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# The iimt Executive MBA for Telecommunications Managers

The amount of human knowledge is doubling in ever diminishing time spans. With the triumph of the Internet and the "convergence" of the analogue and digital world towards the omnipotent personal digital assistant or mobile phone, the tornado-like quality of the environment can be seen especially clearly in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector.

Fortunes are being spent on third generation network licences while the labs are already working on fourth generation devices. With technology as the main driver, it is understandable, that ICT companies, facing ever-

MARTIN STEINERT

tougher competition, are increasingly in need of management skills and management education for their executive staff.

## iimt

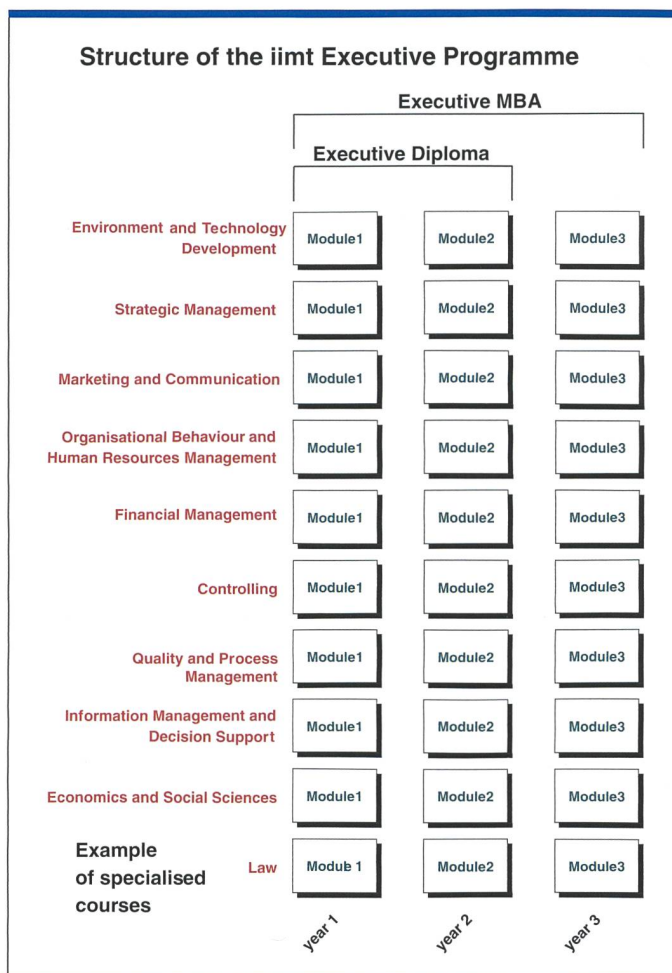
Recognizing this future demand, in 1995 Swisscom and the University of Fribourg founded the iimt (international institute of management in telecommunications). Executives from 57 different companies have now taken part in the iimt Executive MBA. In contrast to the majority of its competitors, which focus more on the technical aspects of the subject, the iimt courses are especially tailored to managers of the ICT sector. They aim to provide participants with a broad and strong base of business administration. The director of the iimt, Prof. Stephanie Teufel is not only responsible for its continuous drive towards excellence in education and research, but also has the chair of telecommunications management for the University's undergraduate programme. In contrast to the early days of the institute, when it was solely sponsored by Swisscom, the iimt today is also supported by Siemens, diAx, and Orange. Moreover, the institute has an active role in the ICT community via its memberships in ASUT, ICTnet, protelecom, IT-Valley Fribourg and TUG and its network of more than one hundred international academic and professional lecturers.

## Executive Programmes

The executive programmes range from the three-year EMBA and the two-year diploma & specialised courses to customized trainings for managers of telecommunication companies, such as Swisscom and Alcatel Germany. Early on it was obvious to the parties concerned that the breathtaking rate of change in the telecommunications sector means that nobody can stay off the job for any prolonged time. For this reason a modu-

lar structure was adopted, based on ten subject areas, each with three modules, requiring physical presence for a total of only five weeks a year. There is one module each year for each subject and the succeeding modules build on what has gone before. Each module lists three days and requires a written test of 90 minutes. The diagram shows the ten subject areas and the modular system. So, in summary, a graduate Executive MBA participant at the iimt

- must have been accepted,
- will have attended 540 full hours of class contact time (excluding all breaks),
- will have passed 30 written exams and
- has written a Master project of around 80 pages in length,
- all of it in English.



*The Executive Programmes have a modular structure.*

Each year, no more than 30 students are admitted. This ensures effective transfer of knowledge and promotes a cooperative teaching style combining a firm theoretical base and practical insight through authentic case studies from business.

One final advantage for our small community of ICT Managers is the networking, fostered via social events for all EMBA students, lecturers and the alumni.

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## Executive MBA - Management in Telecommunications

### Executives from 57 companies can't be mistaken ...

4Media Group  
AAA IT-Law & E-Projects  
Alcatel  
Altran  
Anixter  
Ascom  
Bakom  
BIT  
Business Consulting Dent  
Canton de Genève  
GFM  
Christian Risse SA  
Cisco Systems  
Comfone  
Compaq  
Crédit Suisse  
d-bee  
dIAX  
Digicall  
EEF  
Ericsson  
Etat de Fribourg  
Fantastic

Global One  
GR-FAIG  
GTS Access Services  
Hewlett Packard

IBM  
Infonet Switzerland  
Intercai  
Interconnective

Kanton Luzern  
KPN Qwest  
Marvel Communications  
MCI Worldcom

Multilink  
Nortel Networks  
Novaintegra  
Orange  
Philip Morris  
PWC  
Proms  
Radio TV Steiner  
SBB  
Siemens  
Kanton Bern  
Sun Microsystems  
Sunrise  
Swiss Post  
Swiss Radio  
Swisscom  
Tele2  
tesion  
Unisys  
Université de Fribourg  
UUNET  
Wavetek

The iimt would like to *invite you* for an aperitif at one of its four *information evenings*:

30.05. Fribourg

14.06. Zürich

13.06. Lausanne

27.06. Bern

For further details, please visit our website

[www.iimt.ch](http://www.iimt.ch)

or send an e-mail to

[iimt@unifr.ch](mailto:iimt@unifr.ch)



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Four information evenings in Fribourg, Lausanne, Zurich and Berne.

## Inside MBA – the Voice of a Participant

**Christian Etter**, Student Representative in the Institute Council Class of 1999 in his third year, currently Account Manager for «New Providers Carrier Networks», Siemens Switzerland Ltd., E-Mail: [christian.etter@siemens.ch](mailto:christian.etter@siemens.ch)

### Mr. Etter, why did you opt for an Executive MBA programme?

Well, I believe in the three I's lifelong learning, being a necessity nowadays, forced upon us by the specific market forces in the telecommunication sector and the propagation of knowledge in general. Only four years after finishing university, I felt the desire to re-enter a study programme. It is clear that in order to remain in a good position for an interesting job, one needs extra qualifications.

### What were your reasons for choosing the Executive MBA of the iimt?

The decisive factor was that I can follow the course at the same time as my professional tasks. It is difficult, but one can be on top of both, the job and the studies. Besides, doing business in telecommunications means that one simply cannot take an extended leave. So the five

weeks of modular courses in the iimt programme are just right. Apart from that, since the MBA is specially tailored to the needs of my industry, I can directly implement the knowledge and insight gained in my work.

### What do you think are the main weaknesses of the programme?

Well, our business is hyperactive, probably one of the most dynamic in the world. A University institute is bound by all the formal hierarchic and bureaucratic strings attached to a public administration. In my opinion, the focus on ten subject areas is too inflexible and leaves little space for more recent topics. In fact, the organisation at the university sometimes resembles a three-year plan. In business life, constant change has become standard; this should also apply to universities. Overall, I would like the iimt to focus more strongly on the market.

### What do you consider the main strength of the iimt's Executive MBA?

Basically, the iimt succeeds in its task. Over the years engineers and technical staff have adopted the ideas and philosophy of economic principles. Their

mindsets concentrate more on markets and management. Soft skills are not just buzzwords but little by little are internalised. One is kitted out with all the equipment you need in terms of skills and knowledge. In addition it must be said that the size of the class is ideal. During my first two years I had personal contact and talked with almost all of the participants, some even became friends. And we can always go to the lecturers or the institute if we need help or want to give feedback: A fair comment is appreciated and acted upon.

### What personal goals are you pursuing through this Executive Programme?

Personally I am less interested in maximizing profits, improving my image or such things. Instead I am trying to reach the optimum in my personal effectiveness and satisfaction, whether through a challenging and demanding assignment, or by working in an outstanding team that can tolerate conflicts.

### Any final comment?

For my personal goals the iimt Executive MBA is the appropriate tool.