LBS Sloan Masters in Leadership and Strategy
Creating a business case for company sponsorship

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A. Introduction

A significant number of LBS Sloan students are sponsored by their employer to prepare them for the next level of strategic leadership within their organisation.

The Head of Leadership and Talent Management Office at Mizuho Financial Group mentions how their organisation is benefiting from sponsoring employees on the LBS Sloan programme:

“We are delighted to support our senior managements’ professional and personal development through the LBS Sloan programme. Our employees return to Mizuho with enhanced levels of performance and effectiveness, ready to handle new strategic responsibilities and decision-making critical to shaping our future”.

Learning from 50 years of past students who have secured sponsorship from a range of companies, from multi-national corporations to small and medium enterprises and even the public sector, we have compiled this guide to help you create a business case to present to your organisation. Feedback from LBS Sloan students and alumni suggests that creating a coherent and compelling business case is a pivotal tool when approaching any organisation for sponsorship.

Many companies when approached with such a request may be asking, ‘why should we make this investment?’ and ‘what’s in it for us?’ This guide can help you answer these questions and clearly convey the benefits the unique LBS Sloan Masters in Leadership and Strategy can provide to you and your organisation.

We hope the following provides a useful framework upon which to build a solid case. There is no guaranteed success, but thorough preparation and perseverance has paid dividends for our sponsored students.

We hope you are successful!
B. Return on investment

Make sure you clearly articulate to your line manager your expected benefits to the company. Define measurements to assess how your contribution will increase during or after the programme in terms of skills and knowledge acquired, that will benefit both the organisation and you as an individual.

For example, the Organisational Behaviour core course will help you understand the general principles and processes of effective leadership so that you can lead in a wide variety of situations. You will also learn about change management, how to come up with the right strategy, and not just implement that strategy, but own it.

An LBS Sloan Fellow and director of planning and control at a major telecommunication company in Brazil mentions how Sloan helped her in managing change during a merger:

“Post-Sloan, I can see myself doing things differently and being far more self-aware in the way I work, particularly in complex situations. This is very relevant at my organisation as we are currently going through a merger and we are at a critical point in the process, discussing organisational structure and new responsibilities. Having spent 10 years in the telecom market, I now have much more to bring to the table, including insights from other industries. At this stage in my career it couldn’t just be another course, it needed to be ‘the one’, and when you’re looking for ‘the one’ you need to aim to study at ‘the best’”.

It is important to highlight the wider benefits for your organisation of establishing links with London Business School. As their ambassador on campus, you can be the bridge linking your organisation to world-class faculty, major global events and the global alumni network. Our careers team can also help your organisation recruit top talent from London Business School.
B.1. Key programme features

Once you have defined the business need, the next step is to conduct your analysis. Support your choice of programme by identifying the most relevant components to your organisation.

- **Company project**

The Sloan company project (or management report) is a further opportunity to tailor your academic experience, whilst adding value to your organisation. As a Sloan Fellow, you have the opportunity to undertake a substantial piece of work on a topic for your employer, supported by a faculty member. Many company-sponsored Sloan Fellows complete a project on a problem concerning their organisation, delivering significant payback, and often relating it to their future role.

Previous project topics have included:
- the growth of social networking sites and the implications for marketers
- knowledge transfer in a multinational corporation
- identifying key success factors for an FMCG product launch in an emerging market

- **Core courses**

You will focus on developing effective leadership by reflecting on your career in a structured and disciplined way, and taking stock of your personal leadership aspirations and capabilities. The core courses which will help you develop your leadership skills are:

- *Understanding Top Management* - insight into the professional challenges and responsibilities faced by top managers.
- *Biography* - thinking constructively about your career and life transitions by looking at the lives of others, as well as your own.
- *Leading People and Organisations* - the knowledge and tools to lead and transform organisations through people.
- **Global Business Assignment**

This week-long international assignment allows Sloan Fellows to develop an understanding of a particular regional economy and the factors that contribute to its development and success. Integrating your LBS Sloan Masters learning with practical experience on this assignment is a powerful and enjoyable part of the programme. Accompanied by a member of faculty, you travel to either San Francisco, Mexico City, Athens, Abu Dhabi/Dubai or Buenos Aires (locations subject to change). Working in small teams, you spend a week working closely with an organisation on a real business project or visiting companies, NGOs, institutions and consultancies to gain fresh insight into international business practices. Previous assignments have included:

- **India**: explore the capability of an organisation to innovate and adapt to change
- **China**: examine the world's fastest growing emerging economy in a global market and the implications for international business
- **South Africa**: conduct an internal communications audit to understand how cultural change is led
- **Russian Federation**: learn how fast-growing companies can effectively develop their businesses
- **Argentina**: explore how Argentine businesses and institutions adapt and survive in a volatile climate.

- **Network**

As a student and graduate of the Sloan at London Business School (LBS) you will:

- Have lifelong access to blue-chip corporate partners and their industry network.
- Become part of the LBS community made up of 44,000 alumni in over 150 countries.

- **Sample analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme feature</th>
<th>Return on investment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core course: Executive Leadership</td>
<td>Marked increase in self-awareness; through 360 degree and individual feedback sessions, I will build on my strengths as a leader and eliminate any weaknesses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elective course: Corporate Strategy</td>
<td>Takeover of new business unit - needs to be aligned with organisations wider strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core course: Leading People and Organisations</td>
<td>Ability to manage larger and more diverse teams spanning multiple geographies.</td>
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B.2. Programme structure

The LBS Sloan Masters is a 12-month full-time masters programme with a curriculum designed specifically for senior managers with extensive managerial and strategic experience. The Sloan curriculum has four dimensions:

1. Key knowledge delivered through core courses.
2. Core themes of strategy, leadership and business fundamentals.
3. Tailoring through elective choices that meet your individual interests and goals.
4. Global perspectives gained through the Global Business Assignment and the diverse class and wider School community.

There are usually six classes each week which are scheduled between 08:15 and 18:45 Mon-Fri. Each session is 2 hours 45 mins. Outside of this, you will need to set aside time for skills sessions, private study, study group meetings, guest speakers and club events.

Elective options can be taken from the summer term onwards, and are run in different formats; some in single block weeks and some over 10 week terms up to the end of your programme.
B.3. Recommendation

After you have gathered specific evidence that our Sloan programme will benefit you and your company, you will need to ensure that you highlight the aspects of your personal development that are most important in the context of the business need and your career development plans.

General:

“I believe that it is the right time for me to pursue a Sloan masters degree. It will be not only a huge benefit to myself as a leader in this organisation, but will benefit the teams I manage through the improvements I will be able to implement immediately on my return from the programme and long into the future”.

Specific:

“Having worked within x department I need to broaden my understanding of x…”
“To date within our organisation, I have achieved…”
“In order to lead x business unit, it is vital I develop X skills….”

If your organisation offers internal development programmes or even external training with other institutions, you may need to clarify why an LBS Sloan Masters at London Business School would be preferable to a number of short development programmes. You will also need to compare the Sloan at LBS with other Sloan or Executive MBA programmes, and clearly state the benefits of studying our Sloan. In this case you should emphasise the ability to learn from world-leading faculty who, alongside teaching, consult and sit on the boards of major multinationals and conduct ground-breaking research in their fields of expertise. The rigour of the programme sets it apart from shorter courses, as well as the opportunity to learn from and collaborate with your diverse, experienced, and international peer group. Once you have graduated, remember that you and your company have access to a powerful and influential professional network for life.
C. Asking for employer support

I. Financial support

Think carefully about the level of financial contribution you require, making sure you have up to date information on tuition fees. You may also need to request additional funds for accommodation, travel and materials. Think about different funding models so you have a “package” to request, and can offer different positioning. Outside of 100 per cent funding, students on recent intakes have been financially supported in a variety of ways, including matching funding, percentage splits, reduced hours, salary sacrifice, tuition reimbursement at key stages or after successful completion of terms one and two, and bonus payments. The agreement you finally come to will most likely be the result of a back and forth negotiation between you and your employer. The monetary contribution you receive is most commonly dependent on how long you are going to be contractually obliged to remain with the organisation. If you require a significant level of funding, be prepared to be very flexible with this detail.

II. Time

You will need to show how you will manage any time out of the office, and what you will do to minimise the impact on your team or clients. Allow time off to complete studies, but also be aware that deadlines may conflict with business needs. Indicate clearly in your request the extent of the time required, and whether you will be using any personal time (agreed study days, unpaid leave, vacation, lieu time) for this. It may be helpful to put the detailed schedules into an appendix, and to give a short table within the business case showing the requirements for the Sloan and, if appropriate, comparison with any other programs.

III. Commitment and Conclusion

Your statement of commitment is critical and should show your commitment to the organisation, and to being a successful student on the programme. There are a variety of ways of demonstrating this commitment, and as previously explained, agreements will most typically encompass lock-in periods, reimbursement of tuition and other costs (whole or percentage). The statement of commitment ensures that you take responsibility for your learning and repay the investment that has been made for you by your company.
D. Contacts

We hope this guide is helpful and wish you the very best of luck!

If you require any further information about the LBS Sloan or London Business School to support your business case, please contact the Recruitment team:

Tel: +44 (0)20 7000 7509  
Email: sloan@london.edu

Should your employer wish to have a direct point of contact at the School to answer any questions or concerns they have, or to build a relationship with London Business School, we would be delighted to hear from you. Please contact:

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Business Development Manager, Degree Programmes  
Email: investintalent@london.edu, Tel: +44 (0) 20 7000 7582