

# BREAKING THE ONLINE EDUCATION MOLD

**Jack Welch Management Institute's CEO,  
Dean Sippel, speaks to CEO Magazine  
about how the student-centric, online  
MBA program continues to be as relevant  
and rigorous as ever, seven years on.**

**J**ack Welch Management Institute (JWMI) is one of the fastest-growing online MBA programs in the world, and has been for almost seven years, launching from zero students in 2010 to more than 1,500 students and 800 alumni today. Our students and alumni are located in 47 states and 56 countries. They span from Fortune 500 companies to technology start-ups. I've had a front row seat since the beginning and am humbled to see the great success of our students, alumni, faculty, and staff.

Our diversity and growth is and will be, driven by our mission. We are committed to transforming the lives of our students by providing them with the tools to become better leaders, build great teams, and help their organizations win. Our mission, and the behaviors needed to fulfill it, was created by our faculty and staff, and they re-commit to it every day. As a leader, I look for great people that align with our mission and behaviors and give them the support and tools to do their jobs. The strategy is working.

## **We run JWMI like a business.**

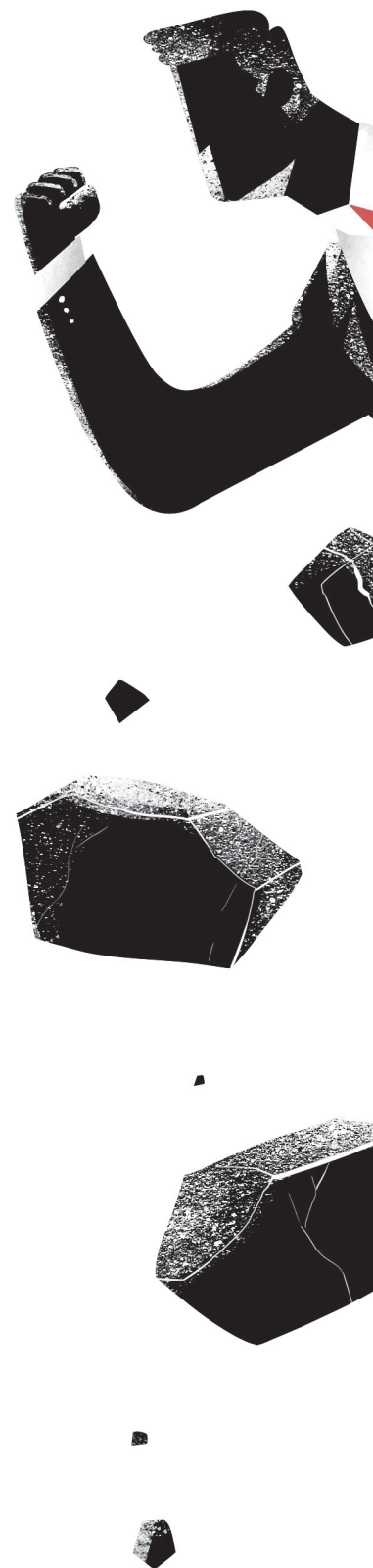
Great businesses focus on their customers, and Jack Welch Management Institute is no different. The entire organization - faculty, staff, and leadership - is committed to changing the lives of our students. JWMI students are successful, busy, working professionals juggling careers and families. They don't have the luxury of time. They need a flexible format that delivers an immediate return

on their investment. So, we relentlessly measure student satisfaction through the Net Promoter Score (NPS). Our most recent NPS score is 81, the highest in school history. Other top schools like Duke, Wharton, and Harvard have reported NPS scores of 67, 51 and 41 respectively. We see our students as the customer, and every decision we make needs to deliver the highest value for them.

We place great emphasis on our curriculum and faculty. Students receive a rigorous, relevant, real-world education that can be applied on the job the next day under our "Learn it on Monday. Apply it on Tuesday." philosophy. They bring actual problems facing their organization into the classroom, and we deliver the proven business tools and practices to help them solve those problems, which provides immediate returns on the job.

JWMI is not a research institute. We hire and reward faculty based on their ability to engage and coach, remaining true to our student-centric model. While our faculty members hold the same credentials as those at other top business schools, they will not succeed unless their student satisfaction scores are high. We practice differentiation, not tenure.

In the end, JWMI delivers a practical business education based on proven practices from the front lines of business and guided by the greatest CEOs in history, taught by a faculty hired to serve our students. Tuition is affordable - less than \$45,000. The cost differential is a huge deciding factor for many students. We deliver results at less than half





the price of some other top-ranked online MBA programs, some of which cost as much as \$100,000 and more. The JWMI model is working - approximately 68 percent\* of students receive a promotion or raise while in the program.

**I can't discount the impact that Jack Welch has on the Institute.**

From the curriculum to the operations, Jack Welch is in the DNA of the program, bringing over 50 years of leadership expertise and a passion for education. His pragmatic approach to business and management is unparalleled and serves as the foundation for the way we operate JWMI. So, while other business schools study great leaders - our school is led by one. Jack's influence spans the curriculum, the faculty,

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**BIOGRAPHY**

As Jack Welch Management Institute's strategic business and operations leader, Dean Sippel has transformed JWMI into one of the fastest-growing and most innovative business education programs in the world, growing its student population over 40 percent a year since inception, to more than 1500 students and 800 alumni and certificate participants.

\*SOURCE: Based on 476 survey respondents among 500 JWMI students surveyed during the final quarter of their program between March 2015 and March 2017.

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the students, and the administration.

As our executive chairman, Jack remains deeply engaged in every aspect of the program. Updated daily on our performance, Jack also speaks to the leadership team weekly and continuously provides direct coaching and mentoring to that team as well. Most importantly, as Jack is currently an advisor to many top CEOs and manages many businesses within his private equity group, he is constantly evaluating how business education can improve those companies and brings those learnings to JWMI. His leadership is and has been a tremendous asset to our brand, students, faculty, and staff.

In addition to his active involvement, Jack's brand recognition has been an asset for JWMI, particularly in the early days of the school. Business leaders are drawn to Jack. Now, these leaders are also excited by the results we are delivering. They are impressed by the caliber of our faculty, students, and alumni, and want to work with the JWMI brand.

**I've always been driven by the belief that students should not have to sacrifice quality by learning online.**

Technology is the true democratizer of education. Thus, our curriculum must be delivered anytime, anywhere with the most engaging content and instructors.

Prior to JWMI, I helped create some of the first online high schools in the United States. The feedback from parents, students, school administrators and state regulators was invaluable. I saw first-hand the power of putting the student at the center of the learning experience. Technology allows you to hyperfocus on individual experiences to ensure learners obtain the outcomes that each course and program is designed to accomplish. From there I spent many years working for Strayer University, the home of Jack Welch Management Institute. Strayer has

125 years of experience in educating working adults, and was one of the first to offer online programs at a university level.

Combining my background with the vision of our founder, we designed JWMI to be an online offering from the beginning, which is very different from adapting a brick and mortar model to an online program. We have a unique understanding of the advantages and challenges of delivering a program virtually and have designed our operations and services accordingly. For example, our faculty must pass a 10-week training course designed specifically for the online environment. And through technology, students can receive support from faculty and staff every hour and every day of the year.

**At JWMI we are passionate about evolving our programs to maintain market relevance.**

Happy students are critical to the success and longevity of JWMI. Looking ahead, we will continue to obsess and execute our current student-centric strategy and deliver relevant and rigorous curriculum. The online, global MBA market is large - estimated to be approximately 1 million potential students. Thus, our current focus is on the execution of our plan to capture more of the global MBA market. We know our program works; now we need to make more potential students aware of its value.

This summer, we are launching our first concentration in healthcare. Global healthcare systems face unprecedented complexity - rising costs, economic inefficiencies, technologies, and increased regulation. These factors forced a change in current models and created a demand for leaders who can navigate highly ambiguous and rapidly changing economic and regulatory landscapes. JWMI is perfectly positioned to help fill this void. We have a great roster of leaders from the Cleveland Clinic, Medtronic, and other organizations who are lending their expertise to our curriculum design.

We are also enhancing our content through a series we have branded 'Experts of Practice.' We have over 30 business leaders providing insights and practices for our students. These include such names as Tim Armstrong, CEO of Oath, a Verizon Company, Carlos Brito, CEO of Anheuser-Busch InBev, and most recently, Warren Buffett of Berkshire Hathaway.

On the technology front, we are adding features and enhancing the user experience through both our desktop and mobile experience. As content delivery continues to evolve across platforms, we will organize and deliver our curriculum with a "your time, your way" mentality.