Program Overview

The U.S. legal system and legal style are in many ways business friendly. The law can help you protect intellectual property and design an effective IP strategy, develop sound plans for new products and marketing technologies, build and retain a successful management team, and shape complicated transactions such as M&A and tailored financial products. But it is also hard-edged, complex, contentious, and poses many risks—such as disputes that cloud IP, consumer class-action litigation which can discredit a brand and impose massive damages, lawsuits by terminated or aggrieved employees, structured financial products that carry hidden risks, and heavy-handed government investigations and sanctions.

Effective management of such issues will sometimes require consulting a lawyer, and this program will discuss making good use of lawyers. But professional legal advice is not a substitute for your own informed judgment and leadership. The ability to navigate tricky legal waters is a powerful source of value for a company and an important competence for a manager. Errors in judgment can doom a business strategy, create liability both for you and your company, and cast a long shadow over a career.

This program will give you the tools you need to plan, manage, and lead in the key law-sensitive areas of your business.

Program Experience

The program will mix quick lectures—laying out basic legal principles—with group discussions of realistic business opportunities and problems. Participants will be given additional materials to take home and further explore critical legal issues.

Program Benefits

You will leave this program better prepared to:

- Protect yourself and your company from the risks of liability and litigation
- Meet the special legal challenges of new technologies, products, marketing tools, and business models
- Avoid regulatory problems, respond effectively to compliance concerns, and minimize the risk of criminal liability
- Understand the key dimensions of transnational legal problems
- Create, protect, and commercialize intellectual property including patents, software, and trade secrets
- Negotiate and interpret contracts, including those relating to M&A and financial services and instruments
- Understand the key legal options for resolving business disputes
- Supervise employees, build and retain a successful management team, and plan for career transitions
- Utilize lawyers and legal advice and manage legal costs

The MIT Advantage

The view of law in this program is practical and hands-on. Faculty Director John Akula practiced law for 15 years, and was a partner at one of the top firms in the country when he returned to the academic world. He has been at the MIT Sloan School of Management for over a decade, working with students, managers, and companies. The materials in this course were developed in response to the distinctive concerns of these stakeholders. The program addresses the special legal challenges of innovation and cutting-edge technologies, and focuses on the needs of successful entrepreneurial managers, in new companies and established firms, whose responsibilities are broadening and who are confronting law-sensitive issues for which their experience and training may not have prepared them.

http://executive.mit.edu/law
Essential Law for Executives:
The MIT Advantage

Sample Program Schedule (subject to change)

Day 1
- 7:45–8:30 AM: Registration and Continental Breakfast
- 8:30–12:30 PM:
  • Welcome and Introduction
  • Liability and Litigation
  • New Technologies and Business Models
- 12:30–1:30 PM: Lunch
- 1:30–5:00 PM:
  • Regulatory Compliance and Criminal Liability
  • Transnational Legal Issues
- 5:00–6:00 PM: Reception

Day 2
- 7:45–8:30 AM: Continental Breakfast
- 8:30–12:30 PM:
  • Welcome Back and Preview of Day 2
  • Intellectual Property
  • Contracts and Business Disputes
- 12:30–1:30 PM: Lunch
- 1:30–3:30 PM:
  • M&A; Financial Services and Instruments
  • Employment Law; Building and Supervising a Team; Career Transitions
  • Managing Lawyers
  • Summary and Looking Forward
- 3:30 PM: Adjournment

Who Should Attend
Any manager in the U.S. with significant responsibility and an expanding leadership role would benefit from this program. One group for whom this course will be especially useful is managers who have strong technical expertise, but whose responsibilities have broadened beyond technical issues.

Many managers from outside the U.S. would also benefit. Foreign companies doing business in the U.S. must adapt to the U.S. legal system, and the U.S. legal style is a strong influence on transactions elsewhere—for example, in M&A and commercial finance.

The materials in this course have been found useful to managers from both young and established companies; and from the for-profit, not-for-profit, and public sectors.

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Program Faculty
John L. Akula. Senior Lecturer at MIT Sloan, is a graduate of Harvard Law School and has practiced law for many years. He was a partner at a top law firm when he left practicing law to teach at Harvard and MIT. He now teaches full-time at MIT Sloan, where he has primary responsibility for the business law curriculum, and offers courses focused on entrepreneurship, innovation, technology, and finance. He is heavily involved in the school’s international and executive education programs, and its relationships with the business community.

“In an increasingly complex legal landscape with proportionate liability exposure for companies and management, this is an excellent course that provides a framework of the key issues.”

Hassan Basil Hassan
Associate General Counsel
GE Healthcare
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