century (The World Bank, 2023). The United Nations (2015) highlights three relevant aspects regarding demographic evolution: the world population has tripled since the mid-20th century; November 15, 2022, has been established as the date when 8 billion people were reached, and according to their forecasts, in 2023, India surpassed China as the most populous country.

This global demographic growth has been compatible with an increase in life expectancy, which has transitioned from 46.5 years in 1950 to 71.7 years in 2022 since the end of World War II (United Nations, 2015), reflected in the gradual aging of the population. People over 65 comprise 10 % of the world's population in 2021. Fifty-one years earlier, this percentage was half, at 5 %.

The higher life expectancy, supported by improvements in personal care, the universalization of health and education, a more balanced diet, and more excellent hygiene, among other factors, results in new needs and the provision of certain services. In the past, people did not reach such advanced ages, and if they did, their care fell on the women in their family; in economically more advanced societies where women work outside the home, support is needed for such care and attention, except for those women who decide to step back or alongside their professional path to take care of their elders.

The higher life expectancy results in new needs and the provision of certain services

Another notable factor in the distribution of the world population revolves around where they live. More than half of the current world population resides in large urban areas, nearly doubling the levels from 1960. The migration of people has left rural areas depopulated. The emergence of jobs in large cities and the provision of services have constantly attracted this movement of people who legitimately seek greater prosperity.

Emerging countries, prominent among those with the largest populations, also hold significant positions in terms of the weight of their informal economy, representing approximately one-third of their gross domestic product and accounting for 70 % of total employment (Elgin et al., 2022). This translates into deficiencies in workers' rights and a lack of appropriate legislation for their health and safety, with the added factor of a gender-based division of roles, often pronounced and persistent in many cases.

Employment in developed countries has successfully expanded to a high number of working-age individuals, as legally established in each country. The translation of this fact means that many countries have close to full employment rates and may even have difficulty finding candidates for certain positions.

However, with the massive incorporation of women into the workforce, contractual relationships in OECD countries reveal a clear trend: women are more inclined towards part-time jobs than their male counterparts (OECD, 2023).

As a result, societies face various challenges, such as the progressive aging of the population without harm or detriment to those within that group or their caregivers, the acceleration of the

trend towards living in large cities, affecting labor mobility, and the asynchronies that occur in the provision of services; employment access, which, although on an upward trend, still contains an excessive weight of informality in emerging countries; and a choice, by women, of formulas that allow a reduction in the temporal burden of work, making it compatible with their other spheres of action.

In conclusion, modern societies have witnessed successive transformations of habits acquired over centuries. Social evolution, fueled by population growth, increased life expectancy, overcoming gender divisions to access the labor market, or the widespread use of technology, acts like a seed that sprouts emerging factors that, whether as leverage or brakes, impact the organization of work and personal time, thus affecting the appropriate work-life balance for each life stage.

The reconciliation of work and personal life will progress through harmony among the various roles that an individual occupies in society. Each person must choose their path and prioritize objectives that align with their aspirations. However, concern for others must remain on each person's agenda.

2.2. Characteristics of Challenge Managers

Traditional management education has long focused on preparing leaders who can optimize resources, manage risk, and drive measurable results. While these skills remain essential, the accelerating pace of technological, social, and environmental changes has revealed the limitations of this approach. Today's leaders must go beyond operational expertise – they must possess the vision, adaptability, and resilience required to navigate a world of complexity and unpredictability.

The shift from being mere 'executives' to becoming 'challenge managers' is not a superficial relabeling; it is a fundamental transformation in what organizations and societies demand from their leaders. The following sections explore the core attributes of challenge managers, beginning with the necessity of embracing and navigating uncertainty, followed by the roles of leaders as agents of change and solution creators, and culminating in the concept of purpose-driven leadership. Together, these elements define the management paradigm that Advantere promotes through our re-solutionary approach to management education.

2.2.1. Uncertainty Managers

Uncertainty arises when we lack precise information to predict outcomes or make confident decisions. Unlike risk, where probabilities can be calculated and outcomes are somewhat predictable, uncertainty deals with situations where the future is unknown and unknowable. Frank Knight (1921), a prominent economist, highlighted this distinction, emphasizing that risk can be managed with data, but uncertainty exists beyond measurable parameters and cannot be reduced to probabilities.

The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) is a clear example of uncertainty. For instance, while organizations know AI has the potential to transform industries, they often do not know precisely how, when, or where its effects will unfold. Businesses investing in AI cannot rely on established models to guide them; instead, they must experiment and adapt as they go. This differs from managing a predictable risk, such as maintaining cybersecurity defenses against known threats.

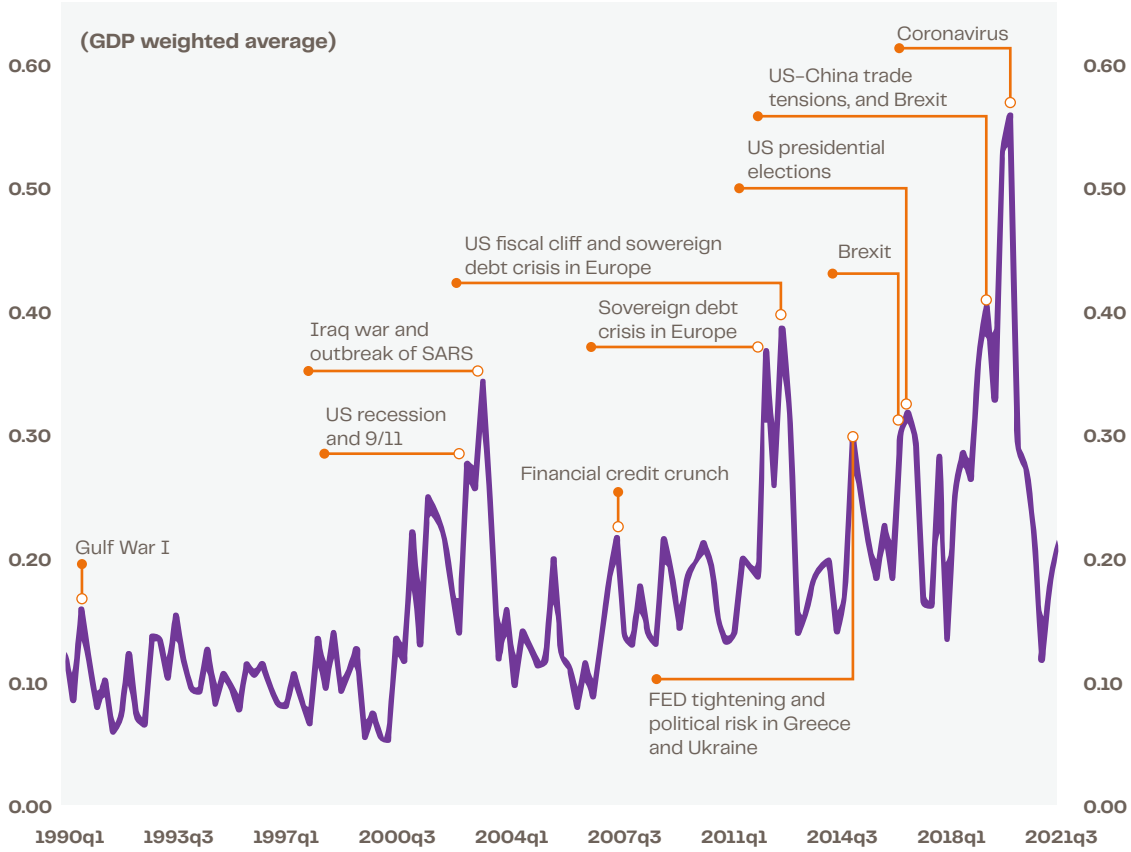
The world organizations face today is characterized by significant volatility. The IMF World Uncertainty Index reveals that disruptions have always existed; however, disruptions occur more often, their impacts are more complicated to predict, and traditional management approaches frequently fall short. Global events like the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and climate change have created a landscape where unpredictable challenges are the norm. Rapid technological advances, geopolitical tensions, and shifting societal expectations mean organizations must constantly adapt to succeed.

Traditional management models often prioritize reducing risk and minimizing uncertainty to maintain control and reduce anxiety within organizations and among employees. Approaches such as SWOT analysis, Scenario Planning, Forecasting, and Six Sigma exemplify this mindset, relying on structured tools and techniques to anticipate and manage risks, minimize uncertainty, and maintain stability. These methods assume that challenges can be predicted and managed within defined parameters.

This logic needs to be revised in the face of growing complexity and unpredictability. Organizations need leaders who can manage, rather than eliminate, uncertainty. Being an uncertainty manager means recognizing that excessive efforts to reduce uncertainty can stifle innovation, delay critical decisions, and foster a false sense of security (Michel and Wortham, 2008; Govindarajan, 2016).

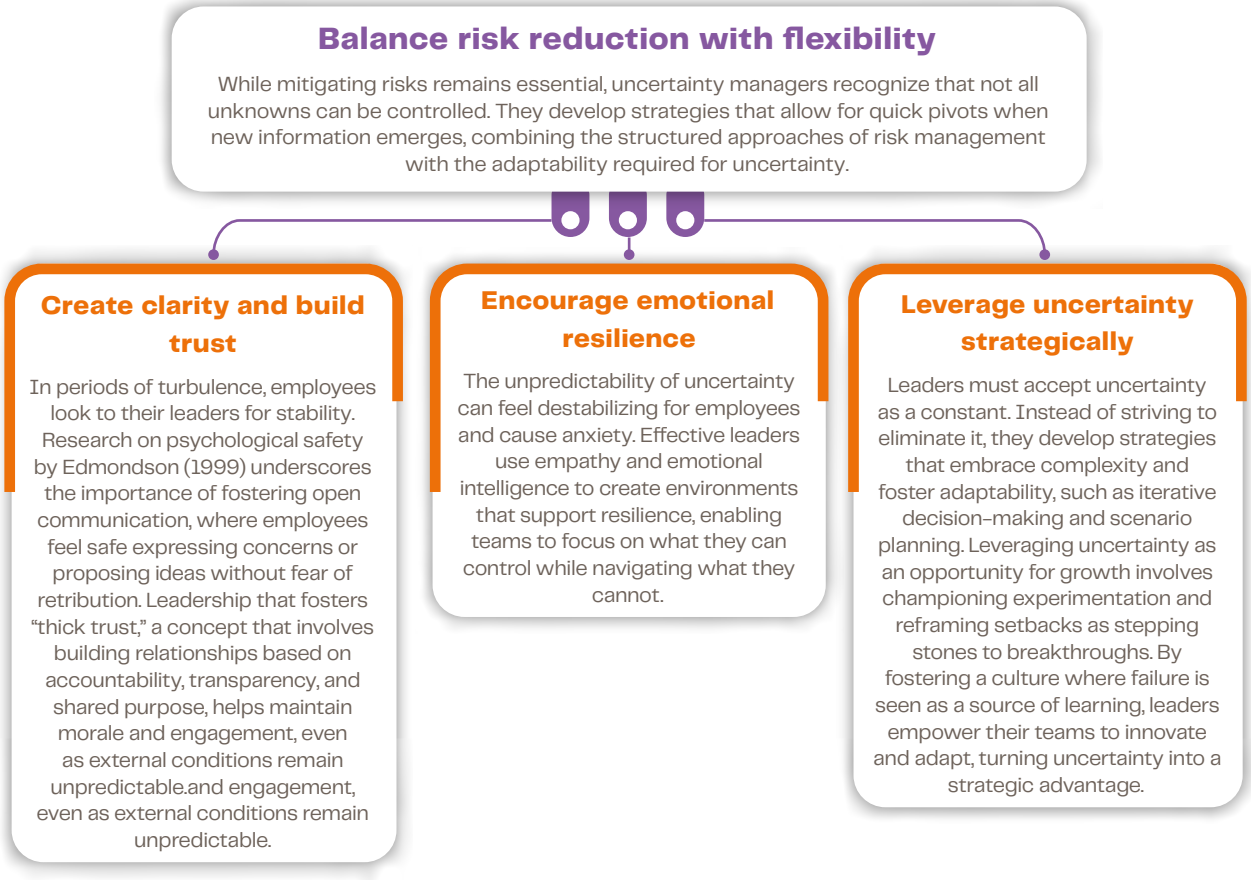
Instead, uncertainty managers embrace ambiguity, balancing the need to address immediate risks with the ability to adapt to the unknown. Modern leadership requires anticipating disruptions and designing systems that view uncertainty as a natural and integral part of organizational success.

Figure 1. IMF World Uncertainty Index (WUI) over time



Source: Ahir et al., p. (2022, p. 39)

Figure 2. Profile of an Uncertainty Manager



Uncertainty managers do more than mitigate risks; they embrace complexity, foster adaptability, and empower their organizations to excel in unpredictable environments. By shifting from a mindset focused on control to one that encourages exploration and flexibility, these leaders guide their teams with clarity and provide emotional support amidst ambiguity, transforming the unknown into an opportunity.

2.2.2. Agents of Change and Solution Creators

Organizations today require leaders who can do more than react to change – they need individuals who actively drive it. These 'agents of change' are proactive leaders who identify opportunities, challenge the status quo, and inspire others to create innovative, actionable solutions.

The concept of a 'change agent' is not new, but its importance has grown significantly in today's complex landscape. As Kotter (1976) emphasizes in his framework for leading change, these individuals play a crucial role in driving transformation. They guide organizations through transitions, helping to improve systems, processes, and outcomes while fostering adaptive capabilities. Kotter highlights that change agents not only respond to external pressures but also anticipate trends, mobilizing their teams to turn uncertainty into opportunity.

Being an agent of change involves combining visionary leadership with the practical ability to create and execute solutions. These leaders operate at the intersection of creativity, resilience, and action, ensuring their ideas translate into measurable impact. For example, during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, BioNTech and Pfizer collaborated to develop one of the first mRNA vaccines at unprecedented speed. This groundbreaking effort redefined vaccine development and demonstrated how proactive leadership, coupled with cutting-edge science, can create transformative solutions to global challenges. By leveraging their expertise and acting decisively, these organizations showcased the power of solution-driven leadership in times of crisis and uncertainty (businesswire.com, 2020).

The following table highlights the essential principles that define effective managers as agents of change and solution creators. These principles – from proactivity to fostering collaboration and driving measurable impact – serve as a roadmap for leaders to become active change makers who inspire innovation and achieve meaningful outcomes.

Entrepreneurial leadership is a leadership style that aligns closely with the concept of change agents. Rooted in Schumpeter's theory of 'creative destruction,' entrepreneurial leadership emphasizes proactive innovation, adaptability, and the pursuit of opportunities, even in uncertain environments (Larsen, 2024). A dual focus drives these leaders: identifying opportunities for transformation through solutions to real problems and inspiring others to bring those ideas to life.

Table 3. Core principles of managers as agents of change and solution creators

Proactivity and foresight	Organizational experimentation	Empowering teams through collaboration	Driving measurable impact
Change agents do not wait for problems to escalate; they anticipate shifts in the external environment and prepare their organizations to respond. As highlighted in McKinsey & Company's report, *Six Problem-Solving Mindsets for Very Uncertain Times*, this requires cultivating an anticipatory mindset and focusing on long-term goals while addressing immediate challenges (Conn and McLean, 2020).	Experimentation is essential for fostering innovation and identifying practical solutions. Creating an environment that encourages experimentation – without fear of failure – can drive individual and organizational learning. Change agents take calculated risks to foster creativity and leverage existing resources strategically to capitalize on emerging opportunities.	Change agents understand that collective action is essential for sparking creativity and creating lasting transformation. By fostering collaboration and embracing diverse perspectives, they encourage teams to co-create solutions. Leaders who build such cultures empower teams to explore, test, and refine new ideas collaboratively.	Change agents excel at bridging strategy and execution. They align resources, set clear goals, and focus on creating value. Whether improving efficiency, solving societal challenges, or launching new products, their efforts result in tangible outcomes that address organizational and community needs.

2.2.3. Leaders with Purpose

Organizations face increasing pressure to balance financial performance with societal and environmental responsibility – and rightly so. Purpose-driven leadership offers a solution by anchoring decision-making in long-term value creation, resilience, and integrity. This approach embodies the idea of 'doing well by doing good,' demonstrating that achieving business success can go hand in hand with contributing positively to society.

While it is not the first time in history that businesses are reflecting on why they exist and who they are to their customers, the current trend shows a growing emphasis on using purpose to

build deeper connections with consumers, contribute meaningfully to the communities they serve, attract and retain top talent, and achieve more significant results and impact (Ramos, 2023). Simon Sinek (2009) popularized the importance of purpose in leadership through his book *Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action,* emphasizing that purpose-driven organizations inspire trust and loyalty by connecting deeply with their stakeholders. More recently, Ranjay Gulati (2022), in *Deep Purpose: The Heart and Soul of High-Performance Companies*, explores how purpose-driven leadership transforms organizations by integrating business performance with a more profound sense of mission. This shift highlights how purpose is evolving from a peripheral concept to a central pillar of business strategy, guiding organizations toward long-term growth and societal relevance.

Being a purposeful leader means driving actions, decisions, and organizational direction grounded in a clear and authentic mission

Organizations that embed purpose into their core operations demonstrate measurable advantages. From an organizational perspective, purpose directly influences key outcomes. According to a 10-year study of 50 companies, Deloitte concluded that purpose-driven companies achieve higher market share gains and grow three times faster on average than their competitors (O'Brien et al., 2019). They also report on improved workforce engagement and customer loyalty. Similarly, McKinsey's 2020 survey on purpose revealed that 82 % of employees view organizational purpose as important, with 70 % stating that their work gives their lives meaning (Gast et al., 2020). The link between purpose and employee engagement is further reinforced by a 2023 BCG study, which found that organizations with a clear purpose experience 8 % less turnover, a two-fold increase in productivity, and 3.25 times the involvement in transformation initiatives (bcg.com, 2023). Employees who feel connected to a company's purpose are more engaged and productive and nine times more likely to remain loyal to their organization (ddiworld.com, 2023).

Although purpose-driven leadership emphasizes creating value for stakeholders and communities, measuring the actual impact of these efforts remains a complex and evolving challenge. Organizations often adopt established frameworks like the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) to evaluate performance on key ESG metrics, such as environmental sustainability, employee diversity,

and governance practices. To assess the broader intended and unintended societal consequences of their operations, many engage in Social Impact Assessments (SIA). These assessments go beyond compliance to manage and monitor social issues throughout a project's lifecycle (Vanclay, 2024). A widely used methodology within SIA is the Social Return on Investment (SROI) model, which translates social and environmental outcomes into quantifiable monetary values, helping businesses and stakeholders understand the financial equivalent of their societal contributions (Corvo et al., 2021). While methodologies like these continue to mature, organizations are making significant strides in enhancing transparency and accountability through ESG reporting (KPMG, 2022). This growing focus on measurable outcomes reflects a broader trend toward aligning organizational performance with societal progress, human rights, and the expectations of diverse stakeholders, including local communities and investors.

Against this backdrop, being a purposeful leader means driving actions, decisions, and organizational direction grounded in a clear and authentic mission that extends beyond financial success. It emphasizes creating value for stakeholders, including employees, customers, communities, and the planet. However, purpose-driven leadership is not just about the organization; it starts with the individual. A leader's sense of purpose – their deeply held values, ambitions, and commitment to making a difference – forms the foundation for inspiring and guiding others. Leaders with purpose align their individual mission with organizational goals, creating a powerful synergy that drives engagement and fosters meaningful impact.

As María Paramés, Head of People and Communication at Bankinter, explains: "We look for people who are driven to improve the world. At Bankinter, we believe that those who aspire to make a

difference will help us become a truly sustainable company. If we want to achieve sustainability, we need people who share this mindset."

This alignment of personal and organizational purpose allows leaders to connect authentically with their teams, stakeholders, and communities. Being a purpose-driven leader involves embedding purpose into every aspect of leadership. Practically, this requires a combination of personal integrity, relational competencies, and strategic action. Table 4 sums up the central elements of being a leader with purpose.

Table 4. Core aspects of purposeful leadership

Clarity of vision	Authenticity	Commitment to positive impact
A purposeful leader articulates a vision that inspires others and is a compass for the organization. This vision emphasizes societal or environmental impact alongside profitability.	Leaders with purpose genuinely embody the values they advocate. They lead by example, ensuring consistency between their words and actions.	Leaders with purpose strive to create tangible benefits for society or the environment, integrating these goals into business strategies.
Empathy and inclusion	**Stakeholder orientation**	**Life-long learning**
Purposeful leaders cultivate an environment where diverse perspectives are valued and individuals feel a sense of belonging.	They prioritize the interests of all stakeholders, including employees, customers, communities, and shareholders, fostering trust and loyalty. This involves helping employees find meaning and purpose.	Purposeful leaders are lifelong learners, continuously evolving to meet new challenges. Leaders who invest in their development inspire others to do the same, creating a culture of resilience and innovation.

Leaders with purpose create a ripple effect within their organizations. Their commitment to living authentically and fostering collaboration inspires employees to connect with the organization's mission, enhancing engagement and productivity. Additionally, by embedding purpose into strategy, they ensure their organizations are resilient and adaptive in the face of uncertainty. Purpose-driven leadership not only delivers measurable business results but also helps organizations align with societal expectations, proving that doing well and doing good are not mutually exclusive.

2.3. Key Competencies to Develop (by Pedro César Martínez Morán)

"We need people trained to be ready for the future" (María Paramés, Head of People and Communication, Bankinter)

The previous section highlights the great demands placed on leaders today. They must not only manage uncertainty and drive results but also inspire purpose-driven transformation in their organizations. These expectations translate into specific competencies and skills that organizations increasingly seek in their leaders. The role of management education is to foster these competencies, equipping students to contribute effectively to organizational success while making a positive societal impact.

This section does not aim to present an exhaustive list of necessary managerial competencies. Instead, it focuses on critical competencies that are essential for leaders navigating today's challenges – competencies that students should start cultivating during management education, particularly through educational approaches grounded in experiential and project-based learning.

The identified competencies include self-knowledge and self-directed learning, lifelong learning and learning from failure, collaboration and complex communication, overcoming challenges, critical and holistic thinking, and agile and design thinking. Each plays a vital role in developing leaders who can manage and lead change, design solutions to complex problems, and lead with purpose. This section provides a detailed exploration of these competencies.

2.3.1. Self-knowledge and Self-directed Learning

Self-knowledge is the cornerstone of personal growth and involves introspection, reflection, and self-awareness, enabling individuals to navigate life's complexities with clarity, purpose, and authenticity. By cultivating self-knowledge, individuals gain insight into their motivations, preferences, and areas for growth, empowering them to make informed decisions, set meaningful goals, and create pathways to fulfillment and success.

One method to enhance self-awareness beyond mere introspection is to be observed by others and to observe one's own behavior (Wilson and Dunn, 2004). However, individuals are often blind

to the illusions that distort their self-knowledge (Bukowski, 2020), influenced by various biases that limit their perceptions and potential for growth.

By embracing self-directed learning, individuals transcend the bounderies of formal education and adopt a mindset of continuous improvement and lifelong growth

Self-directed learning emerges as a natural extension of self-knowledge, reflecting an intrinsic drive for autonomy, curiosity, and lifelong growth. It entails taking ownership of one's learning journey and actively seeking resources, opportunities, and experiences that align with personal interests and goals. By embracing self-directed learning, individuals transcend the boundaries of formal education and adopt a mindset of continuous improvement and lifelong growth that extends far beyond the classroom.

Furthermore, self-directed learning fosters creativity and innovation as individuals leverage their unique perspectives, talents, and experiences to generate novel ideas and solutions to complex problems. Liberated from the constraints of traditional pedagogy, self-directed learners embrace experimentation, iteration, and risk-taking, thus pushing the boundaries of knowledge and exploring new frontiers of discovery. This pedagogical approach impacts both professors and students, necessitating that instructors anticipate and plan for potential challenges that may arise during the process (Robinson and Persky, 2020). It requires being constantly attentive and prepared for whatever may transpire in the classroom.

In essence, self-knowledge and self-directed learning form a symbiotic relationship that empowers individuals to chart their own course, follow their passions, and realize their full potential.

2.3.2. Life-Long Learning and Learning From Failure

Lifelong learning is a catalyst for adaptability in an era of rapid technological advancement and socio-economic change. In a world where the half-life of skills continues to shrink, the ability to learn, unlearn, and relearn is essential to manage career transitions, seize new opportunities, and

remain relevant in the face of disruption. We should all be lifelong learners (Laal and Salamati, 2012). It is recommended that lifelong learning is seen not only as an ongoing challenge that requires constant pressure to be 'always on' but rather as a beneficial pursuit.

Lifelong learners embrace curiosity as a driving force, continually broadening their horizons and embracing the unknown with a sense of wonder and anticipation. The ability to embrace change, to learn continuously, and to adapt to new circumstances is essential for "inventing the future of our societies" (Fischer, 2000). The future has not yet arrived because it is being built every day.

Lifelong learning also promotes personal enrichment and fulfillment, going beyond the instrumental pursuit of career advancement to include the cultivation of passions, interests, and hobbies. Whether through exploring new languages, the arts, or philosophical inquiry, individuals embark on a journey of self-discovery and intellectual growth that enriches their lives and broadens their horizons.

Lifelong learning cultivates the invaluable lessons to be learned from setbacks, mistakes, and disappointments. Failure fosters humility, resilience, and a growth mindset, challenging individuals to face their limitations, adapt strategies, and persevere in adversity. However, failure has emotional and cognitive barriers that make learning from failure more difficult (Eskreis-Winkler & Fishbach, 2022) than people usually think.

Learning from failure also fosters innovation and creativity, encouraging individuals to embrace experimentation, take calculated risks, and push the boundaries of conventional thinking. Being open to learning is the key to a valuable educational experience.

2.3.3. Collaboration and Complex Communication

Collaboration and communication are essential for personal and professional success in an increasingly interconnected world. Communication skills are fundamental to fostering meaningful interactions, facilitating teamwork, and persuasively conveying ideas to diverse audiences. These skills span oral, written, and digital formats, enabling individuals to navigate the complexities of modern workplaces with confidence and clarity. Collaboration, in turn, requires trust, accountability, and shared responsibility within situational rules and norms (Detienne et al., 2012). It also involves efficient coordination to achieve a common goal, which includes sharing resources and fostering a team-building atmosphere that enhances group maturity and a win-win approach (Thornhill-Miller et al., 2023). For a group to work effectively, mutual respect and give-and-take must be the norm, not the exception.

Complex communication builds on these foundations, going beyond the mere transmission of information. It requires active listening, empathy, and the ability to articulate ideas across cultural, linguistic, and disciplinary boundaries. Mastering complex communication involves interpreting subtle cues, non-verbal signals, and contextual nuances to promote understanding and foster meaningful dialogue. It also demands proficiency in multiple communication modes – oral, written, visual, and digital – to convey complex concepts clearly and manage multifaceted relationships effectively.

The diversity of people in the classroom has transformed educational systems, offering a unique opportunity to practice complex communication. Using all available tools and methods, students learn to be more precise, eloquent, and empathetic in their interactions. Whether in interpersonal

exchanges, cross-cultural negotiations, or global collaborations, these skills enable individuals to build bridges, forge connections, and cultivate mutual respect in an interconnected and dynamic world.

2.3.4. Overcoming Challenges

Life's journey is marked not only by moments of triumph but also by trials and tribulations that test character and resilience. Indeed, overcoming challenges is an intrinsic part of the human experience, providing opportunities for growth, self-discovery, and transformation.

The journey of overcoming challenges fosters personal growth and self-discovery, inviting individuals to face their fears, confront their limitations, and move beyond their comfort zones in pursuit of their dreams.

Indeed, overcoming challenges is not without obstacles, setbacks, and moments of doubt. Yet through these crucibles of adversity, the true measure of character is revealed as individuals rise to the occasion, take the reins of their destiny, and emerge victorious against all odds.

Moreover, overcoming challenges fosters empathy and compassion, fostering a deeper understanding of the human condition and forging bonds of solidarity with those who share similar struggles. The educational atmosphere allows learners to acquire new skills to cope with the difficulties that arise and are often impossible to anticipate.

2.3.5. Critical and Holistic Thinking

In an increasingly complex world, the ability to think critically and holistically has become indispensable. Critical thinking is the ability to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information effectively. Amid an overload of data and misinformation, discerning truth from falsehood, questioning assumptions, and making reasoned judgments are essential skills. Critical thinking is the cornerstone of intellectual inquiry and is recognized as one of the most critical thinking skills and indicators of student learning (Alsaleh, 2020). It enables individuals to rigorously and systematically examine evidence, question assumptions, detect bias, and distinguish between fact and opinion to make well-informed judgments and decisions.

Critical thinking also fosters creativity, innovation, and problem-solving as individuals challenge conventional wisdom, consider alternative perspectives, and develop novel solutions to emerging challenges. Through these skills, individuals gain intellectual autonomy and independence, becoming informed citizens capable of making meaningful contributions to society and driving positive change. To develop critical thinking effectively, educational systems must create scenarios where students can practice this competence without fear of criticism or stigmatization.

To nurture critical thinking, educational systems must create environments where students can practice this competence without fear of criticism and stigmatization

Building on the foundation of critical thinking, holistic thinking empowers individuals to navigate complexity with clarity and insight, fostering innovative solutions that promote well-being, resilience, and harmony within interconnected systems. This mindset encourages considering the broader context and integrating knowledge as a whole rather than isolating unique properties (Ng et al., 2023). It involves synthesizing diverse information, recognizing patterns, and identifying interdependencies to understand complex challenges.

Holistic thinking also fosters empathy and inclusivity by encouraging individuals to consider the perspectives and needs of all stakeholders. It promotes collaboration and interdisciplinary approaches, recognizing that complex challenges often require diverse expertise. By adopting a holistic perspective, individuals can identify leverage points, anticipate unintended outcomes, and balance short- and long-term implications to develop effective and sustainable solutions. Without such an approach, educational systems risk creating disconnected pillars of knowledge, losing the benefits of examining problems from multiple angles and interconnected perspectives.

Together, critical and holistic thinking equip individuals with the skills to analyze the present and envision the future. These complementary competencies enable students to address complex challenges with creativity, inclusivity, and a focus on sustainable impact.

Critical thinkers foster creativity and innovation by challenging conventional wisdom, considering alternative perspectives, and developing novel solutions. Through these skills, individuals gain

intellectual autonomy and prepare to contribute meaningfully to society, driving positive change. To nurture critical thinking, educational systems must create environments where students can practice this competence without fear of criticism or stigmatization.

Building on critical thinking, holistic thinking empowers individuals to navigate complexity with clarity and insight. This mindset encourages considering the broader context and synthesizing information to recognize patterns and interdependencies (Ng et al., 2023). By looking at problems from multiple angles, individuals can identify short- and long-term implications, leverage points, and unintended outcomes, fostering innovative and sustainable solutions. Holistic thinking also promotes empathy, inclusivity, and collaboration by encouraging consideration of stakeholders' diverse needs and perspectives.

This interconnected approach fosters well-being, resilience, and harmony within systems while avoiding isolated pillars of knowledge. Together, critical and holistic thinking equip individuals to address complex challenges with creativity, inclusivity, and a focus on sustainable impact.

2.3.6. Agile and Design Thinking

Agile and design thinking represent innovative approaches to problem-solving characterized by flexibility, adaptability, and iterative experimentation. Agile methodology emphasizes collaboration, continuous improvement, and rapid iteration, enabling teams to respond effectively to evolving requirements and customer feedback in dynamic environments, and has been validated as beneficial in areas of uncertainty (Wangsa et al., 2022), as is the case in today's world.

Design thinking focuses on empathy, creativity, and user-centricity. It guides individuals through a human-centered design process to uncover latent needs, ideate innovative solutions, and prototype tangible outcomes. Both frameworks emphasize a holistic approach to problem-solving, integrating different perspectives, disciplines, and stakeholder insights to creatively and collaboratively address complex challenges. By embracing the principles of Agile and Design Thinking, organizations and individuals can foster a culture of innovation, resilience, and adaptability.

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II.

RE-INVENTING MANAGEMENT EDUCATION: RE-SOLUTIONARY LEARNING

CHAPTER 3

RE-INVENTING MANAGEMENT EDUCATION: RE-SOLUTIONARY LEARNING

3.1. The Roots of Re-Solutionary Learning

Re-solutionary learning is a novel approach to management education. The approach is a sum of four pillars: Learning by doing, Learning by designing, Learning by living, and Going beyond oneself. Re-solutionary learning is backed by academic rigor as each pillar is rooted in proven knowledge about teaching and learning. Taken together, the four pillars present an innovative, practical approach to management education.

Re-solutionary learning is more than an instructional approach to the discipline of management. It is a holistic way to understand management education based on the Jesuit values central to Ignatian education. The vision is that management education institutions provide the setting for preparing future managers not only to be highly competent professionals equipped with the skills and knowledge to tackle society's grand challenges. Most importantly, management education develops future leaders who, in their managerial capacity above all, are human, empathetic, and committed to a fairer and more sustainable world.

Re-solutionary learning is a holistic way to understand management education based on Jesuit values

This chapter unfolds the principles upon which the four pillars of re-solutionary learning are built. These principles include the Jesuit values that are central to Ignatian education. These values are the foundation for the vision that underlies the re-solutionary approach to management education. The educational principles that guide the more practical aspects of the re-solutionary approach come from theories of active, experiential, and project-based learning. After

presenting these foundational principles, the last section in this chapter will explain the four pillars of re-solutionary learning: Learning by doing, Learning by designing, Learning by living, and Going beyond oneself.

3.1.1. Jesuit Tradition of Education and Ignatian Pedagogy

Jesuit education is rooted in the spiritual and educational practices of St. Ignatius of Loyola, a Spanish priest and theologian who co-founded the religious order The Society of Jesus. Founded in the 16th century, Jesuit education is one of the most enduring educational traditions globally. It emphasizes a holistic formation, integrating intellectual rigor with moral, spiritual, and emotional growth. Jesuit institutions were among the first to blend classical studies with character development, establishing a model of education that significantly influenced subsequent educational practices (McAvoy, 2013). Jesuit education has always aimed to cultivate individuals who are not only intellectually competent but also compassionate, ethical, and committed to the service of others, embodying the Jesuit motto of becoming 'men and women for others' (The International Commission on the Apostolate of Jesuit Education, 1993).

The Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm, formalized in 1993 by the International Commission on the Apostolate of Jesuit Education, embodies the educational principles that have guided Jesuit education for centuries (Connor, 2014). It is a versatile and comprehensive educational framework emphasizing student-centered learning through five key elements: context, experience, reflection, action, and evaluation (The International Commission on the Apostolate of Jesuit Education, 1993). Context involves understanding and meeting students where they are, considering their backgrounds, environments, and needs, and ensuring that learning is profoundly personalized and relevant to their lives. Experience focuses on engaging students actively in learning that is meaningful to them, connecting theoretical knowledge with practical application. Reflection, often described as the centerpiece of the paradigm, prompts students to think deeply about their learning experiences and how this impacts them personally, academically, and socially. Action motivates students to apply what they have learned in real-world contexts, promoting ethical, value-driven behaviors and solutions to challenges. Finally, evaluation involves assessing both the learning process and outcomes, ensuring continuous improvement and a deeper understanding of the material (Chubbuck, 2007; DeFeo, 2009).

The Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm highlights integrating its five elements into a dynamic and interconnected cycle rather than isolated steps, with reflection playing a pivotal role in transforming experience into actionable insight (Nowacek and Mountin, 2012). This process-driven approach blends intellectual inquiry with self-awareness, ethical discernment, and a commitment to social responsibility. By focusing on the comprehensive development of students, Ignatian pedagogy prepares them to meet contemporary challenges with compassion, responsibility, and a mindset of lifelong learning. It challenges learners to excel academically and consider how their education can serve the greater good, cultivating leaders ready to navigate an interconnected and complex world (The International Commission on the Apostolate of Jesuit Education, 1993).

Figure 3. The Ignatian pedagogical paradigm

At the heart of Jesuit education are the Ignatian values, deeply rooted in the spiritual traditions of St. Ignatius of Loyola and integral to the mission of the Society of Jesus. These values – Cura Personalis (care for the whole person), Magis (striving for excellence), Discernment, Finding God in All Things, and Reflection – serve as the ethical and spiritual foundation of Jesuit pedagogy. These principles aim to nurture intellectually curious, ethically driven individuals equipped to positively impact a complex, interconnected world (McAvoy, 2013; Claywell et al., 2014).

Table 5: Core Ignatian values and their manifestation in education

Ignatian value	Description	Application in education
Cura Personalis *"Care for the whole person"*	A dedication to recognizing and nurturing each individual's unique gifts, needs, and potential, fostering holistic growth – intellectual, emotional, and spiritual – through empathy, respect, and personalized support.	Educators provide personalized support, addressing the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of students' lives. This includes fostering mentorship relationships, creating inclusive learning environments, and tailoring approaches to meet students' individual needs, promoting their holistic growth and well-being.
Magis *"Striving for excellence"*	A commitment to pursuing greater quality, impact, and purpose in personal and collective endeavors, with a commitment to continuous improvement and to go beyond the ordinary for the greater good.	Students are encouraged to exceed minimum expectations, pursuing meaningful goals with integrity and dedication. Magis is manifested in pushing for continuous improvement in academic work, cultivating a sense of purpose, and applying knowledge to solve societal challenges, emphasizing service and contribution to the greater good.
Discernment	A process of intentional and thoughtful decision-making rooted in reflection, ethical considerations, and a deep alignment with personal values aimed at identifying the best course of action in complex or ambiguous situations.	Educators guide students in evaluating complex choices by fostering critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and alignment with their personal values. Discernment can be practiced through case studies, reflective writing, discussions, and project work that challenge students to integrate theory with real-world decision-making, fostering moral and ethical leadership.

Ignatian value	Description	Application in education
Finding God in All Things	An encouragement to recognize the presence of the divine in all aspects of life and creation, fostering mindfulness, gratitude, and an appreciation for the world's interconnectedness.	Students are encouraged to seek meaning and interconnectedness in their studies, relationships, and the broader world. This value fosters wonder, gratitude, and openness, helping students approach learning with an appreciation for diverse perspectives and the deeper implications of their knowledge. Integrative learning and cross-disciplinary dialogue can connect education to a greater purpose.
Reflection	A practice of deliberate and meaningful engagement with experiences to uncover personal, intellectual, and ethical insights, fostering critical thinking, self-awareness, and a deeper understanding of how actions and choices impact oneself and others.	Reflection can be incorporated through journaling, group discussions, and structured reflective exercises that help students connect academic content with their values and aspirations. It enables students to critically analyze their experiences, fostering self-awareness and a deeper understanding of how they can contribute meaningfully to their communities.

Together, these values shape a distinctive educational ethos that extends beyond the classroom. They encourage the development of individuals who are not only academically accomplished but also deeply attuned to their roles in fostering justice, compassion, and sustainable change. By embedding these principles into curricula in higher education, Jesuit institutions prepare students to address contemporary challenges with purpose and resolve.

3.1.2. Active, Experiential Learning

"Learning is more effective when it is an active, rather than a passive process."

The statement above is a well-known remark attributed to German-American psychologist Kurt Lewin (1890-1947). Lewin is one of the most influential figures in organizational psychology and is best known for his pioneering work on group dynamics and change management. However, Lewin

has also contributed significantly to the development of learning theory, specifically experiential learning theory, with the notion that any learning, growth, and change begins with here-and-now experiences (Lewin, 1951).

Experiential learning is an educational approach that emphasizes students' active engagement in meaningful experiences as a way to acquire knowledge and develop skills. The approach requires students to participate in activities that are different from more traditional class-based approaches, such as formal lectures, discussions, reading assignments, and sit-down examinations.

American philosopher and educational reformer John Dewey (1859-1952) is considered a pioneer of the experiential pedagogical philosophy. Dewey advocated that learning is a social and interactive process driven by hands-on experiences. He championed the notion of **'learning by doing,'** emphasizing that individuals who are actively engaged with a problem or challenge they are genuinely interested in will develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills as they engage deeply with concepts and apply theoretical knowledge to practical scenarios (Dewey, 1934; Dewey, 1938). Another influential voice supporting the view that learning happens when the learner is actively engaged was Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget (1896-1980). Piaget argued that knowledge is not transmitted to a passive learner, but rather (lasting) knowledge is constructed as the learner interacts with the world and observes and reflects on those interactions and experiences (Piaget, 1952; Piaget, 1970).

In line with these ideas, experiential learning is a **learner-centered** approach that places the students at the heart of the educational process. Learners actively make choices, set goals, and take ownership of their learning journey. This approach differs from a traditional teacher-centered approach, where the teacher simply transmits knowledge to passive students. In experiential learning, the teacher becomes a facilitator, guide, and mentor rather than the primary source of information. The teacher's primary responsibilities include creating a supportive and conducive learning environment, designing experiential activities, posing thought-provoking questions, and providing constructive feedback. However, they do not dictate every aspect of the learning process, respecting the autonomy and agency of learners in shaping their educational experiences.

Building on these principles, Brazilian educator Paolo Freire's (1921-1997) critical pedagogy offers a profound perspective on active, experiential learning. Freire emphasized education as a dialogic

process that empowers learners to critically engage with the world and act upon it to create meaningful change (Freire, 1970). His work inspired the development of **service-learning**, an approach that combines community service with academic learning. The European Association of Service-Learning in Higher Education defines service learning as "*an experiential educational pedagogy in which students engage in community service, reflect critically on this experience, and learn from it personally, socially and academically*" (The European Association for Service-Learning in Higher Education, 2025). Rooted in Freire's philosophy and Dewey's emphasis on learning by doing, service-learning is widely recognized for its benefits, enhancing students' personal growth and civic responsibility while addressing community challenges. This pedagogy highlights the evolving role of education as an agent of societal transformation, bridging purposeful action with critical reflection to foster individual development and collective impact.

The experiential approach acknowledges that students enter the educational context with existing mental frameworks and experiences. This prior knowledge is the starting point for new learning, ensuring that educational experiences are not isolated but connected to what learners already know (Piaget, 1970). When such a connection is established, the learning experiences and the resulting new knowledge will become meaningful for the learner.

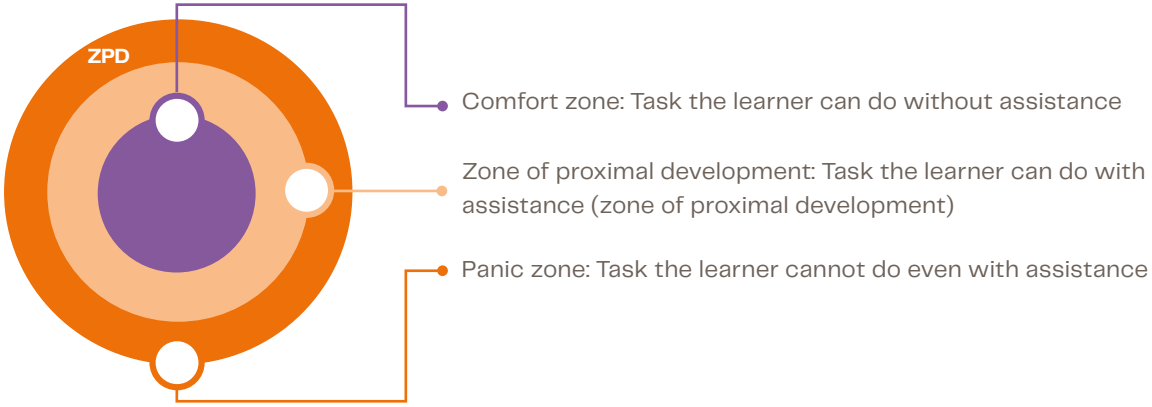
Scaffolding is all about tailoring the help to what each student needs, helping them develop competencies, and then letting them take the reins for their own learning journey

Building on this idea, Jerome Bruner (1915–2016) introduced the concept of **scaffolding** in education. Bruner's notion of scaffolding in learning is similar to how scaffolding works in construction. Construction workers use scaffolding to get support, stay safe, and build tall structures. In education, scaffolding is like that support system. It is what teachers do to help students with complex tasks or difficult concepts. It is like having training wheels when you are learning to ride a bike – you get help until you can do it alone. Like in construction, where scaffolding is removed when the building is strong enough to stand independently, in education teachers slowly step back as students become more confident and skilled. Scaffolding is all about tailoring the help to what each student needs, helping them develop competencies at something, and then letting them take the reins for their own learning journey (Bruner, 1974).

The idea of scaffolding also builds on the **'zone of proximal development'** concept introduced by Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934). It is often said that to learn and develop, you should step out of your usual comfort zone. However, stepping out of your comfort zone can be scary and generate feelings of anxiety and stress to the point where it becomes detrimental to growth and learning. The zone of proximal development represents what can be called 'the sweet spot of learning.' It is the range of tasks and challenges just beyond the learner's current level of competence, but which can be accomplished with appropriate guidance and support of a more knowledgeable person. This zone highlights the importance of providing learners with tasks and activities that are neither too easy (which can lead to boredom and limited learning) nor too difficult (which can result in frustration and discouragement). Instead, it encourages educators to

identify and offer optimally challenging tasks, allowing learners to stretch their capabilities and make meaningful progress (Vygotsky, 1965; Vygotsky, 1978).

Figure 4. Zone of proximal development

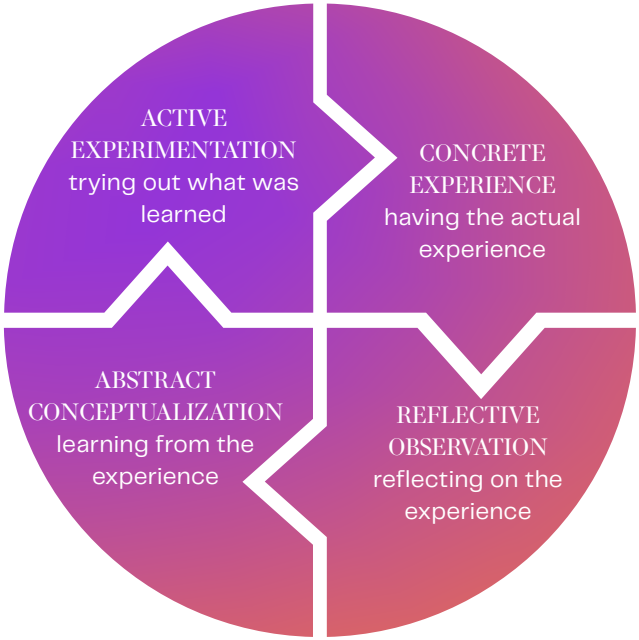


One of the cornerstones of experiential learning is **reflection**. Dewey stated, "*We do not learn through experience; we learn from reflecting on experience*" (Dewey, 1938). Experiences in themselves do not lead to learning and growth. Students must consciously make sense of the experiences by relating them to their prior experience and knowledge and broader concepts and theories of management and leadership. Participating in a business simulation game can be great fun as student groups compete to make the most sales or be most sustainable in their production. However, students must actively reflect on what they have learned from this experience. What were some of the surprising outcomes? Why did they surprise you? Do you have any gaps in your knowledge or skill sets? What would you do differently in the future with the knowledge you have now? How do we see theories in play? etc. Reflection also promotes self-awareness and metacognition, empowering learners to become more effective self-directed learners (Dewey, 1933; Dewey, 1938).

In 1980, David A. Kolb (1939 –), an American psychologist and educational theorist, summarized the ideas of Dewey, Lewin, and Piaget in an illustrative model. According to this model, developed

in his book *Experiential Learning* (Kolb, 1984), learning happens in a cyclical process in four stages: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. This framework emphasizes that learners acquire knowledge and develop skills by immersing themselves in authentic experiences, reflecting on those experiences, forming abstract concepts, and applying these concepts in new situations. Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory remains popular in many contexts, including management education.

Figure 5. Kolb's model for experiential learning



Action learning belongs to the overall umbrella of experiential learning methods. According to Reg Revans (1907–2003), by many considered the pioneer of action learning, there can be *"no learning without action, and no action without learning."* Revans highlighted two aspects central to learning: real-life problem-solving and collaborative learning. While traditional educational methods often rely on hypothetical or past scenarios, action learning proposes that participants

tackle current real-world problems with no apparent solution. Dealing with real-life issues that are inherently relevant for learners enhances their motivation and engagement and ensures that learning is practical and immediately applicable. In addition, by addressing real-world challenges, learners develop a sense of responsibility and ethical awareness beyond academic achievement. Real-life problems often require collaborative efforts, which is why teamwork is the second cornerstone of action learning. Revans emphasized the importance of collaborative learning, where small groups of individuals learn with each other and from each other in so-called learning communities. The group provides a supportive environment where members can share diverse perspectives, challenge each other's assumptions, and collectively generate innovative solutions (Revans, 1982).

The above theoretical backbone of experiential and action learning can be summarized in the following core principles:

- Learning is student-centered and student-led
- Learning requires active participation
- Learning requires experiences and interaction with the environment
- Learning takes place in a scaffolded process guided by a facilitator
- Learning from experiences happens through conscious reflection
- Learning takes place in interaction with others

Experiential learning can take many forms. When students in a strategy course compete in a business simulation game, it is experiential learning. It is experiential learning when a student develops a Capstone project where she interacts with a company, analyses a challenge the company faces, and develops solutions that she presents to the company. A student who does an internship in a local organization will experience experiential learning as he interacts with the organizational members, reflects on his observations and experiences, and tries to make sense of the experience. Industry visits, role-playing, networking events, business plan competitions, and project-based learning are all forms of experiential learning.

Re-solutionary learning can include any of the many forms of experiential learning. There is, however, one type of experiential learning that is central to bringing the four pillars of re-solutionary learning to life: project-based learning (PBL).

3.1.3. Project-Based Learning (PBL)

It has become the norm for many management educators to include project work in their courses. These projects can take different forms, from very short, simple in-class projects to consulting projects for companies and full-fledged venture-creation projects. The inspiration to use projects in management education comes from teaching manual disciplines, such as engineering, agriculture, and architecture, where projects have been a central part of education since the 17th century (Burlbaw et al., 2013; Knoll, 1997).

Project work was increasingly introduced into business and management education in the last decades of the 20th century as a response to the criticism that business schools were not responding to the demands of the business world. Renowned management author and expert Henry Mintzberg (1939 –) was at the time among the most prominent critics of how management was taught in business schools. Even though he was himself a seasoned management educator, he addressed the gap between what was taught in management education and what was needed in the workplace when he in 2004 wrote the following about MBA programs in Management Today: *"It is time to recognize conventional MBA programs for what they are – or else to close them down. They are specialized training in the functions of business, not general educating in the practice of management."* (Mintzberg, 2004, p. 5) Mintzberg argued that management is a craft, and as such, it is learned by practicing it. It is understood and perfected by experience. It is learning by doing. Therefore, the presentation and discussion of management theories in the classroom will not equip students with the necessary competencies to become managers in real organizations.

Integrating projects into management education has been seen as a way to bridge the gap between management theory and management practice in management education. Using projects can be a very effective way to promote student learning. However, the way they are incorporated into a course or program can make a significant difference in terms of the depth of learning and the development of managerial competencies. For a project to foster deep learning and competency development, it should be the bearing component. It should be the 'main course, not the dessert', as stipulated by two of the key voices promoting PBL in primary and secondary education, John Larmer and John R. Mergendoller (pblworks.org 2024).

Currently, in management education, projects are often used as the dessert and run the risk of leading to surface learning rather than deep learning of managerial competencies. In a typical

course, where students will do project work, a lecturer covers the topics with a combination of lectures, textbook readings, case studies, and discussions. Then, students are given a project to complete outside the classroom in teams, such as creating a marketing plan for a large international company or developing a business plan for a potential new venture. At the end of the course, students present their project's outcome in a report or an in-class presentation. The project will often form part of the assessment, yet the course typically ends with a sit-down exam to test the student's knowledge of course content. The focus of the project assessment will be on the project's final product, not on the process students went through in developing the project output. In educational terms, the students are assessed using a summative assessment method rather than a continuous, formative assessment method. In such an instructional approach, the students are 'doing a project,' but one that can be characterized as 'lightweight' because the students' learning does not primarily come from the development of the project. The project is a chance for students at the end of a course to demonstrate the knowledge (and skills) they learned through lectures, readings, and case study discussions.

For a project to foster deep learning and competency development, it should be 'the main course, not the dessert'

In PBL, students learn course-related knowledge and skills first and foremost from carrying out the project from beginning to end. The project is the central element of the educational approach in the course and not just one method among many. The project frames the curriculum, and other instructional methods should support students' learning from completing the project. When the project becomes the primary vehicle for learning in this way, clearly, the project must be designed and executed with much care and rigor.

The re-solutionary instructional approach of designing and executing learning projects is inspired by the extensive work on the PBL method done by PBLWorks. This organization can be considered an industry leader in PBL for primary and secondary education. PBLWorks defines PBL: *"Project Based Learning is a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging, and complex question, problem, or challenge*" (pblworks.org, 2024).

What distinguishes PBL as a unique educational approach are its essential project design elements, encapsulated in what PBLWorks calls the 'Gold Standard PBL.' These elements ensure that PBL delivers profound, meaningful learning experiences. The seven key principles are summarized in Table 6. Together, these principles form the foundation of the PBL learning process, supporting the overarching student learning goals: the development of key knowledge and understanding within academic disciplines and the acquisition of key success skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, and effective communication. These goals encompass not only the acquisition of course-specific and discipline-specific knowledge and skills but also the development of transversal, or generic, competencies that are essential for students' professional and personal growth.

Table 6. Principles of Gold Standard PBL

Principle	Description
Challenging Problem or Question	A significant, real-world problem or question that drives inquiry and requires critical thinking.
Sustained Inquiry	An iterative process of questioning, researching, and refining understanding over time.
Authenticity	Connecting projects to real-world contexts to make learning relevant to students' lives and futures.
Student Voice and Choice	Empowering students to make decisions, fostering ownership and engagement in their learning.
Reflection	Structured opportunities for students to reflect on learning, growth, and problem-solving.
Critique and Revision	Encouraging feedback and iterative improvement to refine work and embrace a growth mindset.
Public Product	Students present their work to an audience beyond the classroom, enhancing accountability and pride.

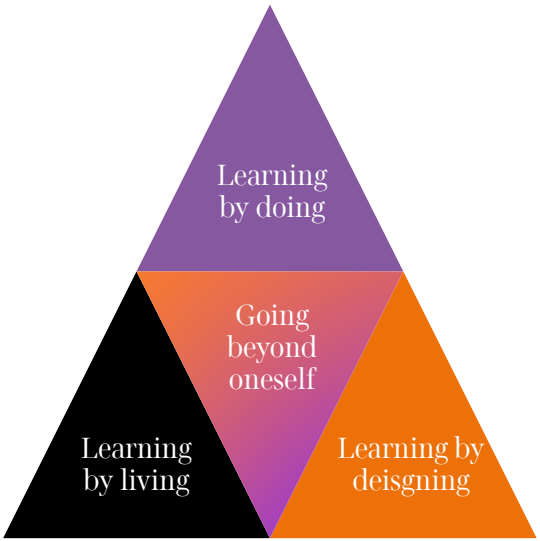
Source: Mergendoller and Larmer, 2015

The PBL approach ensures that students not only gain discipline-specific knowledge and skills but also develop transversal competencies that are vital for their professional and personal lives. These skills prepare students to thrive in complex, real-world contexts by enabling them to apply knowledge meaningfully.

3.2. The Pillars of Re-solutionary Learning

In the re-solutionary approach to management education, four foundational pillars guide students' journey towards becoming effective, empathetic, and impactful leaders. These pillars are Learning by Doing, Learning by Designing, Learning by Living, and Going Beyond Oneself. Ignatian principles, experiential learning, and project-based methodologies inspire the principles. Together, they represent a framework for fostering a holistic development of skills, competencies, and values necessary for leaders in a rapidly evolving, interconnected world.

Figure 6. The four pillars of Re-solutionary learning



3.2.1. Learning by Doing

Education specialist Tony Wagner insists that *"the world doesn't care about what you know. What the world cares about is what you do with what you know"* (Wagner, 2010). This principle is a cornerstone of re-solutionary learning, where students are expected to *actively use* their knowledge and skills to solve real challenges. Practicing action in a safe environment – where setbacks are treated as learning opportunities – enables students to build a foundation for becoming proactive problem-solvers and change-makers.

In Advantere's re-solutionary approach to management education, students learn by engaging in real-world projects designed and executed in close collaboration with a diverse range of partner organizations. These partners represent various industries, sectors, and sizes of organizations that are equally invested in the potential impact of the work. This authentic engagement fosters a high level of student commitment, as they are motivated by the tangible outcomes their work will have on the organization and its stakeholders. For instance, students tackle complex issues in private equity, marketing, and international business strategy, which immerses them in a high-stakes, high-impact learning process. Through these projects, students cultivate an ability to lead initiatives, make data-driven decisions, and approach challenges with resilience and adaptability. Contact with a diverse pool of organizations and challenges also exposes students to multiple career paths. It helps them to be better prepared when deciding where to initiate their professional journeys after graduating.

These real-life projects are at the heart of re-solutionary learning. Partner organizations open their doors to give students a firsthand glimpse into their organizational realities. This collaboration allows students to gain on-the-job skills without being formally employed. As Advantere graduate Pablo Mata says: *"It is a way to have some experience with real companies without doing an actual internship."* To help students succeed in these projects, they are introduced to theories, concepts, tools, and strategies that expand their subject knowledge and prepare them to apply what they learn directly within the partner organizations. Through this hands-on approach, students develop competencies that extend beyond theory because they act: they *conduct* marketing research, *practice* leadership, *propose* courses of action or investment strategies, *evaluate* social and environmental impacts, *present* their findings, and *reflect* on how these lived experiences transform their knowledge and build relevant skills for both their careers and personal lives.

Students will not typically have all the knowledge and tools they need to solve the challenge from the beginning of the project, nor will they be introduced to it during the formal sessions accompanying a project. Often, there will be holes in the students' knowledge that they will need to seek out on their own to address the challenge and develop suitable solutions. This self-driven learning is essential for the pillar of Learning by Doing.

3.2.2. Learning by Designing

In the re-solutionary approach, students learn by designing unique solutions to real-world challenges. The authentic, current problems presented by collaborating organizations provide students with opportunities to create something new rather than replicating existing ideas. This demands creative thinking and encourages students to offer fresh perspectives that can be both innovative and even surprising to the collaborating organizations.

This approach transforms students into active participants rather than passive learners. By directly engaging with real-world problems, they learn to approach challenges with innovative thinking and adaptability. At Advantere, projects are not about repeating past strategies but about crafting original solutions tailored to today's needs.

At Advantere, projects are not about repeating past strategies but about crafting original solutions tailored to today's needs

Initially, most students experience discomfort with the uncertainty and high level of independence these projects demand. However, this ambiguity provides fertile ground for growth. By managing unclear boundaries and adapting to unexpected events, students develop resilience and the capacity to lead in unpredictable situations. The contrast with traditional case study methods is stark. Here, students do not analyze past cases with known outcomes but create solutions with no pre-existing answers, just as they will in their future professional careers.

A vital aspect of Learning by Designing is the role of feedback. Students receive continuous, constructive feedback from instructors, mentors, and organizational partners, making the learning process iterative and results-driven. This feedback loop is central to the project-based approach,

pushing students to adapt, refine, and rethink their solutions. As graduate Luis Muniz describes it: *"It's not just feedback – it's living feedback, constantly challenging us to make our ideas work in the real world."*

Through designing real solutions for real issues, students emerge with the technical and disciplinary skills as well as the adaptive mindset needed to navigate today's dynamic and complex business landscape. The focus on designing prepares students to think beyond constraints, drive innovation, and tackle the complexities they will face as future leaders.

3.2.3. Learning by Living

The 'Learning by Living' pillar embodies the immersive nature of the re-solutionary approach, combining formal and informal learning experiences that integrate cognitive (mind), physical (body), and emotional (heart) aspects of learning. As a leading learning theorist, Peter Jarvis argues, meaningful learning occurs through the interaction of these dimensions, connecting intellectual engagement with hands-on and emotional experiences (Jarvis, 2006). This pillar expands learning experiences beyond traditional classroom boundaries through curricular and extra-curricular activities, such as visits to company headquarters and production sites, gamified learning activities, interaction with beneficiaries of the developed solutions, mentoring programs, and student events. By experiencing learning as a holistic, multi-dimensional process, students develop profound adaptability and resilience essential for navigating complex, real-world environments.

Students at Advantere frequently describe their learning experience as continuous and immersive, citing long-term study trips, diverse team projects, and leadership sessions with industry mentors as transformative. Students are encouraged to experience emotions and reflect on different perspectives and behaviors through this exposure to real-world contexts and professional role models. Not only does this help students gain valuable insights into different leadership styles and strategic decision-making behaviors, but it also allows them to reflect on, build, and refine their own professional identity.

A core element of Learning by Living focuses on collaborative learning, emphasizing teamwork, shared responsibility, and the capacity to integrate diverse viewpoints. Working alongside peers with different cultural and professional backgrounds and diverse skills and perspectives, students

practice empathy and communication skills and learn to appreciate collective intelligence – a crucial competency for contemporary leaders. This dynamic mirrors real-world corporate structures, encouraging students to leverage each team member's unique strengths to achieve a shared goal. It transforms learning from a solitary pursuit into a collective endeavor, with all the emotional ups and downs this can cause. The leaders of organizations are not and cannot be solitary stars; they are only capable of doing what their teams can do.

Ultimately, the Learning by Living pillar equips students with the practical experience and reflective mindset necessary for life-long learning. By participating in holistic learning experiences that incorporate cognitive, physical, and emotional aspects of learning, students practice the agility to respond to emerging challenges with confidence and purpose, as well as the ability to take a step back and learn from challenges. This approach ensures that they leave their program not just with theoretical knowledge but as well-rounded professionals ready to lead with integrity and adapt to the evolving demands of contemporary society.

3.2.4. Going Beyond oneself

The 'Going Beyond Oneself' pillar is the rock upon which the other three pillars are built. And at the same time, it is the pinnacle of the objective of re-solutionary learning. Going Beyond Oneself represents Advantere's commitment to purpose-driven leadership, encouraging students to pursue careers that go beyond personal gain and contribute to the greater good. This pillar stands on two legs, which embody the Ignatian principles of Discernment – the practice of making thoughtful, intentional choices – and Magis, which calls for striving for excellence in a way that benefits others. In practice, these principles can be understood as self-reflection and self-leadership on the one hand and responsible and impactful leadership on the other.

Gandhi said, "If you want to change the world, start with yourself." Re-solutionary learning emphasizes self-reflection as a key tool in educating purpose-driven leaders. To become responsible and impactful leaders, students must first understand their values, motivations, and purpose and embark on a personal growth journey. Students are often unfamiliar with such reflection in educational environments. They need support to increase their self-awareness and find a purpose that aligns their personal values and professional goals with a commitment to serve others. Self-reflec-

tion through structured reflection exercises and guided mentorship aims to empower students as they consider how their skills and actions can be developed not only to realize their personal purpose but to best serve a purpose greater than their own advancement.

The second core component of this pillar, Going Beyond Oneself, is educating leaders with integrity and social consciousness. Students engage in projects, often in partnership with NGOs and socially driven organizations, that demand an understanding of social and environmental issues and the practical skills needed to address them. These projects challenge students to consider the broader implications of their decisions and understand how their leadership choices can contribute to positive social impact. Through this lens, students develop the skills to lead with compassion and inclusivity, ensuring that their decisions support the well-being of their teams, communities, and society at large.

This pillar encourages students to actively leave their comfort zones, as growth requires stepping into unfamiliar and challenging situations. As students tackle complex issues of partner organizations or in their teams, engage in self-reflective activities, and interact with mentors, leaders, and experts from diverse fields and backgrounds, they face ambiguous situations, ethical dilemmas, and problems with no apparent solution. When such events are coupled with action and reflection, they become learning experiences where students acquire a deeper understanding of their own capabilities and limitations, building self-awareness, resilience, and capacity for empathy in the process.

Ultimately, Going Beyond Oneself ensures that students graduate as well-rounded, purpose-driven professionals prepared to create meaningful change. Equipped with the skills to lead with integrity, they are ready to adapt to the evolving demands of contemporary society and inspire others through their commitment to a more just and sustainable world. This pillar is not simply about gaining knowledge but about fostering a lifelong dedication to personal growth, ethical leadership, and positive impact. This combination transforms students into leaders who truly go beyond themselves. Not just the best leaders *of* the world but also the best leaders *for* the world.

Table 7. Summarizing the four pillars of Re-solutionary learning

Learning by Doing	Learning by Designing	Learning by Living	Going Beyond Oneself
Students learn through hands-on, practical engagement with real-world environments through, experiential learning activities.	Students learn through creating innovative and well-thought-out solutions to complex and authentic challenges.	Students learn and develop through a holistic approach that integrates cognitive, emotional, and physical dimensions, engaging in immersive and collaborative experiences.	Students learn through purposeful reflection and intentional action, aligning their skills with a greater purpose that extends beyond personal advancement, fostering leadership driven by meaningful impact.

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CHAPTER 4

THE RE-SOLUTIONARY PILLARS IN ACTION

This chapter will illustrate the four pillars of re-solutionary learning in the context of actual projects and other curricular and extra-curricular activities at Advantere School of Management.

4.1. Collaborating with Organizations

The learning-by-doing principle involves students working on real challenges in collaboration with partnering organizations. A challenge can be a difficulty that an organization experiences in any area of its business or an opportunity that the organization wants to explore and exploit.

The most essential characteristic of the challenge is that it is an actual challenge that the organization has. The more authentic the project is, the better – for both the organization and the students. Authenticity spurs engagement and motivation, which in turn raises potential learning for students and likely improves the resulting outcomes and benefits for organizations as well.

The more authentic the project is, the better – for both the organization and the students

The three projects described below are examples of real challenges organizations faced when the collaboration was initiated with Advantere students. NTT Data wanted to explore the opportunities for strength-based management in their organization. In the project with the sparkling water brand Solán de Cabras, the students were tasked with supporting the company with fresh ideas for how to brand the product to diverse target groups. Finally, the project with Invesco is an example of students addressing an ongoing challenge facing investment managers: developing innovative and sustainable strategies that align financial performance with evolving market demands and stakeholder expectations.

Project 1: NTT Data – Strengths-Based Development Model

Collaborating organization: NTT Data
NTT DATA is one of the world's largest digital consulting and IT service companies. NTT DATA – a part of NTT Group – is a global innovator of IT and business services headquartered in Tokyo. They help clients transform through consulting, industry solutions, business process services, IT modernization, and managed services.

Challenging question
How would the strengths-based development model fit into NTT Data's competency management model?

Curricular integration
Program: Master in Talent Management
Course: Leadership and Social Entrepreneurship

Details of the project:
The project aimed to help students understand how a strengths-based management model can work under specific circumstances. The collaborating organization applied a competency-based management model, and students were tasked with developing actionable suggestions for how to fit a strengths-based development model into the current management approach. In the process, students practiced empathy, design thinking, teamwork, presentation skills, and adaptability.

Final deliverable
An Action Plan to implement a strengths-based development model that fits into NTT Data's competency management model.

Project 2: Solán de Cabras – Marketing and Internationalization Strategy

Collaborating organization: Solán de Cabras
Solán de Cabras is a mineral water brand belonging to the Mahou San Miguel beverages group. Mahou San Miguel is a leading Spanish brewing company headquartered in Madrid. It is renowned for its flagship brands, including Mahou, San Miguel, and Alhambra. The company's portfolio also includes ciders and mineral waters. As a global player, Mahou San Miguel exports to more than 70 countries.

Challenging questions
How would you create a marketing plan to position Solán de Cabras sparkling water in the market successfully?
How can Solán de Cabras sparkling water internationalize?

Project 2: Solán de Cabras – Marketing and Internationalization Strategy *(Continued)*

Curricular integration
Program: Master in International Management
Courses: Marketing management & Global marketing strategies

Details of the project
The project with Solán de Cabras had two parts (I & II) developed in two courses, Marketing Management for the first term and Global Marketing Strategies for the second term. Part I was about creating a Marketing Plan for Solán de Cabras sparkling water. Part II asked the students to develop an internationalization strategy for the same product. The projects lasted for the whole term and were presented at the beginning at the Advantere Campus. The courses' professors supported the students with specific sessions to adapt the concepts and frameworks to the challenges. There were mid-project Q&A sessions with the brand executives and a final presentation at the Advantere Campus.

Final deliverable
A marketing plan and an internationalization strategy for Solán de Cabras sparkling water were presented to company executives.

Project 3: Invesco Management – Designing an Investment Process for Mutual Funds

Collaborating organization: Invesco Spain
Invesco Management is a global investment firm offering individual and institutional clients a wide range of financial products and services. Its expertise covers asset classes such as equities, fixed income, multi-asset strategies, and alternatives. Invesco's offerings include mutual funds, ETFs, and separately managed accounts, providing diverse investment solutions worldwide.

Challenging question
How would you design and implement the investment process of an Equity and/or Fixed Income mutual fund and market it to real institutional and/or retail investors?

Curricular integration
Program: Master in Finance
Course: Global financial markets

Project 3: Invesco Management – Designing an Investment Process for Mutual Funds *(Continued)*

Details of the project
Students were tasked with identifying an actionable investment idea to be marketed to retail and institutional investors as an investment solution through a mutual fund or an Exchanged Traded Fund (ETF). Students developed a comprehensive investment and risk management process with backward and forward simulations. As part of their work, they designed a 'Fund Prospectus' to highlight the most relevant aspects of the investment vehicle, showcasing its potential to real investors.
Student teams were guided by both a company tutor and an academic tutor. They collaborated closely with the company, utilizing a shared document and participating in a midpoint presentation where company tutors evaluated their progress and provided feedback.
Students developed their ability to present investment solutions to top managers and refined key competencies, including collaboration, technical and digital skills, global awareness, and critical thinking. They also gained hands-on experience with two leading financial information platforms: Bloomberg and FactSet.

Final deliverables
Final portfolio presentation, Bloomberg Backtesting and forward testing portfolio simulations, Excel/Python asset allocation, risk management models, and Fund Prospectus.

4.2. Designing Real Solutions

A key competence for managers is the ability to go from the abstract to the concrete. To transform theoretical concepts and ideas into practical, actionable solutions that solve existing problems and take advantage of opportunities. Students at Advantere have plenty of opportunities to develop and practice this competence through the project-based learning approach. Three project types stand out in this context.

Firstly, the common **projects in collaboration with organizations**, where the organization poses a challenge that needs a solution. As an example, the students in the Master of Finance collaborate with N26 on a project to design and build an index that can holistically and objectively determine their customers' financial well-being. When presenting the progress of their designed solutions to experts from the organizations, students gain 'living feedback' on the practicality and feasibility of solutions –in that way, enhancing their understanding of what can work and what cannot work in real life. Other examples include the students in the Master of Talent Management developing

the specifics of a communication plan for L'Oreal as part of their 'Brave Together' program, and the Master of Finance students proposing actionable solutions to ProSegur Cash for how to reduce the company's carbon footprint in a financially efficient manner.

Second, students in all programs develop an **entrepreneurial project**. At the heart of any entrepreneurial problem, whether as part of a venture creation process or within an existing company as a corporate venturing initiative, is the design of an actual, innovative solution that generates value through solving a real-life problem.

Third, the **Capstone project**, which marks the end of all master programs at Advantere, is the final opportunity students have to showcase their ability to design practical solutions that have real-world relevance.

Project 1: N26 – Financial Wellness Insights and Strategic Solutions
Collaborating organization: N26 Iberia N26 is a digital bank headquartered in Berlin, Germany. It offers mobile banking services across most European countries, allowing users to open bank accounts entirely online without needing physical branches. N26 provides various features, including checking accounts, savings accounts, investment options, and debit cards.
Challenging questions How would you build an Index that objectively and holistically determines a consumer's financial well-being? How should N26 incorporate the output and conclusions from the Financial Wellness Index into its strategic plan?
Curricular integration Master in Finance Quantitative methods in finance

Project 1: N26 – Financial Wellness Insights and Strategic Solutions *(Continued)*

Details of the project
Students collaborated with N26 Iberia to analyze Spanish households' financial well-being using the Financial Wellness Index, based on surveys designed and launched by the bank. The surveys measure key factors such as earnings, budgeting, savings, and indebtedness. Students compiled insights from the surveys into a report that achieved significant media coverage, with over 90 mentions across TV, radio, and digital outlets. Using the conclusions from the Financial Wellness Index, students proposed strategic improvements to N26's top management.
The project began with a presentation by N26, during which the driving question and tutors were introduced. Students interacted with the company through Q&A sessions and collaborative documents, presenting their progress in two separate sessions for feedback and guidance. The project concluded with a final presentation at N26's Barcelona headquarters, where students shared their findings and solutions with senior executives, including the CEO and Head of PR.

Final deliverables
MatLab/Python with the Fuzzy Logic Model, a final report, and a presentation to the company executives.

Project 2: L'Oreal – Designing a Communication Plan

Collaborating organization: L'Oreal
L'Oréal is a leading French personal care company and the largest cosmetics company globally. Its product portfolio spans hair color, skincare, sun protection, makeup, perfume, and hair care. L'Oréal actively supports staff wellbeing through initiatives such as "Brave Together," a key component of its broader wellness strategy.

Challenging question
What specific actions would you propose and implement to strengthen L'Oréal Spain and Portugal's external and internal communication strategies for their Wellbeing Pillar program, Brave Together?

Curricular integration
Program: Master in Talent Management
Course: Corporate culture and change management

Project 2: L'Oreal – Designing a Communication Plan *(Continued)*

Details of the project
The project with L'Oréal took an open approach to developing a Communication Plan for their Brave **Together** program, which focuses on mental health care. Students were divided into three groups, each tasked with creating their approach to the project topics. The learning goals of the project centered on applying communication techniques to empower L'Oréal staff to prioritize their mental health by fostering creativity and innovation. The projects spanned the entire term and were initially presented at L'Oréal's headquarters in Spain. Throughout the course, the course professor´ provided support through specific sessions aimed at helping students adapt concepts and frameworks to address real challenges. There were two validation sessions with the HR team from L'Oréal Spain, and students delivered their final presentation at L'Oréal's headquarters. The project enhanced the students' abilities to apply communication techniques to real organizational challenges and developed their creativity, collaboration, and presentation skills.

Final deliverable
A comprehensive communication plan outlining actionable strategies for implementing initiatives under the Brave Together program.

Project 3: Prosegur Cash – Designing solutions to reduce carbon footprint

Collaborating organization: Prosegur Cash
As a subsidiary of Prosegur Compañía de Seguridad, S.A., Prosegur Cash, S.A. is a global leader in cash management and logistics services, operating in 31 countries with a workforce exceeding 45,000 employees. The company offers comprehensive solutions, including cash-in-transit, cash processing, and ATM services, catering to financial institutions, retail businesses, government agencies, and central banks.

Challenging question
How would you reduce Prosegur Cash's carbon footprint in a financially efficient manner?

Curricular integration
Program: Master in Finance
Course: Ethics, sustainability, and society

Project 3: Prosegur Cash – Designing solutions to reduce carbon footprint *(Continued)*
Details of the project Students worked collaboratively in teams to develop innovative solutions to reduce Prosegur Cash's carbon footprint in a financially efficient manner. They analyzed the company's operations, focusing on energy consumption and environmental impact, conducted cost-benefit analyses, and proposed sustainability and cost-effectiveness strategies. The project included visiting Prosegur's main cash-handling facility in Spain, providing students with insights into the company's value-creation process. Teams presented their findings and recommendations, including environmental impact, cost savings, and implementation plans, to Prosegur Cash's top management for evaluation. This project fostered critical thinking, problem-solving, teamwork, and ethical awareness among participants.
Final deliverables Financial model with estimations, final report, and presentation of the solutions to Presegur Cash's top management.

4.3. Learning and Development as an Immersive Experience

At Advantere, learning is not confined to the classroom. Instead, it is an immersive experience combining formal and informal learning experiences. In line with the Ignatian value of Cura Personalis, the objective is to support the holistic development of students as professionals and individuals by offering learning experiences not tied to a particular course or program.

A flagship experience offered to students in all master programs at Advantere is a 10-day stay at **McDonough School of Business of Georgetown University**, our strategic partner and a fellow Jesuit institution. During this 10-day stay, students from all Advantere master's programs participate in an intensive Social and Sustainability Program delivered by world-class professors and experts. The sessions cover trending topics such as climate finance, social impact finance, corporate sustainability strategies, environmentally sustainable operations and business models, and the economics of climate change. A highlight of the program is the opportunity for students to present the social impact projects they developed in Madrid, receiving valuable feedback and encouragement from leading experts in these fields.

Beyond academics, the stay provides an immersive cultural and social experience as students live on campus and experience American university life firsthand. This integration of mind (knowledge), heart (values), and hand (action) makes the Georgetown program a transformative example of Advantere's commitment to providing students with experiences that support their development as well-rounded professionals equipped to make meaningful contributions to society.

Another signature initiative offered to support the student's development is **the mentoring program**, where each student can interact closely with an experienced mentor. Beyond career guidance, this program fosters personal growth by providing a private and supportive space to discuss career aspirations, navigate critical decisions, and cultivate the skills and mindset needed to achieve long-term goals.

The program is carefully tailored to meet individual needs, beginning with an in-depth exploration of the student's career goals. Based on this assessment, students are matched with a high-profile mentor whose expertise aligns closely with their aspirations. The mentors, who come from diverse professional backgrounds – including C-suite executives, board directors, principals, and managing directors – offer students support in exploring their potential career journeys. Through this guidance, students visualize their career paths and nurture the personal qualities that shape them as individuals. Mentor and mentee engage in monthly sessions where students obtain career insights, guidance, and access to networking opportunities. Many mentorship relationships extend beyond the initial four-month program, evolving into enduring professional connections supporting the student's development and career trajectory.

Project-based learning places high demands on students. To help balance these demands, providing opportunities for students to **socialize** and prioritize their **personal well-being** is crucial. Through continuous teamwork in courses and projects, students develop deep social bonds while learning to collaborate across diverse cultures and backgrounds. These bonds are essential for balancing academic challenges with personal well-being, and professors and staff play an active role in monitoring group dynamics and providing support throughout the process.

To further enhance this balance, students and Advantere staff organize various social activities. These include a running club, lunch events featuring traditional dishes from students' home countries, and other informal gatherings. A standout event is the annual collaboration with Google's global initiative, *I Am Remarkable* (https://www.rmrkblty.org/iamremarkable), which

celebrates personal achievements while fostering well-being, allyship, and a sense of belonging among participants.

4.4. Self-Leadership and Service Learning

The re-solutionary pillar 'Going Beyond Oneself' focuses on two interconnected themes: self-leadership and other-orientation. At its core, self-leadership begins with self-knowledge, which requires the ability to engage in meaningful self-reflection. At Advantere, students have ample opportunities to reflect on their values and goals. Three key initiatives that exemplify this approach are the annual trip to Loyola Sanctuary Center, held during the pre-program boot camp, the two annual Employability Weeks, and the Leadership Talks series.

The trip to **Loyola Sanctuary Center** in Gipuzkoa, Northern Spain, serves two primary purposes besides the social benefits of traveling as a group for three days. First, it introduces students to the history and foundations of the Jesuit educational tradition, offering a sense of being part of something greater than oneself. This experience helps students connect with the values underpinning Advantere's educational approach. Second, the main focus of the stay is a series of sessions designed to help students identify their personal purpose and translate it into actionable goals and personal branding strategies.

The **Employability Weeks** combine traditional career development activities, such as creating effective CVs, optimizing LinkedIn profiles, and meeting with company representatives to understand recruitment processes, with sessions focused on self-awareness. These include tools and exercises that help students identify their strengths and opportunities for growth and how to apply these strengths in various professional roles. These sessions are often transformative, providing students valuable insights into their potential and personal development.

Another key initiative that inspires students to define their professional profiles and explore diverse pathways to leadership is the **Leadership Talks** series, featuring 5-6 high-level professionals and inspirational speakers each year. Through the presentation of their professional – and often personal – journeys, these leaders demonstrate the variety of paths students can take to become impactful leaders in the organizations they will join. The talks encourage students to reflect on

their values and understand that there is no single 'right' way to lead; instead, authentic leadership emerges from aligning one's leadership style with personal values. By showcasing the power of self-reflection, as exemplified by the speakers themselves, these talks reinforce the importance of introspection in developing meaningful and authentic leadership.

While self-leadership focuses on personal growth and authenticity, the second theme of Going Beyond Oneself – other-orientation – emphasizes the importance of connecting with and addressing the needs of others. For students to become 'change agents,' it is essential that they engage directly with real social and environmental challenges. Interacting with individuals who experience the consequences of social inequality or environmental harm broadens their perspectives and is a powerful motivator to become the best managers *for* the world. Beyond integrating social and environmental dimensions into every course, project, and activity at Advantere, all students participate in a curricular service-learning project designed to create meaningful social impact and drive positive change. Below are descriptions of three such projects.

Social Impact Project: Ecca – Developing an app for measuring social impact
Collaborating organization: Fundación Ecca Social Fundación ECCA Social, established in 2022, promotes social inclusion and supports vulnerable populations through education and empowerment. With operations in several Spanish regions and international initiatives in Africa, the foundation addresses issues such as women's rights, migration, and social vulnerability, striving to build more equitable and sustainable societies.
Challenging question How can you develop an app for Fundación ECCA Social to measure the social impact of its initiatives and drive data-informed improvements?
Details of the project The project tasked students with creating a minimum viable product (MVP) for an app to help Fundación ECCA Social measure the social impact of its initiatives and implement data-driven improvements. To gain a deeper understanding of the organization's needs, students visited ECCA Social's facilities in Seville and participated in a training session on impact measurement, focusing on the theory of change and its practical applications. A team of 20 students collaborated intensively, overcoming challenges in organization and communication to deliver a functional solution. The project's outcomes were presented at Georgetown University as part of ongoing global discussions on social innovation.

Social Impact Project: Ecca – Developing an app for measuring social impact *(Continued)*

Final deliverables
A minimum viable product (MVP) of the app to measure Fundación ECCA Social's impact, an accompanying impact assessment report, and a presentation of findings and solutions to stakeholders, including managers and key employees at Fundación Ecca Social and professors at Georgetown University.

Social Impact Project 2: UNICEF Spain – An action plan for attracting young volunteers

Collaborating organization: UNICEF Spain
UNICEF Spain is the Spanish branch of the United Nations Children's Fund and one of 36 national committees worldwide. As an independent non-governmental organization, it raises funds exclusively through voluntary contributions from the general public and private sector. Dedicated to protecting the rights and well-being of children globally, UNICEF Spain promotes access to education, healthcare, nutrition, and protection from violence, exploitation, and discrimination. In addition to supporting UNICEF's global initiatives, it raises awareness, advocates for child rights, and addresses specific challenges faced by vulnerable children within Spain.

Challenging question
How can UNICEF Spain promote greater involvement of young people in its activities and initiatives?

Details of the project
The project addressed the challenge of increasing youth involvement in UNICEF Spain by exploring innovative ways to engage young people meaningfully in the organization's mission. Students worked closely with UNICEF Spain to analyze existing engagement models and identify opportunities for improvement. They engaged in research and collaboration, gathering insights to understand the preferences and motivations of young volunteers.
Throughout the project, students were encouraged to combine a business perspective with a social and humanitarian approach, fostering creativity and practical problem-solving. The initiative allowed students to develop impactful solutions aligned with UNICEF's values while addressing operational challenges.
The project culminated in a presentation to UNICEF Spain, where students shared their findings and recommendations.

Final deliverable
An action plan and presentation to top management at UNICEF Spain and professors at Georgetown University.

Social Impact Project 3: Man Truck & Bus Iberia and Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes España – Workforce Solutions and Social Integration
Collaborating organization: Man Truck & Bus Iberia and Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes España *MAN Truck & Bus Iberia*, headquartered in Coslada, Madrid, specializes in importing and selling commercial vehicles, including trucks and buses, as well as related spare parts and accessories. Operating since 1987, the company offers a comprehensive range of products and services tailored to the industrial vehicle sector in Spain. *Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes España (SJM-E)* is a network dedicated to accompanying, serving, and defending migrants and refugees throughout their migration journey, from border crossings to full integration into host societies. SJM-E operates across various Spanish cities, focusing on areas such as the Southern Border, detention centers (CIE), hospitality, migrant women and domestic work, citizenship and participation, and interreligious dialogue. The organization advocates for the rights of migrants, providing support and promoting social inclusion to foster a more just and welcoming society.
Challenging question How can we address the shortage of mechanics and drivers while promoting the social and labor integration of migrants in Spain?
Details of the project his project addressed two pressing societal challenges in Madrid: the growing need for skilled mechanics and truck drivers in the industrial vehicle sector and the increasing inflow of migrants seeking better opportunities in Spain. Students were tasked with conducting a feasibility study to design a program that trains and hires migrants for these roles. Students applied their knowledge and developed key skills such as analytical thinking, decision-making, and adaptability. They collaborated with Fundación San Cas Unidos, a member organization of the Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes España (SJM-E) network, to understand the realities of young migrants. Students engaged with Man Truck & Bus Iberia to understand their organizational challenges. The final proposal offered a practical solution to workforce shortages while showcasing the positive contributions of migrants. The project's outcome subsequently served as a foundation for actual implementation by Man Truck & Bus Iberia.
Final deliverable A feasibility study and a final presentation to managers and key employees at Man Truck & Bus Iberia and Fundación San Cas Unidos and professors at Georgetown University.

Juan Figar, an external advisor collaborating with Advantere on social impact projects, underscores the transformative role of purpose in shaping relationships and outcomes. Reflecting on his experience, he observes: *The underlying theme in all of this is purpose -specifically, purpose within organizations, which, by the way, is not incompatible with higher profits. The depth of discussion*

and reflection we aimed for went far beyond a simple transactional agreement. Since purpose was at the core, we were able to connect on a much deeper level."

Juan Figar's words highlight how a genuine focus on purpose fosters relationships that transcend transactional interactions. When purpose is at the core, the connections between students, the school, and collaborators become deeper, more meaningful, and anchored in shared values. This commitment to purpose influences not only the design and execution of projects but also the nature of the partnerships formed. It aligns seamlessly with the 'Going Beyond Oneself' pillar, illustrating how purpose-driven education can transform initiatives into enduring, value-driven experiences that create lasting impact.

III.

PROJECT-BASED LEARNING AND OUR KEY STAKEHOLDERS

5. The Student Perspective
6. The Collaborating Organizations' Perspective
7. The Perspective of Faculty and Instructors

CHAPTER 5

THE STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

The previous presentation of the principles and pillars of re-solutionary learning makes it clear that students play a crucial part in their own learning and development. As a general principle, re-solutionary learning is for everyone who fulfills the requirements to study for a master's at Advantere School of Management. In fact, the more diverse the student cohort is, the more learning opportunities the individual student will face.

That said, it *does* take something different, something special, for the individual student to make the most of the educational experience in a learning environment where an experiential, project-based approach is dominant. Not in terms of specific knowledge, abilities, or personality. But in terms of willingness to take responsibility for one's own learning. In terms of the courage to fail and learn from mistakes. In terms of empathy and being open to different ways of thinking and behaving. When such willingness, courage, and open-mindedness are present, the re-solutionary approach to management education has much to offer students.

Students play a crucial part in their own learning and development

The following pages are based on testimonials from Advantere graduates and complemented by insights from conversations with organizational representatives and faculty members. On the one hand, the testimonials illustrate what the re-solutionary approach, particularly a project-based learning approach, gives students in terms of learning and development. On the other hand, in the testimonials, the students also express in their own words what it takes to be successful and take advantage of the re-solutionary approach to management education.

5.1. What Does Re-Solutionary Learning Give Students?

Most students in Advantere's first cohorts had little to no experience with experiential or project-based learning (PBL) in their prior education. However, the learning advantages of the approach are very clear to them. The two statements below came from students halfway through their master's studies. They illustrate how students find that PBL fosters more profound, more lasting mastery of the master's program content compared to more traditional approaches to management education.

- Mom Mean, a student in the Master of Talent Management: *"Project-based learning teaches us that it's not just about getting a grade. What matters is truly learning from our experiences and studies. We're not ju*st sitting, reading, and writing papers – we engage. We experience real challenges in the real world."
- Student in the Master of Finance: "When I study for an exam, I focus on that exam, I pass it, and then I forget everything – *I either don't remember it later or don't know how to apply it in real life. But with project-based learning, I remember. I remember what I do, why I do it, and I truly understand the process behind what we study."*

5.1.1. Network and Professional Contacts

Network and professional contacts are often essential for landing a first job after graduation. Beatriz Capote Ochoa de Retana explains that one of her main motivations for joining Advantere was the opportunity to connect with a broad and diverse network across major Jesuit universities in Spain and the US. However, it is not just the number of professionals students meet but also the depth of these relationships that makes a strategic difference in their careers. Beatriz reflects: "*The strategic advantage is how close and continuous the networking opportunities are. Networking happens all the time, and we have access to mentors. I still speak to my mentor – I even met up with her this summer. We stay in touch. In other universities, you don't get this kind of close, meaningful network with important people."*

For Beatriz Capote Ochoa de Retana, the contact with organizations had a lasting impact. She secured her job as Junior Tax Assistant at EY in Luxembourg after meeting company representatives during an employability activity at Advantere. For students from outside Spain, the close

collaboration with organizations through projects, company visits, the mentorship program, and company presentations during Employability Weeks opens the door to start building a professional network in Europe.

The strength of these relationships depends on the organizations' willingness to engage with students. Ricardo Giménez-Arnau, Investment Analyst at Impact Bridge, demonstrates such openness, emphasizing that working on real projects in an organization-student collaboration provides students with valuable contacts for their future careers. He notes: *"I think it's very beneficial for students to connect with professionals in the labor market, especially those working in fields similar to what they want to pursue after their master's, so they have a direct contact there. We can grab a coffee whenever they want or answer any questions they may have. I think that's really valuable for students because it gives them a chance to meet people in the industry they aspire to work in. That, in turn, opens doors for them and increases their chances of starting their careers there."*

Graduate student Luis Muniz highlights that what impacted him most about the re-solutionary approach was the opportunity to engage with top-level executives from corporations like L'Oreal and IBM – an opportunity he did not expect to have so early in his career but one he fully embraced. Luis says: *"The fact that I had the opportunity to have a director from Microsoft as a mentor was a really important experience for me. I never expected someone like that to be so accessible. I think Advantere truly builds bridges for these kinds of opportunities. It's something I will always appreciate about the master's."*

The re-solutionary approach was an opportunity to engage with top-level executives from corporations like L'Oreal and IBM

Employment opportunities open up for students because of the direct access to companies through projects and other employability activities. These opportunities also arise from interactions with faculty and mentors who have vast experience and extensive networks in their sectors. Marta Echarri, who teaches the course 'Fintech and Banking Disintermediation' in the Master of Finance, highlights the role that faculty members and mentors play in helping students find job opportunities. She shares an example of supporting one of her Master in Finance students: *"These students are incredibly fortunate to have outstanding mentors. Some have a mentor at Microsoft, others at Bankinter – truly top-tier professionals. Often, both mentors and we, as teachers, play a role in helping the students find their next job. Just the other day, a student asked me about financing rounds. As we discussed it, I realized an opportunity that might be a great fit for him – an internship at a startup here in Spain. So, I introduced him to the founder."*

5.1.2. New Perspectives on Career Opportunities

The opportunity to build professional networks is not the only direct benefit that influences students' employability after graduation. The re-solutionary approach broadens students' perspectives on career options, including paths they may not have previously considered. The re-solutionary approach does not encourage students to seek employment in any specific function, type of organization, sector, or industry. Instead, a strength of the approach is that it presents students

to many kinds of organizations, industries, and departments within organizations. Students engage in projects with a diverse range of organizations, including large international corporations such as L'Oréal and Bankinter, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) like Coto Bajo and Tresmares Capital, scale-ups such as N26, and national and international NGOs like Fundación Entreculturas and UNICEF.

Graduate Juan Ignacio Rossi puts it like this: *"I think the Master in International Management gives you a perspective on the different things you can do. You can work in human resources, logistics, marketing, communications, or production. And then, through the touchpoints with companies, you start to see, okay – Inditex produces clothes, Solán de Cabras produces water, another company produces medical products. So you get to know more industries and possibilities."* Luis Muniz, from the Master in Talent Management, agrees: *"I really didn't know about the different opportunities available to me in this career path. Learning the foundations of HR in the master's helped me gain a broader view of the different possibilities I could explore. I realized that my expertise could be applied to many areas of HR – or even beyond, in other parts of a company."*

Graduate Klenam Goni shares how working with projects at Advantere broadened her perspective on socially impactful careers. Passionate about humanitarian action, she had always imagined herself working in third-sector organizations. However, after experiencing the re-solutionary approach with its focus on social and environmental sustainability, Klenam now sees more career options available to her: *"It doesn't mean I have to work solely in*

humanitarian action or development. I could also be in the for-profit sector and still create impact – still provide service and maintain that humanitarian focus. This experience gave me a more reflective understanding of the career paths available to me now."

5.1.3. A Bridge Between Studying and Working

All stakeholders emphasize that collaborating on projects with companies helps bridge the gap between studying and working. This gap was a recurring theme in our conversations with students, faculty, and organizational members. A graduate student from the Master in Finance, who upon graduation started a job as Client Advisor in a top global investment bank, relates her experience from her undergraduate studies in economics in Colombia: *"When I finished my undergraduate studies, I realized that since I had only taken theoretical classes, I went into my internship without really knowing what I was doing. What they teach you in class, on a board, isn't the same as what you'll actually do in a company the next day. With project-based learning, I've found that it aligns much more closely with real work because you're actively applying theoretical concepts. That makes it easier to remember, and you start doing things while understanding their real importance."*

Pedro Rodríguez Páramo, PR Lead for Spain at N26, shares that he had a similar experience after completing his studies. He is pleased that his organization's collaboration with students gives them an opportunity to reduce the gap between academia and the professional world. He explains: *"The corporate world is completely different. I remember finishing school and thinking: Wow, there's such a big divide between university and the corporate world. That's why I think experiences like this are incredibly valuable, even if students don't realize it right away. Having these kinds of projects – where you have to meet deadlines and present your work – makes a real difference. And it's not just presenting to your classmates. No, you have to present to a general manager from a real company who will evaluate you. That kind of real-life experience is extremely valuable."*

Graduate Beatriz Capote Ochoa de Retana describes how interacting with organizations during project development mirrors the experience of working with real clients on the job. The personal skills gained through these projects can be applied directly in client relationships when entering a position upon graduation. She says: *"I would say it's that personal touch you also experience in real*

life when you have to contact clients and talk to them – how you communicate, what you need to find out, and what is ultimately useful."

Participants from collaborating organizations are well aware of the benefits for students of engaging in real-world projects and tackling authentic challenges in companies. Ricardo Giménez-Arnau from Impact Bridge mentions that *"studying business is inherently practical. Of course, there's theory, and you need to understand the basics. But in the end, it all comes down to being pragmatic – especially at the master's level. […] At this stage of education, learning should come primarily from practical projects like these. I think it's incredibly beneficial for students to work on something very similar to what they'll be doing after their master's."* Similarly, Begoña Gómez Lozano, Head of Active Distribution LatAm in Invesco, remarks*: "I think it's a great experience for students. It's like a real business case – something that could happen to me in my company. If I had to pitch something, I would approach it in the same way."*

> Interacting with organizations during project development mirrors the experience of working with real clients on the job

Having the chance to work on projects that closely resemble their future professional responsibilities allows students to develop not only specific professional skills but also transversal skills that better prepare them for the transition into the workforce. The following section will explore these transversal skills in more detail.

5.1.4. Professional Skills Development: Collaboration, Leadership, Communication, and Problem-Solving

Which specific work-related skills do students develop through re-solutionary learning? When asked this question, graduates, faculty members, and organizational collaborators highlight a range of skills that emerge from solving real problems for real organizations in real-time. These skills can be grouped into three categories of related skills: Teamwork and leadership skills, Oral communication skills, and Project management skills.

In contemporary business and management education, students will almost certainly participate in some form of group work. *"But not like this,"* as graduate Melyda Saadi proclaims when explaining how project-based learning taught her the importance of structure and communication while working in groups on tasks with real-world stakes. Melyda, who studied a master's in corporate finance in Algeria, notes that *"they normally don't teach you at school how to talk to people in groups"*.

Indeed, the ability to **communicate effectively within a team** is widely recognized as one of the most important skills developed through the re-solutionary approach. Graduate Gonzalo Karanicolás explains how working on real projects motivates students to find the best solutions – requiring them to practice and establish clear communication with their team members. Gonzalo explains: *"If you have a great idea – a truly creative, out-of-the-box idea – you need to be able to communicate it to your team. The idea itself might be brilliant, even the best idea ever, but if you can't effectively communicate it to your team or stakeholders, it will fail."* Speaking up about disagreements and standing by one's ideas can be challenging for some students. Practicing this in a safe learning environment gives courage and confidence to do so in a future work setting. Graduate María José Carriles emphasizes this: *"You learn to stand your ground and say to the other person: 'I don't agree with your idea. Let's find another way or see how we can change it.' You really learn not to be complacent."*

A student-centered approach to learning also provides opportunities for students to practice and develop **leadership skills**, even for those who may not initially see themselves as leaders. One student who discovered her leadership potential was graduate student Elisa González Pérez. Finding herself in a team with no clear leader, she took on the role out of necessity. She explains: *"It's not that I dislike being a leader, but I usually let someone else take on the role. In my team, however, I had to step up because if I didn't take charge, nothing would get done. I learned a lot from the experience – I realized that I am capable of leading, and that having that responsibility is also incredibly enriching for me."* Elisa also highlights another important aspect of the re-solutionary approach: student diversity and its contribution to learning. She points out that diverse teams help generate stronger solutions. *"Having different points of view and people with diverse strengths greatly enriches both the ideas and the final product."*

Research confirms that team diversity and multiple perspectives can enhance creativity and improve decision-making. Yet, managing these differences effectively is essential. Among other

factors, this requires fostering a **psychologically safe climate** within the team. Graduate Marisol Acevedo Larralde explains how she learned to create such a safe space in the group: "*In my team, during our first session, we wanted to truly get to know each other because we come from different countries and may have different traditions or habits. We wanted to create a safe space where we could share our opinions without feeling judged. […] I think that worked well for open discussions, and it helped that we established some simple rules, like raising your hand before speaking and sharing your opinion.*"

Students who tend to seek perfection and control over processes and outcomes may struggle with teamwork, as they often feel the need to be involved in every aspect of a project. The habit of taking on responsibility for all parts of a large project can lead to **unhealthy stress**, both during their studies and in future professional settings. Graduate Juan Cruz Giraudo describes how he experi-

enced a positive shift in his approach to teamwork by learning to **trust his team members** rather than taking on responsibility for every part of the work: *"There were many times when I found myself overthinking the project. I was concerned – was everyone working well as a team? Was everyone doing their part? But now I've learned that we are a team. Each of us should focus on our own part, and when everything comes together, we review it and gather feedback as a team."*

The second category of practical, transversal skills students develop significantly is **oral communication.** When working on real challenges for organizations, students have opportunities to speak with and present their solutions to executives and industry experts. Engaging directly with professionals across various industries helps students learn how to communicate effectively in professional environments. This includes preparing and delivering oral presentations, as graduate Juan Ignacio Rossi explains: "*One of the biggest improvements for all of us was communication – speaking confidently and standing out. We presented in front of different people and audiences every week. It was intense. Some students were shy at first – during their first two or three presentations, they struggled – but after six or seven months, they weren't even nervous anymore. We had so much practice – presenting, presenting, presenting – summarizing ideas, answering questions. That's why I think communication is one of the strongest skills we gain from the master's."*

Graduate Andrea Morales Zarabozo is one of the students who was initially nervous about public speaking but gained confidence in her presentation skills after receiving positive feedback from organizational collaborators. *"Before the presentation, I was really nervous because I don't like speaking in public. But afterward, I felt incredibly proud. I thought, 'We managed to do this! I understand what this was all about, and I feel like I learned a lot'"*, Andrea says.

Her classmate, Jesus Martin Castillo, acknowledges that it is not just the frequent practice of public speaking that helps students improve but also the fact that these presentations are delivered to real stakeholders, real clients, who have deep knowledge and interest in the project. These circumstances create a challenging setting that boosts students' communication skills and confidence. While students might feel nervous or inexperienced, successfully delivering these presentations can positively impact their perceptions of their own abilities. Jesus Martin Castillo elaborates: "*You really have to work on how you sell your ideas to your team and how you communicate. I also think our presentation skills improved significantly because it's challenging to stand in front of an audience and present. For example, at N26 Tech Hub in Barcelona, we had*

to present all the research insights and the entire project to the clients and the team. It was a tough experience. The same goes for the Invesco project, where we had to pitch our investment fund to industry experts. It's really challenging because we often have self-doubts. In the end, I believe the toughest judge is yourself."

Engaging directly with organizational representatives, often at their company premises, places students in a unique position to receive valuable feedback on the solutions they design for real business challenges. Many graduate students found this feedback was often positive because the audience was genuinely interested in the solutions presented, the collected data, and the rationale behind them. However, at times, the feedback was not positive, and stakeholders disagreed with the students' conclusions or questioned the feasibility of their proposed solutions. Juan Ignacio Rossi describes his experience: *"In one project, we developed a buyer persona and a strategy to approach them. However, the organization rejected it, stating that it did not align with their identity. Initially, the feedback was difficult to accept. With experience, it becomes easier to recognize the value in different perspectives, but at first, it can be challenging. After spending three months on a project, it may feel as if all the work was for nothing. Over time, however, it becomes clear that the most difficult feedback is often the most valuable. While it is initially hard to accept, it ultimately provides important learning opportunities."*

Engaging directly with professionals across various industries helps students learn how to communicate effectively in professional environments

The ability to receive constructive criticism is developed not only in the final presentation of solutions but also throughout the entire project development process. As students realize that constructive disagreement can enhance team performance, they learn to voice their perspectives in a way that benefits both the team and the project. According to Marisol Acevedo Larralde, real-life projects provide a safe space for students to practice **giving and receiving difficult feedback**, even in multicultural environments. When asked about the primary skills she gained from PBL, she says: *"Knowing how to give feedback and how to receive feedback. Cultural differences often meant that students had different perspectives, where one might see a situation in a certain*

way while another, from a different background, viewed it differently. In these situations, the approach was to openly share perspectives, actively listen, and work toward a solution that everyone could agree on."

Project management skills form the third group of competencies that the re-solutionary approach teaches students through learning-by-doing. Beatriz Capote Ochoa de Retana emphasizes that the method exposes students to how they will handle projects in their future professions: "*Now that I'm working, I've realized that this approach is much closer to real life. There are projects, problems arise, and you have to figure out how to fix them."*

Graduates particularly highlight that they develop skills for **systematizing project work**, enabling them to initiate and manage projects in teams, regardless of the project's purpose. Jesus Martin Castillo remarks: *"Being at Advantere has really helped us develop a structured approach to projects, something we didn't have before. Now, returning to professional life and daily work, we have the knowledge of how to manage a project and collaborate effectively in a team. When faced with a new challenge at work, we can sit down with the team, discuss the objectives, define our goals, and determine how to achieve them. This structure gives us a clear way to approach our work."* This perspective is echoed by Juan Cruz Giraudo, who states that *"the biggest learning for me was about team dynamics and project organization. Many times, the key challenge in a project isn't just the solution itself – it's the way you approach it and how you reach that solution."*

Although all phases of a project contribute to its success, students particularly highlight that project-based learning helps them acknowledge the importance of the initial phases and equips them with skills to plan and initiate projects in the future**.** Gonzalo Karanicolás explains*: "One of the most important lessons from our first project was understanding the value of the initial planning phase. While time is limited, investing enough time at the beginning to map out the next steps is essential. Without proper planning, things quickly become disorganized. Setting clear rules, defining team roles, and establishing a focused direction from the start makes the entire process smoother. In the end, this approach leads to better results, as we experienced in our own team."*

> Being at Advantere has really helped us develop a structured approach to projects

One characteristic of organizational projects is that the outcome is often not clearly defined at the beginning and project work takes place under uncertainty. Educational projects that tackle real challenges share the same uncertainty, making them excellent opportunities for students to learn how to **work in non-linear projects** where there are no specific answers. It can be challenging for students to work with the uncertainty of real-life projects, but educational PBL provides a safe setting for practicing.

The final category of skills that graduates consider is developed more effectively through project-based learning than through more traditional approaches is **problem-solving skills.** To graduate student Nicolás Fernández García, today an analyst at the Equity & FX Trading Desk at BBVA AML, this was the most valuable learning he gained from working on projects. When explaining how PBL enhances problem-solving skills, Nicolás elaborates: *"It's not just about working with theoretical problems or fitting real-world challenges into a case study or paper. It's about truly understanding how a company operates—seeing it from the inside and learning how problems are solved in real-time. For me, that was the most valuable aspect of these projects. They exposed us to the actual challenges companies face daily: identifying problems, finding solutions, and working toward clear goals. Now, in our jobs, this is exactly what we deal with every day."*

Problem-solving skills include both analyzing and understanding organizational problems and developing practical solutions. Both aspects are emphasized in the re-solutionary approach to

management education. The testimonials below demonstrate this from the graduate students' point of view.

- Beatriz Mor Gimeno: *"I've learned how to gather and filter information effectively, focusing only on what truly matters. With limited time, structuring the project and prioritizing key information is essential. That's been the most valuable takeaway – learning to organize and concentrate on what is most important."*
- Beatriz Capote Ochoa de Retana: *"It helps in understanding the bigger picture and how a decision in one area can impact the entire company. For example, in marketing, strategies are influenced by multiple factors, which explains why certain actions aren't taken or why some ideas may be unrealistic. It's important to consider not just the brand, but also the consequences, existing clients, and other related aspects."*

5.2. What Does Re-Solutionary Learning Require of Students?

When students play the leading role in their learning journey, the responsibility for learning is not solely on the professors or the institution. It is a shared responsibility, including the students themselves. In fact, students should take active responsibility for their learning.

For that reason, it should be acknowledged that not all students initially find the re-solutionary approach equally rewarding. Certain aspects of experiential, project-based learning can make the process overwhelming for students without prior experience with student-driven learning. The institution and the faculty can provide significant support to help students maximize their learning. Yet, students who want to do well and fully take advantage of the many mentioned benefits of the re-solutionary approach to management education must take their responsibility seriously and, so to speak, put their own skin in the game.

Drawing again on the testimonials of Advantere graduates, certain behaviors are essential for students to succeed in this learning environment. The testimonials highlight three fundamental pieces of advice that former students pass on to future students to help them thrive in re-solutionary learning: Be curious and open-minded, Be resilient and focused, and Be professional and involved.

5.2.1. Be Curious and Open-Minded

"Trying to figure out how to solve problems, real-life problems, you need to be really curious about things" (Graduate Juan Ignacio Rossi)

The essence of PBL is that students develop innovative solutions to companies' real challenges. Curiosity compels a person to continuously seek new knowledge and information, aligning with the core of PBL, where questioning and exploration are essential steps in reaching innovative solutions. In complex problem-solving, a relentless pursuit of understanding allows students to uncover hidden details, gather the broad range of information necessary to form a comprehensive view of the challenge and explore and consider diverse perspectives. Curiosity fosters open-mindedness, encouraging students to consider unconventional solutions and novel approaches.

However, curiosity and open-mindedness are valuable not only for improving the student's ability to understand complex problems and develop innovative solutions that participating organizations will find valuable. Being open-minded is crucial for achieving high-level performance in teamwork as well, especially when teams are composed of students with diverse national and professional backgrounds. Adding to this challenge, teams must work together effectively, often under pressure to perform at their best when interacting with managers and executives. María Calvo, a participant in the executive program Purpose to Impact, sees this variety in backgrounds as a significant strength, but emphasizes that honesty and openness are required to fully benefit from it. She states: *"I think the participants were quite diverse, and that's a strength. The more diverse the students and participants are, the better. Be very open, very candid – just listen and learn from everybody. Being open and candid fosters empathy, and I believe that's the attitude a new student should have. You're going to hear ideas that may be completely different from your own, but that doesn't matter because there is value in all of them. Finding and appreciating that value is what's important."*

Graduate student Luis Muniz agrees that diversity improves performance, but only when team-members are open to see differences as strengths and actively try to learn from them. He explains: *"I think it's a great mix to have both experienced professionals and those without professional experience. You can take bold, out-of-the-box ideas and shape them into something that could actually work. That's something I personally practiced as an exercise with friends. One of*

them had no experience, but she kept throwing out ideas, and I tried to catch them – organizing them into something structured to see how they could work. This kind of curiosity and creativity is what drives innovative, out-of-the-box thinking."

The final reason graduates emphasize the need for curiosity and open-mindedness is that an open mind allows students to recognize and explore opportunities during their studies. Beatriz Capote Ochoa de Retana admits that, in retrospect after graduating, she realizes she was presented with many opportunities, especially through networks and personal relationships with companies, leaders, mentors, and partner universities. However, she did not see all of these interactions as opportunities at the time. She now encourages students to be open to these opportunities to continually improve and build stronger connections in the job market. She urges students to be ambitious and clarifies: "*When I say ambitious, I don't mean it in a grand sense, but rather in making the most of the opportunities that come your way. Looking back, I realize I could have taken greater advantage of the networking possibilities Advantere offered, which would be incredibly valuable now. Stay open-minded to new opportunities.*"

> Be very open, very candid – just listen and learn from everybody

5.2.2. Be Resilient and Stay Focused

For most students coming to Advantere, highly experiential and student-driven learning provides a whole new educational experience. In addition, many students have their first experience living in a foreign country or on their own. This combination is bound to create challenging situations as students balance their many demands. Resilience and focus are crucial for navigating the intensity of a re-solutionary learning environment. These qualities are not just about endurance but about maintaining a proactive and positive approach to learning and problem-solving.

One difficult situation that many students are likely to face is the rejection of ideas and solutions. When organizational participants are critical of the proposals students make, it may feel like a failure to the students. Luis Muniz describes his experience with rejection: *"Everyone was confident in the ideas developed, but when they were presented to the organization, the response*

was a firm 'no', again and again. At first, this was tough and discouraging, a real setback for the group. But at the same time, it became an opportunity to experience something that happens in the real world: realizing that an approach isn't working and needing to rethink the strategy. It was a clear reminder that resilience is essential. This experience, though within a controlled environment, closely reflected real-world challenges, making it especially impactful." As this statement illustrates, a certain level of resilience is needed to deal with the setbacks that undoubtedly come from working on real-world challenges and to appreciate the learnings that emerge from these experiences.

For Klenam Goni, graduate from the Master in International Management, maintaining motivation in challenging times meant staying focused on her purpose for studying and seeing every challenge as a learning opportunity. Coming from a non-business background, she faced difficulties not only due to a new learning approach but also because most course content was initially unfamiliar to her. In her words, being focused is a way of being resilient through difficult moments. Klenam says: *"With coursework at such a high level, resilience became essential. For me, staying laser-focused was key. Coming from a non-business background, staying focused and reminding myself that any knowledge gained wouldn't be wasted was essential. It would serve different purposes in ways that might not be immediately obvious. That mindset kept me going. If I had made it this far, then it was worth pushing forward rather than looking back. Maintaining that level of focus made all the difference."*

Another piece of advice from graduates on overcoming challenges in any project is to ask for help. As students are responsible for

their own learning, they cannot allow themselves to be stopped when a hindrance appears that initially seems too daunting to take on. And such hindrances *will* appear. When they do, graduates encourage new students not to give up but instead reach out to someone who can help them, whether a mentor, a professor, or someone within the collaborating organization. Graduate Emilio Moreno describes his team's approach during a project: *"A key factor was the mentoring we received throughout the process. We actively sought out professors with relevant experience and insights, and two of them ended up being invaluable to us. Interestingly, they weren't directly involved in the project, but we reached out to them, and that support played a crucial role in helping us navigate the process."*

5.2.3. Be Professional and Involved

The third factor graduates consider crucial for thriving in re-solutionary learning is professionalism, which involves a deep commitment to the learning process and the projects undertaken. In fact, several students highlight that a PBL environment closely mimics the real-world business setting they encountered after graduating. In these settings, professionalism and thoroughness are paramount, and the re-solutionary learning approach is very similar in demand. In the words of Nicolás Fernández García, students must demonstrate a work ethic, which he explains as *"not just going crazy about doing a lot of things, but just having the ability to work when you need to"*. It is about prioritizing tasks, not to get overwhelmed in the process, and keep focused on solving the challenge posed by the collaborating organization.

The real-life projects provide authenticity to the learning process, helping students realize the relevance of their contribution to the organization. Graduate student Pablo Mata Arencibia emphasizes that as students, it is essential to recognize that because these projects are real, they have certain professional expectations. He says: *"It's important to recognize the magnitude of each project. Suddenly, there's the responsibility of delivering a project to top executives from major companies and presenting in front of them. This requires consistency – there's no room to leave everything for the last week, as is often the case with university exams. Meeting deadlines and maintaining professionalism at every stage is essential. However, balancing multiple projects, exams, and assignments made this challenging. At times, the instinct was to complete a project quickly just to move on to the next one. But through this experience, it became clear that this approach wouldn't*

work in a real company. While some tasks may take priority over others, every detail matters, and in the end, everything has to be taken seriously."

For Luis Muniz, professionalism when working on real-life projects requires involvement. This involvement implies more than just curiosity and interest in the project and the challenge. It should be driven by a genuine desire to perform at your utmost to help the organization or its beneficiaries. Luis argues: *"The process requires a genuine belief that the work being done will have an impact. Without that mindset from the beginning, it won't work. Involvement is key – without real interest, the process falls flat. Getting excited about helping the organizations makes a real difference, both for them and for personal growth. If the focus shifts to thoughts like, 'It's not a big company' or 'It's not exactly what I expected,' it becomes harder to give full effort, which ultimately affects the quality of the work."*

The process requires a genuine belief that the work being done will have an impact

In sum, according to students and collaborators, the re-solutionary approach enhances management education by integrating real-world applications directly into the learning process. This method not only deepens students' understanding of management principles but also equips them with critical professional and personal skills through practical experience. The approach bridges the gap between academic study and business practice, providing students with a useful framework to develop essential workplace skills, including teamwork, communication, and problem-solving. This places students in a favorable position to seize career opportunities and make meaningful contributions early in their professional lives. Students must, however, play a leading role in this process, acting with proactivity, creativity, empathy, and a willingness to learn and improve continuously. Only with an open and positive attitude will students harness all the benefits of the re-solutionary approach to management education.

CHAPTER 6

THE COLLABORATING ORGANIZATIONS' PERSPECTIVE

As highlighted, project-based learning (PBL) is student-centered. Yet, the students' learning does not happen in a vacuum – on the contrary. PBL enhances students' learning first and foremost because of the interaction with the participating organizations. But equally important is the fact that learning is not limited to the students in a PBL process. Organizations that participate in projects also learn. And learning is only one of several benefits that organizational members emphasize as positive outcomes of the close organization-student collaboration that is at the core of the re-solutionary approach to management education.

6.1. What Does Re-Solutionary Learning Give Collaborating Organizations?

The following sections illustrate some of the benefits organizations can obtain when engaging students from management education to work on real challenges they face. The sections are based on conversations with nine members of organizations who were involved in projects with Advantere master students from September 2022 to April 2024.

Before turning to the illustrations of the organizational benefits, it is worth noting that several conversations with the organizational representatives included a particular confession. The participants confessed that when they started the collaboration with Advantere, they did not expect the organization to benefit from it. They simply saw their participation in the projects as a support to help students learn. However, after their organization participated in a project, each and every participant acknowledged that organization-student collaboration is a win-win situation that benefits everyone involved.

Let us see what these benefits might involve and how the collaboration can impact the participating organizations.

6.1.1. Access to Young Talent with New, Innovative Ideas

"We're going to have brilliant minds from the Master in Finance working on a project for us" (Marta Echarri, at the time General Manager Spain & Portugal at N26)

In today's uncertain and rapidly evolving business landscape, organizations constantly seek innovative solutions to stay competitive and relevant. Collaborating with higher education institutions can be an effective strategy to support organizational innovation and development because it allows organizations to tap into young students' fresh perspectives and ideas. These young minds bring not only their academic abilities but also contemporary insights from a Generation Z perspective that can lead to new and different developments within organizations. Furthermore, the diversity of Advantere students' professional and national backgrounds enhances the chances that original and new perspectives will arise. Because the students are external to the organization, they are in a position where they can challenge conventional norms with their out-of-the-box thinking.

These young minds bring not only their academic abilities but also contemporary insights from a Generation Z perspective

For example, in a project with UNICEF students developed proposals for engaging young people between 18 and 25 in a children's organization. Jose María Vera, Executive Director of UNICEF Spain, confirms that the interaction with students provided novel ideas for the organization: *"Some of the proposals were really interesting, challenging, and out-of-the-box. Quite innovative"*. Jose María Vera goes on to explain how the proposals are used to explore new ways of doing things in UNICEF: *"We are using a couple of the proposals – adapting and refining them – but they are going into our pipeline for public engagement and youth outreach. The students' inputs were interesting and relevant for our ongoing efforts. We are transforming our engagement strategy, shifting from traditional channels to a more digital and omnichannel approach. These students' proposals are being used to frame our approach better"*. This quote highlights how student contributions can drive companies to rethink established methodologies and explore new approaches.

Ricardo Giménez-Arnau from Impact Bridge acknowledges that better results will be reached when more heads are working on the solution for any organizational challenge. To him, it was a very positive and tangible benefit of collaborating with students that Impact Bridge expanded the number of people working on the solution that the organization had to present to their client. He says: *"In the end, a person can be highly intelligent, incredibly creative, or have extensive experience. But I've always believed – and I've seen it throughout my life – that when you collaborate with others who are equally creative, talented, and intelligent, like the students of Advantere, ideas grow, perspectives expand, and brainstorming becomes more powerful. And that makes it much easier to recognize the right solution."*

When an organization engages students to provide solutions to an organizational challenge, the organization cannot expect to get expert recommendations on how to address that challenge. What the organization can expect is to get new, original ideas from someone who is external to the organization and, therefore, provides a new look at the problem and the organization. In a project with Mahou San-Miguel, students were tasked with providing recommendations for the internationalization of the sparkling water brand Solán de Cabras. Marketing Director Waters at Mahou-San Miguel Group, Beatriz Fernández Loizaga, recognizes that students obviously do not yet have actual expertise in international marketing. However, students' innovative, fresh perspectives can still result in interesting ideas for established companies. She elaborates: *"Mainly for the international business, they proposed some good ideas. Now, the implementation part is what is more difficult, because of course they are not experts in how to implement the things in international business and everything. But in terms of the approach, of why and how to enter some countries, there were some good, interesting ideas."*

Even though the students are not experts, the proposals and recommendations they present to companies at the end of a project process can create real value for the organization when the ideas are implemented. Christina Fisher, CEO of Coto Bajo, corroborates this benefit. In the project with Coto Bajo, students developed detailed proposals for the internationalization of the company's extra virgin olive oil. The students' recommendations led to real changes in the company's marketing strategy. She relates: *"What the students observed and shared with us inspired the idea of refreshing the product and making it more appealing for the market. We decided to adapt the brand by emphasizing the BIO label and giving it a fresher, younger look. And we are implementing this right now at Alimentaria [an important industry fair in Barcelona, red]. We are presenting two products – one in French and one in German – highlighting the BIO label in bold, fresh colors."* Christina Fisher highlights that a key reason students were able to develop ideas that could be implemented to create value for Coto Bajo was that students understood the brand and presented ideas aligned with the company's vision and identity.

Pedro Rodríguez Páramo from N26 explains how the collaboration with students in two consecutive projects produced new ideas for the company's product development: *"The students provided us with recommendations on how to improve both our product offerings and our relationship with clients. I think their insights fell into two main categories. First, product offerings. They suggested ideas we hadn't considered but that could work for specific market segments. They actually defined different buyer personas. For example, one was a young professional just starting to earn money, while another was a self-employed worker without a steady income. For each persona, they provided hints and ideas for potential products. We then scaled this information to our strategy and operations team. What I always emphasize to the students is that the work they do is truly valuable and has a real impact – it actually reaches the teams responsible for implementing these changes. The second key area was client relationships. How do we communicate with our clients? Because sometimes, even if you have the best product on the market, you're not effectively conveying its value to the right audience. The students helped us think differently about how we communicate with our clients, offering ideas on how to refine our messaging and approach."*

The above testimonials demonstrate that organizations that incorporate students' innovative, fresh ideas not only inject vitality into projects but also push organizations to think differently about various aspects of their business, potentially leading to more innovative and effective solutions.

6.1.2. Reimagining Your Business

The previous section illustrates how fresh ideas from young students can positively impact the organization in terms of specific input to improvements in products or processes. Another benefit that the organizational participants repeatedly highlight is the opportunity to break with the daily routine. Routine, while necessary for operational efficiency, can sometimes stifle creativity and hinder innovation. Collaborating with students introduces a disruption in the best sense, breaking the cycle of daily operations and encouraging a fresh look at established processes. This disruption can be motivational for participating employees. Additionally, and more importantly, it provides a new lens through which to view projects and organizational challenges, offering valuable insights that might otherwise go unnoticed.

Engaging in projects with students is an exercise in understanding the core of what the organization is about. It presents an opportunity for the organization to review how it communicates about itself. Ana Vázquez Ponzone, coordinator for international volunteers at the NGO Fundación Entreculturas, experienced this as she prepared to present one of the organization's volunteer programs to the students. She says: *"It was an interesting challenge because we had to think about how to explain [our program] to people unfamiliar with this type of initiative."* This exercise can clarify and refine the way organizations present themselves to the outside world. In this case, the project led to specific changes to the vocabulary used by Entreculturas when describing their projects, for example, the program called Volpa. Ana Vázquez Ponzone explains: *"We had to think differently, and now we have a broader vocabulary. We've updated the way we describe Volpa, including introducing new terminology. For example, we now use the word 'mentoring.' The process itself was motivating – it pushed us out of our comfort zone and encouraged new ways of thinking."*

Ricardo Giménez-Arnau from Impact Bridge does not doubt that the disruption that comes from working on a project with students provides a fresh perspective that benefits both the organization and its clients. On the one hand, he states that the students' ideas translated into actual changes in the consulting for their client. The ideas *"eventually became something that gave us tools and ideas that were useful for rethinking parts of the business plan."* On the other hand, the disruption to the work routines allowed the organizational participants to lift their heads, take a break, and open their minds. He points out: *"It was valuable for us because the students brought new ideas, fresh perspectives, and different ways of approaching challenges. They introduced a new mindset and a different way of thinking. Even though they weren't there to execute, they played a key role in planning and design, which ultimately provided us with a fresh perspective – something that was very valuable for our client. It also gave us a moment to pause and see the bigger picture. At least in my experience, this kind of disruption breaks the routine. Instead of constantly running and doing, you stop and reflect. It raises important questions: How do I want to live my life? How do I want to approach my work? Sometimes, we get so caught up in individual tasks that we lose sight of the bigger picture. Having these moments that disrupt our routine allows me to step back, gain perspective – not just on my work, but on my life as well."*

The above quote from Ricardo Giménez-Arnau demonstrates that collaboration with students broadens the minds of individual organizational participants, not only on how they see the organiza-

tion and its offerings but also on how they look at their own work and role in the organization. From the perspective of an organizational leader, Beatriz Fernández Loizaga, Marketing Director Waters at Mahou-San Miguel Group, sees similar benefits. She brought team members to the students' final project presentations because, as a leader, she wanted her employees to learn from the students. She explains: *"For me, it wasn't just about listening to my team's feedback on the students' work. It was about observing the students themselves. How they react, how they communicate, and even how they use technology to present their ideas. It was eye-opening, not only because of the questions they asked but also because of how they prioritize, find balance, and discuss products or even entire categories. When you're caught up in the routine of office life, it's easy to overlook these things. But I think it's essential to have open-minded, inquisitive individuals around, because there are always different ways of doing things. That's something I realized from day one. Young people question everything, and not just for the sake of it. They ask thoughtful, insightful questions – ones I had never even considered. It was a fascinating experience because they made me think in ways I hadn't before."*

Young people question everything, and not just for the sake of it. They ask thoughtful, insightful questions – ones I had never even considered

Organizations today are required to develop cultures where continuous learning is supported. Collaborating with young students from across the world, who bring with them not only academic knowledge but also familiarity with the latest technologies and cultural trends, can be a means to organizational learning. Beatriz Fernández Loizaga finalizes by confirming that a significant take-away for her and her team was to learn about new ways of doing things: *"We got a lot of learnings – not so much about the business itself, but about different ways of thinking, working, communicating, and even the diverse styles of people."*

The testimonials make it clear: collaborations between organizations and higher education students are not just about completing projects or fulfilling academic requirements. They are about opening new pathways for growth, innovation, and continuous learning. These partnerships help businesses stay competitive in a fast-paced, uncertain environment by challenging the status quo and encouraging a dynamic approach to business strategy and execution. As companies continue

to navigate the complexities of contemporary markets, embracing the fresh perspectives of the next generation can lead to transformative outcomes.

6.1.3. A Better Understanding of Young Target Segments

"Let's listen to what these 20-year-olds are saying" (Beatriz Fernández Loizaga, Marketing Director Waters at Mahou-San Miguel Group)

For many organizations, there is a real and essential value in connecting with members of Generation Z. Young people are in the minority in organizations, but for many products or services, understanding this generation is crucial to staying relevant and developing sustainable brands.

Organizations benefit from collaborating with students because of the opportunity to gain valuable insights about young people as a target group.

Beatriz Fernández Loizaga explains: *"At the end of the day, they are the new generation, and they will significantly change the way people buy, consume, and connect with products. In most companies, young people are underrepresented and not highly empowered within the organization. Through projects like this, we shift the focus to them, we take the time to listen. I believe they bring valuable insights into their lifestyle choices, how they select and interact with brands, how they perceive them, and how they would like the market to evolve. And they bring a global perspective as well. For an international company, this kind of thinking is essential. We are a very Spain-focused company, but today's consumers are increasingly global. Even in Spain, we welcome 50 million tourists from all over the world. So now is the time to dedicate ourselves to understanding insights from the new generation."* Along the same lines, Christina Fischer, CEO of Coto Bajo, encourages organizations to see student-organization collaborations as an actual opportunity to market themselves to students who are potential clients. She remarks: "*It is an opportunity for the companies to relate directly with their customer, because they [the students, red.] are clients as well.*"

Pedro Rodríguez Páramo also clearly underlines the specific relevance of understanding how young people think and behave. That is a key reason that N26 continuously collaborates with Advantere students. He points out: *"We could have hired external consultants to conduct the survey, and I'm sure they would have done a great job. But for a company like ours – one that targets a young audience – there's something invaluable about getting input directly from people who understand the trends shaping the world today. That fresh perspective is priceless. We're gaining insights from people who are living these changes in real time."*

Perhaps one of the most striking advantages is how students can authentically engage with their peers in ways that might be challenging for more senior professionals. For Jose María Vera, it was precisely the age and diversity of the student group that made participation in the project relevant to the organization. He notes: *"One of the best decisions we made was not just framing the project around talent, but specifically around young talent. There's a big difference between having fifteen 40-year-old senior consultants, experts in engagement, trying to figure out how to connect with 23-year-olds and actually having 23-year-olds themselves tackle that challenge. Age, status, and perspective matter, and I believe that made a difference. Diversity also played a key role, with*

students from different countries bringing unique viewpoints. The key is recognizing the talent you have – not just seeing them as junior management consultants but as skilled, insightful individuals in their early twenties. Their firsthand perspective adds unique value, especially when compared to older professionals who may be further removed from these trends. That's what makes this approach so powerful." The peer-to-peer approach enhances the projects' relevance and ensures that the solutions are practical and resonate with the target audience.

6.1.4. PR and Media Exposure

One crucial benefit organizations can obtain is the opportunity to create positive public relations. From the conversations, however, it seems that this opportunity has been underutilized in the early years of Advantere, as only one organizational member directly addressed a PR benefit from the collaboration with students.

The project with N26 generated significant media exposure, as the results of the student-led survey on the financial wellness of people in Spain were featured in national and regional media, including El Economista, EuropaPress, Servimedia, Telemadrid, Forbes, and La Vanguardia. Pedro Rodríguez Páramo describes the process: *"What we do afterward with the report [that students prepare, red.] from a PR perspective is that we develop different stories and pitch lines to present to the media. And with the first project alone, we had over 100 media mentions covering the report. That was to me really valuable because it gave us great coverage throughout the year."*

Although the PR benefits of being involved in student-organization collaborations have not been a very visible outcome of the projects, organizations that enter into such collaborations are encouraged to consider how the project might be used to generate public relations opportunities that can enhance their visibility and brand image. These collaborations, particularly those that result in innovative solutions or community benefits, can attract media attention and become a platform for organizations to communicate their corporate values and culture to a broader audience. Effective communication through media channels can enhance the company's public profile and set the organization apart from competitors, providing a unique selling point emphasizing innovation and social responsibility. The external visibility of student-organization collaboration can, therefore, help attract like-minded talent and partners who share similar values. This might even become a

cycle of positive reinforcement where media exposure attracts more partnership opportunities, which in turn generates more exposure.

When an organization is featured in relation to a successful student project, it bolsters its reputation as an innovative industry leader and as a socially responsible entity, as the media coverage showcases the company's involvement in education and community development. Contributing to the development of tomorrow's workforce is compelling and resonates well with a broad audience, including potential customers, partners, and future employees. Taking advantage of the PR opportunities that student-organization collaborations generate is important for organizations to achieve benefits beyond those directly related to the project topic and outcomes.

6.1.5. Identification of Talent

Engaging with students provides organizations with a front-row seat to the brightest upcoming professionals in the field

For organizations, collaborating with academic institutions can serve as a strategic pipeline for future talent. Engaging with students provides organizations with a front-row seat to the brightest upcoming professionals in the field. María Paramés, Head of People and Communication at Bankinter, cites this as a major reason for the organization's continuous engagement with students at Advantere: *"I believe we need to engage with projects that help us better understand talent. Advantere is attracting a unique kind of talent, and I want to understand who they are – their needs, their motivations – because I want to gain deeper insight into what young people look for in the companies they want to work for. This dialogue is valuable to me. And I also believe that Advantere is on the right path in understanding how to support people in their growth, whether in finance, HR, or leadership."*

In the project with Invesco, the students from the Master in Finance were not asked to solve a particular challenge that the company was facing. Instead, students were tasked with proposing how to design, implement, and market an investment process for a mutual fund. Four senior employees from Invesco acted as tutors and engaged with the student groups during the project. In the end,

each group presented an actionable investment idea to the company representatives and received practical feedback on their proposals. For the organizations, this way of engaging closely with the students is an opportunity to learn more about their skills and competencies, and it gives a more accurate picture of whether students who graduate from the program are a fit for the company. Begoña Gómez Lozano explains: *"I think identifying talent is important. A business case like this is different from a theoretical exam, where everyone can study and prepare in the same way. In this case, it provides a much better way to recognize the true talent of the people involved."*

Christina Fischer, Coto Bajo, agrees that the collaboration presented an opportunity for accessing and potentially selecting talent for the organization. She says a project like this can *"give us access to our company's talent and the possibility to select some people."* She continues: *"If we weren't in Córdoba, and if I had part of my offices in Madrid, I would have seriously considered interviewing two or three of the students who participated. Definitely."* Her statement highlights the dual benefits of achieving project objectives and identifying potential future employees. Yet, it also addresses a location issue that should be considered when choosing collaboration partners. Can it be expected that after graduation, there will be students interested in working and living in the area where the company is located?

6.1.6. Showcase your Company or Industry

Interaction with students through projects, mentorship programs, or leadership talks allows organizations to showcase themselves to potential future employees. These collaborations provide a platform for organizations to present their corporate culture, work environment, and industry challenges directly to a group of talented, international young individuals. This direct engagement increases the organization's visibility among upcoming graduates and allows it to shape their perceptions of the organization and its operations. It can help the organization attract talent that is aligned with its values and operational vision.

To some organizations, this benefit may be particularly appealing. That is the case when the organization operates in sectors or industries less known to the students despite being important and attractive areas to work in. The agricultural sector could be an example of this. Christina Fischer, CEO of Coto Bajo, specifically notes that because of the importance of the agricultural sector

for the challenges facing our society, demonstrating to students what it means to work in this sector is important if the companies are to attract the best talent. She says: *"It was also an opportunity to connect young professionals with the agricultural sector, which is not very common. I saw that as a very positive aspect. Agriculture has long been perceived as a primary sector with few professionals, but I believe the reality is quite the opposite. There is a general lack of understanding about what it truly means to work in agriculture – how we produce food, manage the environment, and interact with nature. We are directly connected to nature and sustainability, concepts that are often discussed but in agriculture, their impact is visible every single day."* This exposure to industries, such as the agricultural industry, is invaluable as it demystifies the sector for students and can spark an interest in fields they might not have previously considered.

Students in management education often aspire to work in global multinationals because these are the organizations they know by reputation. Yet, the potential to make a difference and an impact with the competencies acquired through a master's program might be equal, or even more significant, in other types of organizations. Management students must be exposed to various organizations and industries just as these lesser-known organizations must showcase themselves to attract the most qualified talent. For organizations in the third sector, for example, encouraging students to consider the social aspects of management and impact can be a motivation for engaging in student-organization collaborations. Ana Vázquez Ponzone, from Fundación Entreculturas, acknowledges this benefit of the collaboration with students as she notes that student-organization collaboration is good because *"when students finish their*

studies, I assume they will go on to work in organizations very different from ours – economic institutions, for-profit companies. Here, they have the opportunity to learn and see that there are other ways of working, other types of organizations, and alternative ways to contribute to a better world – guided by our values and mission." Ana Vázquez Ponzone finalizes by expressing a hope that with such collaborations, students might in the future be able to link better the two different worlds, the economic and the social.

Lastly, these partnerships can enhance a company's reputation not just among students but within the broader academic and industry community. Being viewed as an organization that supports education, invests in potential employees' growth, and contributes to academic advancements can boost an employer's brand. This enhanced reputation might attract not only more talented candidates but also more customers and business partners who value corporate responsibility and community engagement. As such, the strategic benefit of participating in educational collaborations extends beyond immediate staffing needs, impacting broader corporate objectives and market standing.

Before moving on to the next section about what it takes for an organization to participate successfully in the type of close student-organization collaboration implemented at Advantere, it should be clarified that the illustrated organizational benefits are based on the nine conversations with organizational collaborators and related to the particular projects they were involved in. Other organizations participating in different projects tackling other types of challenges may experience benefits different from those included here.

6.2. What Does Re-Solutionary Learning Require of Collaborating Organizations?

The previous testimonials from collaborating organizations illustrate how organizations can benefit from collaborating with academic institutions. These benefits, of course, do not come without a cost to the organization. These costs are, first and foremost, the time and resources dedicated to preparing, executing, and evaluating the outcomes of the project. They also involve the amount of information the organization can and is willing to hand over to students so they can understand the circumstances of the challenging question they are addressing.

6.2.1. Balancing Input and Output Expectations

Achieving the right trade-off between effort and output is one of the challenges of such collaborations with students. Marta Echarri notes: "*It's always important to find the right balance between the time spent with students and the value they bring in return. For companies, that balance can be a fine line. As a general manager, your day is already hectic, so dedicating hours to students needs to be worthwhile and make sense in the bigger picture.*" Jose María Vera, Executive Director of UNICEF Spain, has a similar reflection: "*Obviously, you have to be very aware of an organization's capacities. Ours is a large one, with 200 staff members, so we can handle it. But if you're working with a small Jesuit NGO, they are in a very different position. They are incredible people, working 12-hour days, but any time taken from them is valuable time. You have to be very aware of what benefits they get from dedicating their time. If the collaboration is transactional, where there is an expectation of input and talent being provided for a period, then it must be balanced with the burden it places on the CSO.*"

> Getting truly hands-on is riskier for both the organization and the university, but it also has the potential to create a greater impact

One of the things we at Advantere have learned from the projects carried out with organizations is that the input-output trade-off is real. The more impact an organization seeks from the collaboration, the more effort it takes in terms of thorough preparation, interaction with students and project tutors, and disposition to hand over information and insights about the company. After participating in the project with students, Jose María Vera sees it the same way: "*Getting truly hands-on is riskier for both the organization and the university, but it also has the potential to create a greater impact, both for the organization in real life and for the students.*" What is essential is to not over-promise on either side, not on the contribution students can make to the organization and not on the resources the organization is willing to dedicate to the project.

Because the effort-output trade-off exists, it is important that the participating organization has gone through an internal process of evaluating how to achieve the balance. The organization must identify what it hopes to achieve with the collaboration and clarify the approximate resources available for the project. Then, in conversations with the faculty member(s) in charge of the project,

the communication must be transparent and collaborative. The preliminary conversations are meant to state expectations and arrive at a balance of involvement based on a shared agreement between academic and organizational representatives. The most important thing is the commitment of the organization and the understanding that despite all good intentions on the part of all parties, estimating the exact resource need upfront is difficult.

6.2.2. Time and Resources

So, what resources do collaborating organizations actually use in the projects with students? How is the interaction between the people involved? Below are testimonials of how organizational members describe their resource use and participation in the collaboration.

Ricardo Giménez-Arnau, Investment Analyst at Impact Bridge: "*I was in touch with the project tutor, who was guiding and leading the students through the project. My role was to coordinate two or three meetings throughout the process and provide the figures they needed to build something real. In total, I think we held three or four sessions with the students: an introduction, a midpoint check-in, and some Q&A sessions based on the students' questions. These meetings were very useful. They required us to be efficient with our time and thoughtful about the questions we wanted to ask. The students also learned an important lesson: they had to recognize that the other side doesn't have unlimited time. This helped them focus on their questions, prioritize what was most important, and be more strategic in their approach. For us, the structured format was also beneficial. With so many other responsibilities in the company, condensing everything into three focused sessions was more effective. It ensured that when we did meet, we were 100% engaged for those three or four hours. In fact, I believe it was more efficient than if we had checked in with them every week.*"

Ana Vázquez Ponzone, Coordinator of international volunteers at the NGO Fundación Entreculturas,: "*In the end, we had two or three meetings. One of them was particularly interesting, but since it took place at our office in Madrid, we had to create a highly dynamic session. It went well, but it required a significant effort on our part. Overall, everything was interesting and valuable, but one challenge was that we had to invest more time than we had initially planned. However, it was necessary. The students needed to visit our office, meet the people, and experience the energy of the institution firsthand.*"

Pedro Rodríguez Páramo, PR Lead at N26: *"Four of us were involved in the project. At the beginning, we introduced the company to the students and presented the brief. We essentially structured the project and outlined a timeline. We stayed actively engaged throughout the process. I understand that 'financial wellness' is a broad and complex concept, so we felt it was important to provide as much guidance as possible from our side."*

Christina Fischer, CEO of Coto Bajo: *"Our main resource was the people who engaged with the students and guided them through the process. Overall, the experience was far more positive than negative. At no point did we feel it required excessive effort or investment – quite the opposite. The time we dedicated was well worth it, and what we gained in return was truly valuable."*

Beatriz Fernández Loizaga, Marketing Director Waters at Mahou-San Miguel Group: *"The preparation was very simple. We started by putting together a basic PowerPoint presentation with key information about our business and a straightforward question: What would you do with the launch of Solán de Cabras? From there, we had a second session dedicated entirely to student questions, followed by a final session. In the end, it didn't feel like a sacrifice at all – quite the opposite. It was a great experience for both sides."*

These testimonials demonstrate different levels and types of engagement. However, across the board, organizational participants expressed that the collaboration with students resulted in a win-win situation that was worth the resources invested, even though these can be difficult to estimate upfront. A case in point is Impact Bridge. Upon reflection, Ricardo Giménez-Arnau admits that the complexity of the project meant that more time was needed both in the preparation phase and the interaction with students: *"The biggest challenge for me was that I underestimated how much time it would require. I expected it to be easier. In the end, we didn't have all the necessary information, and I had to coordinate with our client, who was responsible for providing it. This meant we couldn't manage everything internally – we depended on our client, which added another layer of complexity. If the project had been more internal, it would have been easier to manage resources, time, and people."* Despite the realization that the project needed more effort than he initially anticipated, Ricardo Giménez-Arnau concludes that it ended up being more beneficial to the organization than he expected: *"At first, I thought it would primarily be valuable for the students, something designed for their learning experience. But in the end, it also became valuable for us. They brought fresh ideas, new ways of tackling challenges, and a different mindset. So ultimately, it turned into something useful for us as well."*

6.2.3. Real Need and Genuine Interest from Affected Organizational Members

Another key learning we have taken away from completed project collaborations is the importance of working with authentic, real challenges. It has become clear from all conversations underlying the elaboration of this publication that an absolutely crucial requirement for achieving positive results from the student-organization collaboration is that the challenge the students are addressing represents a genuine need for the organization. It follows that if the need is real, the organization is also more likely to have true interest and involvement in the process, a second essential criterion for successful collaboration.

Jose María Vera participated not only in the project that students did within his organization, UNICEF, but also in preparing two other social impact projects for the first cohort of Advantere students. He emphasizes the importance of addressing real organizational needs: "*Ask the organization to provide a project that is truly relevant, something already in their plans, not just a task created for the sake of working with students. It shouldn't feel like an obligation where a topic is chosen simply to fulfill a requirement for collaboration. In our case, the project was very real. We are struggling with the 'missing middle' – we fail to effectively engage people aged 18 to 30. If this continues, we will face serious challenges down the line. So, bringing a real issue, a real challenge, makes a significant difference. And if the organization is willing to humbly acknowledge its struggles and areas for improvement, that adds even more value to the process.*"

Tackling a real need also means that the organization should be prepared to see the solutions proposed by students as real valuable input that can be put in place in the organization to address the challenge. Therefore, the participating organization's members need to spend time considering how they will take the project's outcome and use it in the organization. This is not only valuable to the organization, as the testimonials above about organization benefits illustrate, but it is also extremely valuable to students to see that their work has a potential real impact. Pedro Rodríguez Páramo, N26, recognizes this duality in value creation when the need is real. He says: "*I think it was also valuable for the students to see that their work in school can have a real impact. We're talking about top newspapers in Spain showing interest in the report's findings. Clearly conveying the project's purpose and helping them understand what we need from them was crucial.*"

The involvement and genuine interest of the organization are repeatedly mentioned by students and faculty members as an essential criterion for success in PBL. This involvement is not to be understood

as a very substantial amount of dedicated time but instead, as a willingness to share information about the need the organization has and the situational characteristics surrounding the challenge. It also involves having an open mind to the questions and solutions students bring and a true objective to use the students' input to address the challenge in the organization afterward.

Within the collaborating organization, there is typically one person who initiates the collaboration with students and promotes it internally. In most cases, this is a person from the HR department, but it can also be the CEO or another executive. No matter the composition of the organizational team that participates, the buy-in from the individual members is essential to ensure continuous interest and, as a consequence, adequate resources dedicated to the project. Involving the organizational members who are relevant to the proposed solutions is important for the project. Yet,

those members can have work agendas and objectives that complicate their involvement in the project. When asked how she balances her team's busy schedules with their participation in the project, Marta Echarri emphasizes the importance of motivation: *"It's about getting the team's buy-in so they see it as an opportunity rather than an obligation – something that makes their day more interesting and different, rather than just another task on their to-do list."*

Whether the motivation from organizational members is a break from the routine, a new perspective on the business, access to young minds that can propose innovative solutions to organizational problems, access to future talent, or the opportunity for media exposure, the motivation has to be explored and identified. Once the organizational need and motivation are identified, a project that aligns with this motivation can be designed, thereby increasing the chances that the process will be beneficial and bring value to the organization.

6.2.4. Is Our Organization a Good Fit?

Just as PBL can benefit all students, it can also benefit all organizations. That said, based on our experience of identifying and collaborating with organizations, we believe that specific organizational profiles represent a better fit for this type of close collaboration with academic institutions. The ideal candidates for these collaborations are those that embrace specific organizational values and approaches to management, HR, and leadership.

First, participating organizations must be convinced that the input and fresh perspectives students can bring are truly valuable to the organization. Without this fundamental conviction, the motivation for committing resources and time to the project might be jeopardized, and the project will suffer as a result, both in terms of learning and output quality.

Organizations that thrive on **continuous learning** and improvement are the prime candidates for student collaborations. These companies view learning not as a periodic or project-specific activity but as an integral part of everyday business. A learning culture encourages the employees to have curiosity and open-mindedness, traits that are necessary to absorb and implement the new ideas proposed by the students. Organizations with an internal learning culture are more likely to integrate fresh perspectives into their existing work methods, turning novel concepts from student recommendations into practical, actionable approaches and business strategies.

Perhaps companies engaged in **open innovation** present the most obvious candidate for student–organization collaboration. In an open innovation approach, organizations look beyond their internal resources and invite ideas from external sources to drive innovation. Organizations that are already engaged in open innovation understand the value of external inputs and are more adept at navigating the complexities of integrating new ideas into their operations. Collaborating with students can be an extension of this philosophy, where academic projects become a channel for innovative thinking and problem-solving.

Successful collaboration with students requires organizations to be open about their challenges and **willing to share data and insights.** For certain companies, such openness might not be possible, but without it, the quality of student output will suffer. Organizations that operate with sensitive information or are overly protective about their internal processes are less likely to benefit from such collaborations. On the other hand, transparent organizations that see value in external input tend to make the most out of these collaborations. This openness helps the students learn and enhances the quality of the solutions they develop because they are based on authentic and detailed information.

Organizations that place a high **value on talent development** represent ideal partners for academic institutions looking to establish meaningful student–organization collaborations. Such organizations view these partnerships not merely as an opportunity for corporate social responsibility but as a proactive investment in the workforce of tomorrow. Organizations with a strong focus on talent development are always on the lookout for innovative ways to engage with potential future leaders. The re-solutionary approach, with the PBL methodology as a core element, represents one such innovative way for an organization to engage and contribute to the professional growth of future employees and leaders. This early engagement is beneficial not only for the students who gain real-world experience but also for the organizations that can begin nurturing these individuals to fit into their organizational culture and operational needs.

Additionally, organizations that see talent development as a cornerstone of their business strategy tend to have well-developed internal structures for professional growth and learning. These structures make them well-equipped to provide students valuable mentorship and learning opportunities. On top of that, collaborating with academic institutions offers a way to demonstrate the commitment to nurturing talent both internally and externally. It enhances their employer brand,

making them more attractive to ambitious candidates who seek dynamic and supportive work environments. This strengthens the company's position as an employer of choice and helps attract, retain, and develop top talent.

Finally, there must be **an alignment of values** between the participating organization and the academic institution for a student–organization collaboration to be effective and mutually beneficial. The organization that wishes to engage in such collaboration should seek out those educational institutions that share similar core values. This alignment of values supports collaboration because it ensures that both parties work towards common objectives. On a strategic level, shared values contribute to the sustainability of the collaboration over time. Partnerships built on a foundation of shared principles are more likely to endure and evolve because they are rooted in a shared understanding of what students need to learn to become the future leaders that organizations need. Shared values are therefore essential to develop lasting partnerships, which, over time, can develop into long-term strategic alliances that provide ongoing benefits for both the academic institution and the organization, including continuous innovation and talent development.

Shared values are essential to develop lasting partnerships, which, over time, can develop into long-term strategic alliances

Moreover, when organizations and academic institutions share similar values, they can create a learning environment together that genuinely resonates with the students. This is critical because it not only enhances the students' educational experience but also prepares them for future roles in workplaces that value similar ideals. Students trained in such environments are better equipped to transition seamlessly into their professional roles after graduation, as they have been practicing enacting these values throughout their educational experiences.

CHAPTER 7

THE PERSPECTIVE OF FACULTY AND INSTRUCTORS

In Advantere's approach to project-based learning (PBL), we operate with two different teacher roles. The first is the role of the *professor*, who is the one designing a course. This involves developing the syllabus, setting the learning objectives, designing course assessments, and evaluating students' knowledge, skills, and competencies development. At Advantere, professors are encouraged to apply technology and innovative approaches to teaching, such as gamification, flipped classroom, peer instruction, and incorporation of educational technology. The second teaching role is the *tutor.* The tutor's main responsibility is to support the students in their work with real-life projects, and this responsibility takes the form of guiding and coaching. Besides helping students progress in the project work, the tutor also helps students navigate the emotional rollercoaster and uncertainties of this experiential learning approach. The tutor can be an Advantere faculty member or a person from an external organization who is brought into the project to offer their expertise to the students during the project. It can be the same person who takes on the role of professor and tutor, but sometimes, these roles are filled by different individuals. For simplicity, this section will use the terms faculty and faculty member to refer to any person involved as a professor or tutor in PBL at Advantere.

> For any faculty member, having students who show commitment and take the coursework seriously is very gratifying

It is important to recognize that most university professors in Spain have no or limited experience with PBL or other experiential approaches to teaching and learning. It is, therefore, natural that some faculty members might have certain reservations initially about taking on the facilitation of a real-life project and have doubts about how to incorporate such projects into their courses. One of the doubts faculty members might have concerns their role in the process. Another concern relates to the potentially increased workload of preparing for a course based PBL.

In conversations with ten faculty members who have been involved in the student-organization collaborations at Advantere, we get to understand some of the demands that such experiential approaches place on professors and tutors. Equally important, these conversations shed light on how rewarding it can be for the individual faculty member to be part of a learning process where students connect with real organizations and directly apply course content to solve current challenges these organizations face.

7.1. How Faculty Benefit from Student-Organization Collaboration

"It's been a great run." "The experience was positive." "For me, this is the way to go." "I really enjoyed it". Advantere faculty members express positive evaluations of their experience with student-organization collaborations. The faculty testimonials also reveal that it is not an experience without challenges. Yet, faculty members see many promising aspects of this approach, not only in its potential to enhance student learning but also in providing a rewarding working environment for the individual faculty member.

7.1.1. Motivated and Engaged Students

"The excitement of young people is refreshing"
(Borja Oyarzábal, Advantere Faculty)

Across the board, faculty members mention that they experience highly motivated and engaged students when a course incorporates student-organization collaboration. They attribute this engagement to the direct interaction with real organizations, which gives students firsthand experience in solving real-world challenges. This engages and motivates the students more than working with similar challenges using a case study methodology. Faculty Juan Antonio Gil notes: *"It's motivating for the students. You can see them working long hours, analyzing the problem from different perspectives, debating, and so on. The level of engagement is high, and I think a big part of that comes from the fact that it's a real problem and that they will be meeting with a client. If we*

were to take a similar approach using a business case study, the engagement probably wouldn't be as strong."

The interaction with organizations places students in a visible position, pushing them to work in a highly dedicated manner to present well-developed solutions they can feel proud of. Having something at stake personally can make the presentation of solutions to executives feel more like a job interview than an academic exercise. As faculty member Borja Oyarzábal puts it: *"There was a sense of relevance because they were presenting to a real company, and in a way, their reputation was on the line. They took it very seriously and approached it as something meaningful – probably even more so than a typical case or seminar."* For any faculty member, having students who show commitment and take the coursework seriously is very gratifying. It creates an enjoyable and rewarding environment for transmitting knowledge.

For Faculty and Director of the Master in Finance, Jorge Martín, student motivation arises from meaningful projects, which in turn drive deeper engagement. In his experience, the motivating factor for students is that they, through the project work, can see how academic content can

translate into actual, practical use. Making this connection is essential for students to realize that the theoretical and technical content of the program or course is meaningful and relevant to study and learning. He explains: *"PBL increases student engagement and motivation. The fact that students perceive these projects as addressing actual challenges that corporations face in their real-world operations is very powerful. Students feel that PBL connects academic content with real-world issues and challenges. This makes the learning process much more meaningful and engaging for them."*

7.1.2. Shaping Student Growth and Real-World Readiness

Besides the fact that it is enjoyable to teach in a course where students are highly motivated and engaged, faculty members also acknowledge that the learning-by-doing approach helps students retain learnings of subject content better than traditional methods. In the end, a driver of faculty motivation is often the desire to impact the students' knowledge acquisition and competence development positively. Faculty member and Vice-director of the Master in International Management, Robert Antonides, highlights that one of the strengths of PBL is that students are more likely to remember subject content because they go beyond classroom discussion of theories and tools. He says: *"It's the application of content in a way that I think is very motivating, which leads to a higher retention of that knowledge even years down the line."*

The re-solutionary approach aims to develop students' professional and transversal competencies in addition to their technical and managerial knowledge and skill set. Although the real-life project work places many students out of their comfort zone, it is precisely this setting where students 'learn by living' that creates an environment where students become better prepared for life after their master's program. Faculty member Consuelo Benito Olalla does not doubt that to her, the most rewarding aspect of facilitating student-organization collaboration is to see students leave their comfort zone and become more ready for work realities as a result of it: *"For the three projects this year, students reached a point where they felt overwhelmed and panicked. But I believe this is part of the learning process – and part of real life. Next year, after graduating, they will be in companies where they are given challenges without clear starting points. This is real life, and it's exactly what happened with our students during the projects."*

Borja Oyarzábal similarly points out that the most rewarding aspect of teaching is not the transmission of technical content but being in a position where he can impact the students in developing soft skills. He states: *"My main goal is to impact them in how they develop critical thinking, how they approach challenges, and how they build emotional intelligence – essentially, their outlook on life and work. That's what makes me happy and gives me a sense of purpose, because I believe not everything should be about making money and working 16-hour days, seven days a week. That's not very wise unless you use it for something meaningful."*

My main goal is to impact students in how they develop critical thinking, how they approach challenges, and how they build emotional intelligence

This last point made by Borja Oyarzábal demonstrates the importance of alignment between the individual faculty member's values and the academic institution's values. The re-solutionary approach aims to educate the whole person, not just teaching technical and managerial skills. That involves developing responsible leaders who use their values and sense of social justice in decision-making. In this setting, faculty members can instill a responsible approach to a subject matter in the students. Supporting the students' ability to make decisions and embrace responsibility is also what faculty member Luca Boer highlights as a central motivating factor in facilitating a PBL process. He says: "*My reward is seeing them take ownership of their decisions when they leave here. That's very fulfilling. It's similar to the reward a parent feels with their children – the responsibility of giving them wings and then watching them fly.*"

7.1.3. Delivering Value Beyond the Classroom

The last aspect that faculty members highlight as personally and professionally satisfying is that the PBL approach provides an opportunity to use the university setting to bring value to collaborating organizations. Faculty member Emilio Llorente Cano describes how he understands this relationship: *"We are the university. We're supposed to be at the forefront of what's happening out there. Companies don't always have the most advanced solutions; they often prefer what they see as safer options. For me, it was great to see that we could influence real-world prac-*

tices, putting our stamp on innovation and positioning the university as a true source of cutting-edge knowledge and solutions for companies through these projects." In this way, PBL allows faculty members to become an active part of the bridge between academia and society or industry.

Just like student engagement creates a rewarding working environment for faculty members, the active involvement of organizations likewise contributes to this. Juan Antonio Gil notes: "*For me, the most rewarding part is seeing the involvement from the client, from the company – both at the beginning, when they frame the challenge, and especially at the end, when they listen to the presentations and engage in discussions with the students. […] That, for me, is one of the most critical and fulfilling aspects, and it truly sets this apart from being just a regular case or a general classroom discussion.*"

Juan Antonio Gil further elaborates that the involvement of the organization is critical because it highlights the relevance of the course content and the learning process. He explains: "*It's relevant for a real company, so students can see that these are real problems and that the business world actually works this way. They don't see it as just another business case study or something purely theoretical. In that sense, I think it's very rewarding.*" Consuelo Benito Olalla states this very clearly: *"My main objective is to ensure that, in the end, we deliver something valuable to the company. I don't want it to end up in a drawer, never to be reviewed again."*

7.2. What it Takes from Faculty Members

"Your life gets extremely complicated by doing project-based learning, in comparison to doing just a regular lecture." (Consuelo Benito Olalla, Advantere Faculty)

The use of authentic PBL in management education is still minimal. Especially in Spain, there is no well-established tradition for adopting innovative or experiential approaches to learning in higher education. It can, therefore, be a challenging and, at times, overwhelming task to take on as a faculty member to integrate a real-life project into a course or to play the role of a tutor during a project.

Many statements from the conversations with faculty members evidence that facilitating PBL is no easy task. It requires faculty members who are open to trying new teaching approaches and who are willing to commit to an uncertain process. Based on their experience, Advantere faculty members highlight four types of demands that PBL places on faculty: the role of process facilitator, commitment to the project, personal competencies, and certain professional knowledge and experience.

7.2.1. The Role of Process Facilitator: Shifting from Teaching to Guiding

In a more traditional educational model, faculty members are often seen as the primary source of knowledge, responsible for delivering content through lectures and direct instruction. However, PBL requires a significant shift in this role – from being the central authority who imparts knowledge to becoming a facilitator who supports and guides students in their learning journey. As Luca Boer succinctly puts it, a tutor in PBL *"should focus on guiding rather than teaching, as the tutor ultimately acts as a facilitator, bridging the gap between traditional teaching and a pure project-based learning approach."*

As facilitators, faculty members must create an environment that encourages students to explore, question, and discover solutions independently. This means stepping back from the traditional authoritative role and fostering a learning space where students feel empowered to take the initiative and make decisions. Faculty Marta Alonso del Hoyo explains her approach: "*I see my role as*

more reactive – asking, 'How can I help you?' rather than actively telling them what to do. I offer advice and input, but ultimately, I give them a lot of freedom to explore and make their own decisions." This approach, where students assume responsibility for the direction of the project under the guidance of experienced faculty members, helps students take ownership of their learning. It helps them develop autonomy, as they are not simply following instructions but actively driving the learning process.

One of the fundamental strengths of PBL is its potential to develop the students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Faculty members support the development of these skills by guiding students through questions and challenges rather than providing direct answers. Juan Antonio Gil explains how he had to consciously adapt his approach to teaching. While he, in a traditional learning environment, sees his role as one of giving explanations and answering questions, he notes that when facilitating project processes, he needs a different approach, which also implies using other abilities: *"The ability to stay silent, to resist the urge to immediately respond with your own point of view, the ability to answer with questions instead. This forces them to keep progressing, explore different alternatives, make decisions, and justify those decisions."* By asking probing questions and encouraging students to consider multiple perspectives and solutions, faculty can help them develop a more robust decision-making process and a deeper understanding of course content.

Effective facilitation of student-organization collaboration also involves managing group dynamics and ensuring productive collaboration among team members. Jorge Martín emphasizes the need for faculty to *"manage group dynamics in a careful and sensitive way [...] ensuring that there is effective collaboration between all the members of a particular team."* This includes addressing conflicts, breaking down communication barriers, and fostering an environment where every student feels valued and heard. By doing so, faculty members can help students learn essential teamwork and interpersonal communication skills, which are crucial for their future careers. In addition to managing group dynamics, faculty might also need to deal with individual issues of students who struggle with the project-based approach and the demands it places on the individual student. In such cases, striking the right balance between providing guidance and encouraging autonomy is key to effective facilitation.

In sum, transitioning from a traditional teaching role to a facilitative role in project-based learning is a process that demands faculty to adopt new perspectives and techniques. It requires them

to step back from the traditional mode of knowledge transmission and instead create a learning environment that promotes autonomy, critical thinking, and collaboration.

7.2.2. Commitment

Successful implementation of PBL demands a significant commitment from all involved, including faculty, as pointed out by Jorge Martín: *"Project-based learning requires significant time and significant effort from everyone involved. It's not only students, but it's also tutors, coordinators, and for me as the director of the master."* Faculty members must be prepared to engage fully with the methodology, dedicating more hours than traditional teaching requires. This commitment involves regular interactions with student teams, providing guidance, feedback, and support throughout the project lifecycle. It's about being present and engaged in the learning journey, which often extends beyond the scheduled class hours.

One of the primary challenges of PBL is ensuring that real-world projects align closely with the course objectives and content. Juan Antonio Gil emphasizes the importance of this integration: *"It requires a lot of work, not just in preparation, but also in ensuring that it aligns with different discipline courses. It's not just an add-on, and sometimes it can even feel like an unrelated extra. It has to be deeply integrated into the subject."* Faculty members must be involved in designing projects that not only complement but also enhance the learning outcomes of their courses. This involves careful planning and continuous adjustment to ensure that the projects are

relevant and impactful, fostering more profound understanding and application of the discipline knowledge and tools.

Effective facilitation of PBL also means being deeply engaged with student teams, monitoring their progress, and ensuring that team dynamics are positive and productive. Robert Antonides highlights the additional time investment needed for this task: *"It takes much more time. You have to dedicate significant time to the teams to keep them on the right track and ensure the dynamics run smoothly. It's more time-consuming, and to do it well, you have to invest more time than the standard class hours allow."* This level of engagement helps students stay focused, overcome challenges, and achieve their project goals. It also requires faculty to be adaptive, responding to the evolving needs of their students and the project, and to be willing to commit the needed time to ensure a successful learning process.

Finally, real-life student-organization collaboration is inherently challenging for both students and faculty. Faculty members must step out of their comfort zones and embrace a more facilitative role. Jorge Martín underscores this willingness to take on the challenge: "*You need to be willing to engage with the methodology. Teachers who simply use their material and leave the class do not align well with PBL. You have to be willing to take it on, truly willing to embrace the challenge. PBL* is *a challenge."* Faculty must be open to exploring new teaching methodologies, handling the uncertainties that come with PBL, and constantly adapting to the needs of their students.

7.2.3. Personal Competences

"In these projects you don't have full control and it is stressful for the professor."
(Consuelo Benito Olalla, Advantere Faculty)

Because PBL represents a significant departure from traditional instructional methods, it demands particular personal competencies from faculty members. A major reason for this is that working with organizations and real-world challenges introduces an element of significant uncertainty in the learning process. Consequently, flexibility is perhaps one of the most critical competencies in PBL. Faculty members must be comfortable with uncertainty and prepared to navigate the unpredictable paths that PBL can take. Faculty member Consuelo Benito Olalla

emphasizes that *"you need a person that is good at dealing with uncertainty because you don't know what the outcome is going to be."* This flexibility involves being open to different student approaches and solutions, managing diverse teams, and adapting teaching strategies as projects evolve. It is about guiding students toward their learning goals while being prepared to explore various avenues to achieve them.

In PBL, classes are dynamic, and the direction can change based on the inputs and ideas brought by students. Faculty member Javier Morales Mediano highlights that faculty members must be able to handle this open-ended nature of student-organization collaborations: *"You know the starting point but not the ending points. Classes are very open and you need some "cintura" [= waist – Spanish expression for being flexible and adaptable, red.]."* He further explains that to be adaptable in the process, preparation is needed. But not preparation in a rigid, scripted sense, but in anticipating various alternative scenarios that could unfold during the course. This readiness to adapt to different scenarios ensures that learning objectives are met, even as the journey to those objectives may vary. He notes: "*You need to keep your final goal and learning objectives in mind. But depending on the raw materials you have, you may need to take one path or another.*"

You know the starting point but not the ending points

The high level of uncertainty is not felt only by the professor or tutor. Students also experience uncertainty at a level that they are rarely accustomed to in formal learning situations. Many also experience for the first time what it means to take charge of their learning. Therefore, a key competence for faculty members to possess is empathy. As Luca Boer puts it when he describes who a good project facilitator is: *"It is someone that hasn't forgotten what it means to be a student, but at the same time knows very well what it means to be a good professional. So, being able to understand the different people that are playing this game."* Faculty members must be able to see the world through students' eyes while also deeply understanding what it takes to be a competent professional. This dual perspective allows educators to bridge the gap between theoretical learning and practical application, making the learning experience more relatable and impactful for students.

Finally, in PBL where the learning journey and the final output are unknown in advance, faculty members must be open to learning and remain sincere about gaps in their own knowledge or ex-

perience. Working with real-life challenges and organizations means the project is based on a particular set of circumstances – all potentially novel for the faculty member. Being open to the idea that faculty may not always have all the answers is very important when facilitating PBL, according to faculty and director of the Master in Talent Management, Pedro César Martínez Morán. When indicating key competencies for faculty, he notes: *"Being open-minded. Being very, very flexible. Being sincere with the students if you have to look for more information about the topic or a specific aspect of the project."*

In conclusion, compared to traditional classroom teaching, facilitating PBL effectively requires a blend of empathy, flexibility, adaptability, and openness. Faculty members must be prepared to embrace the unpredictable nature of student-organization collaborations, guiding students through their learning journeys with patience and insight. By cultivating these competencies, faculty can help create a rich, engaging, and impactful learning experience.

7.2.4. Professional Knowledge and Experience

According to the conversations, faculty members point out that certain prior knowledge and experience can be beneficial for a seamless adaptation to PBL. In general, a solid professional background equips faculty members with the ability to relate academic concepts to real-world applications, a crucial aspect of PBL. Javier Morales Mediano reflects on his experience: *"One thing that really helped me was having previous professional experience. To make students see the project as a real-life experience, I constantly drew from my own background. I think that played a big role in gaining their recognition. It also made students think, 'Okay, this is someone who really knows what he's talking about and deserves our respect.'"* This credibility and practical insight allow educators to guide students through complex projects and real-life challenges effectively.

Experience in strategic roles or consulting might be particularly beneficial for faculty members in PBL environments. Juan Antonio Gil shares his perspective: *"Having spent many years in strategic consulting, I could bring knowledge and expertise to help students as they worked through the process. We held tutorials, and I assisted them with any part of the consulting effort."* Consulting experience often involves problem-solving, project management, and client interaction, skills that translate directly into guiding students through their projects. Faculty members with consulting

backgrounds are trained to help others, in this case students, structure their work, develop strategies, and deliver outcomes.

An understanding of innovation processes and a problem-solving mindset can also be invaluable for faculty members in PBL. Marta Alonso del Hoyo highlights this point: *"To know a bit about the innovation process is important – so they don't just follow a rigid ABC approach. It makes sense to have this kind of knowledge or background. And I would say the most important skill is being able to work with projects and problem-solving. I'm used to working with a problem that needs a solution within weeks. For people from consulting firms or similar backgrounds, this approach makes sense."* This perspective underscores the need for faculty to be flexible and innovative, guiding students through iterative processes and encouraging creative solutions.

Finally, effective facilitation of PBL requires strong team management and collaborative skills, not unlike those found in successful managers and consultants. Robert Antonides draws a parallel between the roles: *"The competencies of a professor are, in many ways, equivalent to those of a manager at a consulting firm. In consulting, you're always with your team and constantly engaging with them."* This continuous engagement and communication are essential in PBL, where faculty must foster a collaborative environment, support team dynamics, and ensure that all members contribute effectively to the project.

To conclude, although specific professional knowledge and experience are not a must for facilitating a student–organization collaboration well, some prior work with innovation, project management, and consulting can make the faculty member adapt more easily to the characteristics of PBL.

CONCLUSION

With this publication, we hope to have inspired institutions, educators, and organizations to rethink the paradigms of management education. The world demands leaders who are not only prepared to navigate uncertainty but also act as catalysts for meaningful change. Graduates must possess the ability to analyze complex challenges, propose innovative solutions, and work with purpose toward a better future for society and humanity. Through re-solutionary learning, we have sought to present a model that bridges academic knowledge with real-world application, fostering professionals who are ready to contribute beyond the confines of traditional management education.

The renewal of management education is not a solitary endeavor. It requires the commitment of universities, businesses, and society at large to engage in meaningful collaboration. Organizations stand to gain from deeper engagement with educational institutions, benefiting from fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and the development of future-ready talent. Likewise, students and faculty gain invaluable insights from real-world challenges that shape their learning experience, preparing them for the complexities they will encounter in their professional journeys. This mutual exchange strengthens the link between education and practice, ensuring that learning remains relevant, impactful, and aligned with the needs of a rapidly evolving world.

As we move forward, we invite institutions, educators, and industry leaders to take part in this transformation. Let us create learning environments that cultivate challenge managers: critical thinkers who embrace uncertainty, solution creators who tackle complex problems, and respon-

sible leaders who drive change. This vision reflects a long-standing educational tradition that not only promotes professional excellence but also encourages collaboration, reflection, ethical leadership, and service to society – principles deeply embedded in the Ignatian pedagogical paradigm. The success of management education will no longer be measured solely by academic credentials but by its capacity to develop individuals who drive innovation, sustainability, and societal progress. Re-solutionary learning is not just a learning method: it is a call to action for the future of management education.

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To each of you – thank you for your trust, your perspectives, and your dedication to advancing the future of management education.

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