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Panel 5: Information Technology in the General Management Curriculum

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• N E W D O C •

PANEL 5

Information Technology in the General Management Curriculum

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For many years, individual professors in accounting, finance, operations research and other disciplines have worked to utilize information technology in their courses. What is new in the mid- 80's are broader, more comprehensive, sometimes school-wide, approaches to introducing IT into general managerial courses.

Driven in most cases by the recent availability of the microcomputer, these newer, more proactive approaches take several forms. In almost all, information systems faculty are involved, and in all, it appears significant lessons are being learned concerning the appropriate use of information technology as well as the breadth and depth of resources (technical, financial and human) necessary to support these ventures.

This panel is aimed at raising and shedding light on such issues as:

- Approaches to involving IT in the general managerial curriculum
- Selecting appropriate courses for IT
- "Make vs. Buy" of required software
- Involving functional area faculty
- Case study enhancement through IT
- Leadership roles of IT faculty
- Information as an integrative factor in the MBA curriculum
- Faculty training
- Development of standards
- Software evaluation
- Managing the spread of IT
- Resource requirements to spread IT throughout the curriculum

Introducing Information Technology to General Managerial Courses

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Harvard University

This session discusses the issues faced at the Harvard Business School on introducing personal computer technology to general managers in Master's and Executive Education programs. Specifically, the session will trace a period of five years, what we did and the factors which caused the approach to evolve. Secondly, it will discuss what the educational results have been from this activity. Building on this base, the session will then discuss the major messages for education programs for both managers and MBA students. One general caveat, however, is that the acquisition of hardware and software packages in the end is not the major cost item. Development of the standards, faculty training, and tolerance to software evolution all turn out, in the end, to be where the real expenses lie.

The Arizona MBA: Five Required Courses in Information Management

J.F. Nunamaker
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Because of the growing dependence on information within all fields of business, a new but essential component of MBA instruction at the University of Arizona is the development of skills related to the acquisition and use of information. This focus on understanding and managing information is now a fundamental element of the curriculum.

In common with most MBA programs, the curriculum at Arizona has a "Functional Field Core" of eight subjects. Beyond this traditional functional core, however, an additional "information management integrative core" of five courses, all concerned with the management of information in key business areas, addresses major challenges presented by new technologies and teaches students to acquire, manipulate and analyze information to assist in problem solving. These highly innovative courses are designed and taught by multidisciplinary faculty teams.

The courses in the integrative information management core include the "Design and Control of Production/Systems," "Management and Evaluation of Information Systems," "Decision Support Systems for Investment Planning," "Environmental Scanning," and "Business Strategy and Policy Making." The University of Arizona is continually expanding its efforts to integrate information technology across all functional areas and to incorporate information management across the curriculum.