

FOREWORD

*Cédric Baudet, President of the Business Science Institute
Alumni Association*

Dear readers,

It is with great pleasure and a deep sense of pride that I present you with this captivating book about the journey, the odyssey of managers who have completed a doctoral thesis at our institution. As President of the Alumni Association, I would like to thank Aline, Frédéric and Stephen for sharing with you the inspiring stories of these exceptional individuals.

In an ever-changing world, the role of the manager is more crucial than ever. The challenges we face demand cutting-edge skills, in-depth expertise, and an enlightened strategic vision. Against this backdrop, the Business Science Institute supports exceptional leaders who are able to grasp the complexity of business.

From one page to the next, this book will help you discover the unique journeys of managers who have chosen to embark on the adventure of research. Their decision to reconcile demanding professional and personal responsibilities with the intellectual demands of a doctoral thesis is in itself a testament to their passion for the acquisition and transfer of knowledge. Beyond their academic successes, you will meet people who have created managerial impacts, pioneers in their fields and, above all, human beings who have helped to bring the academic and professional worlds closer together. Their stories, both inspiring

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and accessible, bear witness to the importance of perseverance, curiosity and daring in the quest for excellence.

As alumni of the Business Science Institute, we form a close-knit community, driven by the desire to actively contribute to the advancement of knowledge and the transformation of management practices. This book is an ode to our shared commitment and determination to push back the boundaries of applicable knowledge. I sincerely hope that reading these pages will inspire you. I invite you to immerse yourself in the unique stories of these manager-researchers. May this book guide you along the exciting paths of research and managerial impact.

Enjoy your reading,

Prof. Cédric Baudet

AVANT-PROPOS

*Cédric Baudet, Président de l'association
des alumni du Business Science Institute*

Chères lectrices, chers lecteurs,

C'est avec une grande joie et un profond sentiment de fierté que je vous présente cet ouvrage captivant sur le voyage, le périple, voire l'odyssée de managers qui ont réalisé une thèse de doctorat au sein de notre institution. En tant que président de l'association des alumni, il me tient à cœur de remercier Aline, Frédéric et Stephen qui vous content l'histoire inspirante de ces personnes exceptionnelles.

Dans un monde en constante évolution, le rôle du manager est plus que jamais crucial. Les défis auxquels nous sommes confrontés exigent des compétences pointues, une expertise approfondie et une vision stratégique éclairée. Dans ce contexte, le Business Science Institute accompagne des leaders d'exception capables d'appréhender la complexité du monde des affaires.

Au fil des pages de cet ouvrage, vous découvrirez les parcours uniques de ces managers qui ont choisi de se lancer dans l'aventure de la recherche. Leur décision de concilier responsabilités professionnelles et personnelles exigeantes avec l'exigence intellectuelle d'une thèse de doctorat est à elle seule un témoignage de leur passion pour l'acquisition et pour le transfert de connaissance. Au-delà de leurs réussites académiques, vous rencontrerez des créateurs d'impacts managériaux, des pionniers dans leurs domaines et surtout des êtres humains qui ont

su contribuer au rapprochement du monde académique et du monde professionnel. Leurs histoires, à la fois inspirantes et accessibles, témoignent de l'importance de la persévérance, de la curiosité et de l'audace dans la recherche de l'excellence.

En tant qu'alumni du Business Science Institute, nous formons une communauté solidaire, animée par le désir de contribuer activement à l'avancement des connaissances et à la transformation des pratiques managériales. Cet ouvrage est une ode à notre engagement commun et à notre détermination à repousser les limites des connaissances applicables. J'espère sincèrement que la lecture de ces pages vous inspirera. Je vous invite alors à vous plonger dans les histoires uniques de ces managers-chercheurs. Que cet ouvrage vous guide sur les chemins passionnants de la recherche et de l'impact managérial.

Bonne lecture,

Pr. Cédric Baudet

INTRODUCTION

*Michel Kalika,
President Business Science Institute*

The creation of Business Science Institute 10 years ago came from the idea that management professors needed to respond to an international demand from managers wishing to continue their studies after an MBA. Indeed, a small number of our alumni from the MBA programmes we had created were asking us to prepare a doctoral thesis. Traditional PhD programmes, designed to train academics, were unable to meet the expectations of practising managers in terms of both objectives and organisation, and high-quality, affordable DBA programmes were few and far between. When we created the *Doctorate of Business Administration* (DBA) programme, our aim was to meet a legitimate need, but we had no idea of the impact it would have.

It was only several years later, after the first series of DBA theses had been defended, and more particularly during the first survey of graduates in 2019¹, that we realised what was happening after the thesis.

While developing the BSIS project for the FNEGE and EFMD², the author of this introduction came to realise that the DBA is more than just a qualification: it is a process that transforms the doc-

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1. "What is the Impact of a *Doctorate in Business Administration*?" EFMD global programmes conference, Lancaster, 13-15 May 2019, Kalika, Mola, Moscarola, Platt.
 2. *BSIS, a decade of Impact*, M. Kalika, EMS, 2022.

toral manager into a manager-researcher, but also, by the very nature of the research carried out by the doctoral manager with the help of professors, a research process that creates results and impacts. Our involvement in international accreditation processes also helped us to identify the impact of the DBA.

As the number of alumni increased, their spontaneous feedback led us to conduct a survey among our graduates to better understand their career paths and the influence the DBA had on their professional and personal lives.

This book, which we wanted to publish to mark the 10th anniversary of the Business Science Institute, is the first result of this survey. After an introduction presenting the methodology used, the respondents, the main impacts resulting from the 79 interviews carried out and the 81 profiles of the graduates interviewed, it contains a summary of each profile. Each profile is deliberately concise, with an engaging title, a few key words, their current situation and significant extracts from the interviews.

Methodology

At the time the study was launched, Business Science Institute had 136 *Doctors in Business Administration*³. 134 were contacted via a general e-mail offering them an interview on the impact of the DBA. Around fifty of the recipients agreed immediately. Subsequently, a series of personalised emails, sent from the President's email account, brought the total number of interviews to 79 and the number of alumni interviewed to 81 (two alumni couples conducted the interview jointly). Two people from Business Science Institute attended the interviews, which were conducted via Zoom. Stephen Platt and Caroline Hertz for the first 50, Stephen Platt and Michel Kalika for the next thirty, with Professor Anne Bartel-Radic being mobilised for 4 interviews with German-speaking alumni.

Why was such a large sample selected, representing almost 60% of the graduate population? Of course, we wanted it to be as representative as possible, and we had decided to stop when we

3. 31 theses are due to be defended at the end of September 2023, the date of the publication of this book.

reached saturation point in the data collected. But it turned out that, given the diversity of alumni profiles in terms of functions, sectors, career paths, and even nationality, each interview provided us with new information. We therefore set ourselves the target of 80 interviews, compatible with the aim of publishing the book on the occasion of the 10th anniversary.

The interviews were structured around four open questions formulated at the beginning of the interview: 1) Introduce yourself. 2) Why did you do a DBA? 3) What was the impact of the DBA? 4) How did you disseminate the results of your thesis? The interviews took place between 27 June 2022 and 7 June 2023.

The interviews lasted a total of 56 hours, with an average duration of 42 minutes. The back-to-back profiles represent a 353-page document containing 275,247 words of 'cleaned' graduate responses only.

All the conversations with the alumni were recorded with their consent, then automatically transcribed into a Word file using Sonix Software. They were then entered in a database into which respondent identification information was entered for future analysis. The summary profiles in the book were written in French and English by Stephen Platt, Frédéric Branger and Aline Closse and approved by the alumni interviewed.

The verbatim comments below were chosen by the author of the introduction and are solely his responsibility. The diversity of the recording languages and the automatic transcription of the interviews mean that he alone is responsible for the quotations.

In this introduction, only the answers to the question on impact are presented.

The respondents

The sample of respondents is representative of the graduate population, i.e., doctoral student-managers who enrolled at Business Science Institute until 2019, with an average thesis preparation time of 3.5 years.

- 84% of the alumni interviewed were male.

- The average age is 50 (the average age of candidates being 46, which makes sense).
- 20% are aged between 36 and 42; -35% over 54.
- 49% come from Europe (including 16% from France), 37% from Africa, 10% from the Americas and 4% from Asia.
- 68% followed the French language, 16% the English language and 16% the German language programme.
- 78% attended the in-person programme and 22% the distance learning programme.
- In terms of sectors of activity, diversity is the norm, with all sectors represented. The most represented sectors are banking and insurance (19%), consulting (19%), the public sector (16%), accounting and law (13%) and education (13%).

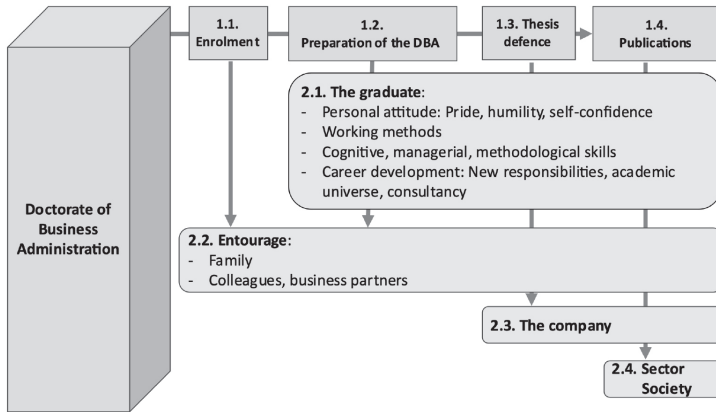
In 2023, the current Business Science Institute student population will be significantly different: 40% will follow the in-person programme and 60% the distance learning programme: thanks to Covid-19! Today, 44% follow courses in English, only 40% in French and 16% in German. It should also be noted that the proportion of students from Asia has risen to 26%.

The Impacts of the DBA

The analysis of the main impacts of the DBA is based on the interview transcripts, the profiles in the book and statistical analyses of the corpus of texts, in particular the occurrences of words and expressions. The quotes below are taken from the full interview transcripts. They are not intended to be exhaustive, as the situations and career paths of our DBA graduates are so different. In addition, only 81 graduates were interviewed in total.

The impact of the DBA refers to the changes brought about by the programme. This covers several stages in terms of causes and obviously different players in terms of consequences.

Impact of the DBA



1. THE IMPACT OF THE DBA ACCORDING TO THE STAGES OF THE PROCESS

First of all, we can distinguish the impacts of the DBA according to when the impact is triggered by the DBA process, which is characterised by several stages.

1.1. The first stage is **enrolment**, when applicants gather information about the programme, particularly on the website, take part in webinars, submit their CV for initial approval, which encourages them to apply, put together their online application, write their research proposal and attend the selection interview. This impact is real for some applicants who spontaneously mention it, even though the programme has not really started yet! *Doctor Gabriel Tremblay*, an economist specialising in the economic evaluation of healthcare, explains: “*Right from the start, just the fact that I was enrolled on the programme had an impact, because they thought: well, he’s working on his doctorate, he could make a good director*”.

1.2. The second stage of impact, and clearly the most important, is the **preparation of the DBA** itself. This stage lasts three to four years on average and constitutes a genuine transformation process. This stage involves attending in-person and remote seminars, listening to videos, reading, monthly monitoring reports, discussions with the thesis supervisor, follow-up seminars, data collection and analysis, writing and formulating rec-