

The Future of Work podcast is a weekly show where Jacob has in-depth conversations with senior level executives, business leaders, and bestselling authors around the world on the future of work and the future in general. Topics cover everything from AI and automation to the gig economy to big data to the future of learning and everything in between. Each episode explores a new topic and features a special guest.

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Jacob: [00:01:11](#) All right, well hello everyone. Welcome to another episode of the future of work show. I'm your host, Jacob Morgan, and for those of you who are watching live on social platforms and channels, welcome. And for those of you who are listening to the audio version of this, when the podcast went up, well you're missing out because the live is always better. But today I have a very special guest and it is Martin Boehm, the Dean of IE business school. So Martin, thank you so much for joining me today. Thank you Jacob for having of course, [inaudible 00:00:01:50] about all sorts of cool, crazy stuff. I'm really curious just to get a bit of background information about you. What did your career trajectory look like? How did you become the Dean of E business school and what is I E business school for people who are not familiar with it?

Martin: [00:02:02](#) Sure. Let me start a little bit about myself. So I actually have been with IE Business school for quite some time. Actually now it's a little bit more than 13 years already and I did join IE essentially as a faculty member. So in my side job, you could say I'm a faculty member in our marketing department and obviously still teach as well in the marketing area. However, after a couple of years with IE teaching and researching, I got drawn over to the dark side to the administrative side and really when I started my administrative career here at the school, I first was in charge of overseeing our undergraduate program. Then was actually in charge of our master's program and then the entire product portfolio and at some point years ago, it was I think the natural progression as well to then move into the Dean's role, which I'm in now a little bit less than two years ago before joining IE.

Martin: [00:03:08](#) I'm not really sure how much I have to go into detail. I worked a little bit in the consulting industry and then actually engaged into my MBA. And to be honest, when I did my MBA, there was the opportunity to obviously go back into consulting or do something else. But I was so in love with studying and being a

student that I thought, well maybe a PhD might be a good idea. So actually continued my life as a student and then I would say I got stuck in the academic world. Yeah, I mean like I, I thought I'm going to give it a try and see where the teaching and researching is something for me. And yeah, ever since then happily I'm living the life as a faculty member.

- Jacob: [00:03:54](#) Very cool. And then IE business school, I mean it's a very, very prestigious university, but some people might not be familiar with it. So can you give us a bit of background information about I E business school?
- Martin: [00:04:05](#) Sure. So we are a business school that happens to be based in Madrid, Spain, I'm saying happens to be based in Madrid, Spain. Because actually when you would walk out of a campus, you probably wouldn't necessarily get that feeling because clearly one of our I think characteristics is that we attract a very diverse student population. Right now in most of our programs we actually have more than 80/90% international students.
- Martin: [00:04:40](#) Right now on campus we have something like around 125 nationalities. So, to some extent I sometimes joke at walking here on campus, it feels a little bit more walking the United Nations than actually an educational institution. So, so it's incredibly diverse when we think about the different nationalities and we are clearly an institution that is obviously as a business school, we're focused on business, but we are, I would say as well a full service business school as they sometimes call it. So we offer a wide portfolio starting with undergraduate studies, which obviously especially in Europe is a thing. And this is probably one of the most demanded undergraduate studies that you could go for, but all the way up to obviously executive education. So we might have students who just basically barely turned 18 all the way up to students, students in quotation marks who may be in their 50s.
- Jacob: [00:05:40](#) Hmm. Very cool. And you guys have won numerous awards, so congratulations on being one of the top business schools that are out there. So I talked to a lot of business leaders on the podcast and I always get emails and comments to the podcast and they say, you're going to talk to more on the academic side, people who are running educational institutions, professors, teachers, deans such as yourself. And so I'm really curious to hear your perspective on how is education and learning changing and is it different 15 years ago, 20 years ago versus where we are today?

Martin: [00:06:19](#) Well, I certainly hope so that this is changing because I think the challenges that we are facing today are very different to probably challenges that we faced 15 years ago. Unfortunately, I'm saying I truly hope so because I think the reality is that the education sector has not been necessarily a sect that it has undergone a lot of change. Right? And really when we think about the fundamental teaching model, I think it has been more or less the same for the past 15 years, but a hundred or we could even argue 500 years, right? So not much really has changed on average I would say. Nevertheless, I think it clearly has to change. And I think some institutions are trying to change. And when we think about change, I think it can happen on multiple dimensions. I'm only, the first change that certainly has to happen is in terms of what is it, what we are teaching, and he, I'm taking now the business school perspective. What is it, what we should be teaching at business school? What is it, what we should be teaching, for instance in an MBA program?

Jacob: [00:07:24](#) Well it's actually, I have one question for you before you jump into that. So you said that it is changing, so why is it changing? Why can't we just teach and learn the same way today that we did 15 years ago, 20 years ago? Like you said, it hasn't changed really in a 100/150 years so why now?

Martin: [00:07:43](#) So I think when we think about, I mean like I said, one of the dimensions, what is changing I think is that it's the content, right? I'm like, what? What we actually teach and I think that is a quite a nice illustration of why it actually has to change. My feeling is the first thing that has to change as we probably have to move much more from let's say, imparting content or knowledge to actually helping our students to develop skills. Think a little bit more about the attitudes toward life towards work and so forth. And that certainly has to change. Why is that a good example of why education, how education has to change? Because I think there is more and more research that actually shows, number one, that knowledge is less relevant and what becomes much more relevant in order to be successful at work is actually your skills, right?

Martin: [00:08:38](#) Your skillset more the soft skills that we call it. I mean this is clearly one thing. The second thing is I think is we have to see this shift because I think our environment, our context is increasingly changing and as a consequence the stuff that we learned 10 years ago is probably not relevant anymore. And as obviously this change is accelerating. It might even be true that the stuff that we learned one year ago is not relevant anymore, but if I'm facing such a situation that actually everything gets quicker and quicker, outdated, I actually have to think about as

well, so how can I learn? How can I prepare for the future? And here again, I probably have to be prepared by the future by developing the skills, having a broad expertise and having skills such as learning agility that actually then allow me to, once the context is changing, that I quickly adapt. I learned the necessary stuff that I need in order to tackle some of these challenges, some of these problems, but I have the fundamental skills in order to handle these problems or tackle these problems.

Jacob:

[00:09:43](#)

Yeah, no, that's interesting because I think a lot of people can relate to this. And I'm thinking about when I went to college, I'm trying to think how much of what I learned in my university did I actually use in life or did I apply in life? And I feel like a lot of people today simply just to get that diploma, that piece of paper so that they can get that first job out of college. Because if you don't have that diploma, you can't even start to apply for these jobs. But I don't think there's not that much that I apply from college. And I double majored in economics and psychology. I did very well in school, but there's not a lot that I apply from what I learned in university on a regular basis to my daily life because I was just very obsessed with can I pass the tests? Do I know the answers to the questions? I mean, that's how it was focused. It's just do the finals, do the midterms and that's it.

Martin:

[00:10:43](#)

But I would even argue Jacob, that maybe content wise, maybe there's not too much that you remember, there's maybe not too much that you actually applied in your day to day. Nevertheless, I think as well there are certainly certain learnings that you took away from your time that are going to be helpful. Right? I mean let's think about the most basic things. Like you probably worked on a term paper with some of your classmates. Well that teaches you as well how to collaborate, right? It teaches you how to draft a convincing argument for instance. Right? And these kinds of things are relevant and I'm pretty sure it's, well it's your life. You have applied them multiple times and they probably, and it has become quite handy I would assume. Right? So that's a little bit what I'm populating. I think while maybe 15 years ago it was more of a side product of going to college or getting an education.

Martin:

[00:11:42](#)

It probably should become much more center stage. Try to make, it should be focused much more on, well how do we collaborate, collaborate. And it's not by chance I picked this up and by chance I learned how to collaborate. No, but there should be maybe a class on that or there should be a program on that, that actually tells me, wow, this is the best practice learning from research and now let's actually give you the

opportunity to test it, to apply it and let's see what actually works for you. And that makes you a more collaborative individual, a better collaborator in the future for instance.

Jacob: [00:12:16](#) Yeah. So how do you think it's going to change the way that we structure curriculum? Because it's clear that we have to move away from this idea of simply trying to know what's on the test and pass the test. So, our educational institutions like IE business school. Are you experimenting with different, I guess things that you're teaching, how you're teaching and communicating that information?

Martin: [00:12:41](#) Absolutely. I'm mean certainly, I think what we see as I'm going to clearly is, as I said, we probably are going to see a reduction in terms of the knowledge that we teach and we're going to see probably an increase across curricular in terms of the skill development. When we think about the skills that are relevant, especially in a day and age of artificial intelligence, I think we have to think much more as well about the skills that are relevant for human beings or I would argue that make us distinct to machines that give us a cutting edge over machines, right? Or over artificial intelligence. So cool would probably, what we have to focus on much more is let's say human skills such as creativity, right? Machines are pretty bad at that. We human beings are pretty good at that and actually creativity is something that you can practice that you can learn, right?

Martin: [00:13:32](#) We spoke before about collaboration. Well, most of the problems that we will have to tackle in the future are problems that we probably can't solve by ourselves. So we need to collaborate with others, with other experts in order to find the appropriate solution. So probably collaborating, learning about collaboration is going to be a useful tool that includes for instance as well are human traits such as empathy for instance? Right, or simply curiosity and trying to train this and pick up on that in order to have this competitive edge over machines. Having said this, I think living in a digital age, let's call it that I think requires us as well to understand this new world order, right? I mean so we probably have focus. Even if you go your business school, you probably have to focus much more as well on digital skills.

Martin: [00:14:28](#) Knowing about data, being able to work with data, analyze data, visualize it in a way so that I can actually build a convincing story. And besides data, I would say probably I have to some extent understand the basic technological trends out there. Like artificial intelligence, like virtual reality. Like cryptocurrencies, but primarily not to be able to become a designer of

cryptocurrencies. But to actually think about, well it is a technology that is here to stay and understanding it probably is going to help me in order to, or for instance, understand how it might influence my industry or how I could leverage this particular technology in order to disrupt an existing process and existing industry for instance.

Martin: [00:15:23](#) So I think I'm going to, we're going to see the fundamental shift of moving my one from knowledge more to towards developing skills. And I clearly think that we probably have to focus much more on let's say the human skills, let's call it the digital skills. And I would separate maybe to some extent as well the cognitive skills or the thinking skills. So just training and practicing the right way of thinking, analytical thinking, tackling problems, solving problems, adapting to new environments. So a little bit this agility idea and so forth.

Jacob: [00:16:04](#) It's funny, somebody on LinkedIn who's watching the slide was actually just asking this question and they did, can you, can you do in the future? But it sounds like you, you covered those. There's the balance between the technology stuff, AI, virtual augmented reality, and also kind of a human stuff like empathy, self-awareness, emotional intelligence and all that. Okay. Makes a lot of sense. So for example, if we look at getting an accounting degree or a finance degree, do you think those types of professions that are, a lot of that stuff's going to AI and technology now, right? Do doing accounting, crunching numbers, looking at data, do you think the types of degrees are going to change? Like are we not going to have an accounting degree in the future or do you think it'll just be more of an accounting degree, but the things that you change within there or the things that you teach there will be different. So maybe you'll have to learn how to work with technology and artificial intelligence to do accounting.

Martin: [00:17:07](#) So I'm not really sure whether I should be saying this a publicly. Right and no but jokes aside, I'm going to... Let me actually step back a little bit from the degree perspective and let me talk a little bit more about what we for instance tried to teach in an accounting course. I think right now we still focus to a large extent on the rules of accounting, right? And then basically having this ledger and making sure that students know how to, you know where to put that, you know that number, right. And making sure that at the end everything balances. I think that is going to become less and less, right? Because as you just said, machines are going to be able to do that fairly soon. They much more precise in, in doing that. So it is probably something that is going to be a job that is super repetitive, that is quite

structured, quite logical, follow certain guidelines, follow certain rules so it can easily be done by a machine and a human being can add very little value.

Martin: [00:18:12](#) Having said this, I think there is still a place where human beings right away there is a place for instance of interpreting this data, working with a data because obviously sometimes accounting is called as well the language of business. Well then you need someone who understands that language and can actually work with that language in order to draw conclusions. And I think that is still relevant, right? Accounting as well about calculating ratios. Well, calculating ratios is actually simple, straightforward, but understanding what that means and what are the conclusions, how do I have to respond to a certain set of ratios in a strategic fashion that actually allows me to turn or continue making my organization successful I think is much more relevant. I would even argue that obviously when it comes down to accounting, there are a lot of ethical considerations to take into consideration, right?

Martin: [00:19:07](#) And that is something I think that we should be discussing much more in accounting as well. What is ethical? What is not ethical? Where are the borderlines, right? What is the gray area or what should not be a gray area? And should be clearly considered as being unethical. Right. And this is something where we come into play where we, we'll have to maybe program the machines in a certain way in order to do our job or where we simply, once we get the data presented or the information sent that we draw ethical conclusions out of that.

Jacob: [00:19:41](#) I get a lot of emails from people who say either they're going back to school or maybe they are just about to enter school or they have kids who are about to enter college and they always say, what's the best thing to study now? Like what, what should you be majoring in? Do you have any advice or suggestions on what people should be studying now? Are there any particular degrees that you would recommend they go after to stay relevant in the coming 10/15/20 years?

Martin: [00:20:11](#) So I think it's tricky to ask a business school Dean what kind of a degree or major he would recommend. [inaudible 00:20:21] So as you can imagine. No, I probably would recommend to a large extent, I think business because I truly believe that business is really teaching you increasingly, I think the skills and the competencies that are relevant if I want to go down the business stream, but I think it is also relevant in many other professions, right? Let me give you a silly example. I'm going like, let's say I'm a lawyer. I always wanted to study law and you

know, this is my thing, right? I would argue to some extent even for a lawyer, it might be actually quite beneficial to have a fundamental understanding of business. Why? Because I mean I could come up with two really good reasons.

Martin: [00:21:13](#) First, maybe I want to open my own practice. Well, that actually means that I might have to manage staff. That might actually mean I have to think about the financials of my business. There are certain revenues coming in, but I certainly have expenses. I have to manage this. I have to probably make forecasts. I might have to go to the bank in order to ask for a loan. So they want to see a business plan. So I might have to write that, right? So what we actually see as I'm going to clearly business skills might come in quite handy if I want to start essentially my own practice, my own business. But even when we think about being employed in a large law firm, when we look at most of the things that these large firms are working on right now typically is corporate law, right?

Martin: [00:22:05](#) And obviously there as well when you think about it and you have to go and review a contract while you could approach is only from a legal perspective and say, is this correct? This is not correct. But if you really want to be a good lawyer, I think you should have a comprehensive understanding of what is it that your client is trying to accomplish, what is it, what your client wants to resolve potentially, and then consult the client on really the legal aspects, but maybe a little bit more holistically of well, I would recommend you tackle this issue from a slightly different perspective. And that's my take. And I think in order to do that, you probably have to have a good understanding as well of the business world. Let me give you yet another example. Imagine you say, well this, this business is not right for me, right?

Martin: [00:22:50](#) I'm a person who wants to leave a mark on this world, wants to have the significant impact. I want to go into the third sector. I want to work for an NGO. Well, NGO's to a large extent about as well coming up with the right marketing campaign to raise the funds to support your costs, right? Once you have the right money, you want to obviously dedicate it in the most efficient way. So it really comes down to managing your operations in the most efficient way. Maybe you're going to focus on natural disaster as well.

Martin: [00:23:27](#) If you really want to help and you want to make sure that you're going to resolve the pain as quickly as possible, you have to think as well about the operations to deploy your efforts as quickly as possible in the most efficient way in any part of the

world, for instance. Right? So again, I think business know-how can come in very, very handy. So I don't want to say everybody should study business, but I think I'm having a certain interest for business I think can be quite helpful even if you consider very different professions that at first sight might not have anything to do with this with business.

Jacob:

[00:24:06](#)

Yeah, I think that makes a lot of sense. And somebody who's watching live said that she recently went back to school at 41 and is actually getting a lot of value out of it. My mom, who I think is also watching also went back to school, I think she went back to school at around 50 she used to be a computer programmer and then she went to become a marriage and family therapist. So we're seeing that even later in their careers to learn something new, to make a pivot in their life. And a couple of people have mentioned this as well, that it means that it's really important to learn how to learn. In other words, you're probably going to have to make several pivots in your life, learn new things several times in your life. So do you have any thoughts on how do you teach that skill of being a perpetual learner? You know, learning how to learn all the time. Is it something that you guys are thinking about at IE business school?

Martin:

[00:24:58](#)

Certainly. Maybe before I answer your question, let me maybe say something before that. I completely agree. I think nowadays it becomes around lifelong learning. Absolutely right? I think we have to reinvent ourselves or we're going to have to reinvent ourselves over our career multiple times. Maybe you might've heard people talk about the so-called T model, right? Where they actually say, well, education is about having a broad foundation, right? I mean some basic skills and then the T is essentially about, I have to specialize and become an expert in something. Right? And that's going to serve me for the rest of my life over the next 30/40 years. I'm going to, that's what I'm going to be doing. I think what we're going to have to do is we're going to have to evolve from this a team model more to a M model or W model, which means, I mean there's going to be multiple times and throughout your lifetime, throughout your career where you might have to reinvent yourself and specialize in something.

Martin:

[00:26:03](#)

Maybe now it is being a social media expert. Well, maybe in 10 years time social media doesn't exist anymore, right? So I might have to completely reinvent myself and maybe with a completely different skillset and are going to be, again, become an expert in something that is relevant at that point in time. So in generally I completely believe that, yes, we have to reinvent

ourselves, which obviously requires as well to pick up the capability of being a better learner. Right? And yes, do we focus on this? Do we experiment in this space? Yes, we do. I don't know whether you ever heard of a professor called Barbara Oakley. Barbara Oakley actually is the faculty member who probably has one of the most, or one of the largest MOOCs with the highest number of participants in all history.

Jacob: [00:27:01](#) And a MOOC for people who don't know what a MOOC is?

Martin: [00:27:06](#) Okay, so a MOOC is basically the massive online open courses that you might see on platforms such as Coursera, Udacity, or ed X for instance. I mean these are some of the platforms that essentially provide some of these massive online only a massive open online courses where you essentially can study, study for free, right? If for the listeners, if you have never tried this, I really recommend you to do that. So Barbara Oakley actually has a MOOC, which is called learning how to learn and I mean she basically brings her research on, well, how is it, how the human brain works and how can, how can we leverage this in order to be more efficient in, in, in learning.

Martin: [00:27:54](#) She brought that to a MOOC and we actually are now currently working on a yet another MOOC in a Spanish version in order to cater as well to the Latin American and the Spanish market. And we also actually are working with her, let's say on a mini online course that is going to be rolled out to all our students in the business school and teaching them basically a couple of tricks, a couple of things to take into consideration on being a more agile and more effective learner.

Jacob: [00:28:28](#) Very cool. That's exciting to hear. I like hearing that kind of stuff. It actually, that pivots very well [inaudible 00:28:36] as have something called a wow room and I saw a video of this and I mean it's really fascinating. I thought maybe can you share a little bit about what this wow room in?

Martin: [00:28:49](#) Sure. So the wow room and actually the wow stands for the window on the world is essentially a raw large video wall. The video wall is set up in a semi-circular fashion. It has the size of 13 by 3 meters. Right? So basically it's huge, right? I mean certainly huge right? And we actually designed this because we felt that the online instruction that we were delivering to our students, for instance in our online MBA, MBA was not immersive, not engaging enough, and one of the things that we realized is it was not engaging because the typical thing what we did is that faculty had to sit just like me right now in front of a laptop in front of a webcam, but they had sit down and they

basically were talking to the camera and that had really two fundamental issues.

Martin: [00:29:46](#) The first one is faculty typically blossomed when they can walk around. They can show their passion to the students and that obviously is very much hindered when you're actually sitting down, right? I'm going to get much better when you can walk, when you can stand and so forth. Typically as well you want to engage with the audience, maybe using a whiteboard or using other means that you typically have available in the classroom, which was a little bit more difficult than the typical view conferencing setups. But something that most faculty complained about was as well that they were not able to see their students. So they were preaching essentially to a webcam, but they didn't really get any feedback about, well are they all falling asleep or are they super engaged? Something that you can feel and can easily notice and pick up in a traditional and an ordinary classroom.

Martin: [00:30:40](#) I can see in the faces out of falling asleep or are they looking somewhere else. I can easily see this and as a consequence I can respond to that. And that obviously in the online environment was a little bit more challenging and this is where the wow room came in because now we're having this huge video wall. What we can actually do is we can first of all project all the students connected to the session and we actually now able to project up to 90 students on this wall. And given the size as you can imagine if you have around 60 to 90 students up, they actually projected in life size so you can actually see the face, you can actually see their facial expression and you certainly you're going to be able to pick up whether Jacob or Martin is falling asleep or not paying attention.

Martin: [00:31:29](#) So we solved with that clearly the feedback issue but at the same time as it is the wow room. So it's not only about the video wall, but it's actually an entire room that is set up in this way. It actually now allows as well the faculty member to walk around, walk around in the room and we have set it up in a way so that the cameras are automatically tracking the faculty member and follow the faculty members so he or she can walk around as an ordinary classroom. But it's always center stage and it's always in focus for all the online students connecting. So we will need to leave the wow room. We, we, we over came, let's say some of the shortcomings that we identified were present in the more traditional way of teaching online, I would say.

Jacob: [00:32:19](#) And when I first saw it, I thought of if anybody's ever seen X-Men when professor X goes into this dome and the walls close around and then he can kind of like see what's happening in the world. And that's immediately what I thought of when I saw that room. And it's really cool. I think people who want to check that out, you can just Google like wow room IE [inaudible 00:32:47] . And I think that's a really good example of how you guys are changing the way you're thinking about learning to make it more immersive, to make it more interactive and engaging instead of, like you said, just kind of watching, watching a teacher present on a laptop, which is not always that fun.

Martin: [00:33:01](#) [crosstalk 00:33:01] Jacob I think I'm going to Billy, I'm going to guess I how I pitched it or how I positioned this was really, we really wanted to overcome some of the shortcomings that existed of online versus face to face. Right? And I think the WOW room did actually help us and that was really the first step. That was the first stage I would say, of the project. But then we thought, well wait a minute we are now having the situation that everything is essentially happening digitally. And the only thing what we're doing is we're replicating what we're doing in a classroom that existed a thousand years ago. So can we to some extent actually leverage as well the fact that everything is happening digitally and then we thought as well about some added services I would say that don't exist in a traditional classroom.

Martin: [00:33:50](#) And allow me to only highlight one feature because I think it's it's actually kind of cool because as you have all students connect to the class through video feeds, what you actually can do is you can actually use algorithms to analyze this video feeds. You can actually analyze the facial expressions of these individuals. And what this algorithm can do is it can actually tell what is your emotional states, why don't make it basically measure as a couple of emotions and as a consequence to can actually determine whether you are paying attention or not. So what's your attention level, right? On a scale, let's say off of 1 to 10 and that is actually a piece of information that can be incredibly useful for a faculty member to have.

Martin: [00:34:36](#) Because at the beginning when we actually even thought well, maybe we project the students on this wow room or at this video wall and if you are attention level drops below a certain level, what we do is we actually flag that for the faculty member so that the faculty and I can reach out to Martin, Hey, is something wrong or why are you not paying attention?

- Martin: [00:34:57](#) For instance, we learned fairly quickly that was a little bit too much information, but what we now do is we provide this information at the wrap of the session to the faculty member and basically give them an aggregated score of what is the level of attention throughout the 90 minute session and then what the faculty can do is he or she can go back to the teaching plan and say, well, it seems at minute 20-25 people are disconnected.
- Martin: [00:35:29](#) Well, what is it that I did during that time, and maybe I used an example in order to illustrate something and that might make me or might allow me to reflect about whether that particular example was the correct one. Maybe I'm going to go back to the drawing board and say maybe I use something that the audience can relate to much better and hopefully that's going to be helped me to actually bring the attention scores up. Right. So what makes you see is these kinds of features would not be able to pick up in a traditional classroom. And I think it helps clearly faculty to go through learning cycles and over time improve their teaching.
- Jacob: [00:36:05](#) Yeah, that's fascinating. So it's not just a kind of a virtual room. I mean there's a lot of artificial intelligence, there's algorithms, there's all sorts of complex stuff that's going into changing and then you're learning an education experience, which is, which is fascinating. I wanted to switch gears a little bit because I know that you work, I'm sure with a lot of organizations who are wanting to recruit and bring in people from IE business school and into their companies. What are some of the top things that organizations are asking you for when, when they're thinking about recruiting from IE business school, what are they looking for the most?
- Martin: [00:36:41](#) So I think right now I'm going to go think it is. As I said a little bit before. I think it's clearly the typical management skills, like are they good problem solvers, are they good collaborators? Do they have the necessary analytical thinking skills and so forth. I think that is still all the way up there. I think what we clearly have seen recently come up much more and that obviously has today to do as well with the challenges that most companies are facing right now is simply an understanding for technology, for data. I think that is clearly a skill that is coming up much, much, much more. I think over the past few years what we have seen is even that they wanted to see students to have certain basic programming skills. I think now it's a little bit more data management skills.

- Martin: [00:37:35](#) That is a, I think more or less the trending topic and it'd be related to that I would say as well, some expertise around digital transformation. So being aware or understanding how all these technologies might help us to transform organizations or entire industries and how to actually make that happen, which then asks us, well, components that are not technical in nature because obviously you might know as well that in order to make a digital transformation actually stick and work, there's a significant part that has to be dedicated to the cultural change within an organization in order to make this a true success.
- Jacob: [00:38:22](#) So these organizations are actually using the words and the phrase digital transformation when they're thinking about recruiting from IE business? Cause I would imagine like 10 years ago, maybe even five years ago, you probably didn't hear that phrase that much.
- Martin: [00:38:34](#) Probably not. I would agree on that. Do they necessarily always use these kinds of words? I'm not really sure what they probably do. And obviously this is something that our students tell us a lot. They, for instance, say, well our industry is under a lot of pressure. One of these pressure points has maybe new players coming into the market that make our life difficult. And then obviously the typical interview question would be what do you think how we should actually respond to that? Well, that is to a large extent as well the consequence of digital transformation. I'm going to get think about the typical retail organizations. I bet with you, I'm going to get they're constantly concerned about how to tackle Amazon, how to deal with that threat. That is obviously becoming actually a question of life or death. Just recently, I actually spoke as well with one of our esteemed alumni who is in the banking industry and I asked him as well, well what is it, what you actually are concerned about?
- Martin: [00:39:42](#) Is it the typical incumbents in the financial services industry? Is it maybe new and younger players that try to take a piece away from you in the retail banking industry or is it actually the Apples and the Facebooks or the Googles of the world and he cleaned? He said, well, clearly the startups, the fintechs, we're watching them. But the good thing is they're following our business model, but they may be doing this a little bit smarter and we're watching them because these are perfect targets for us to purchase, right? I'm going to then incorporate them and they're going to help us to make us more successful. But he even said, well, what we're really afraid of is the Facebooks, the apples and the Googles of the world because they have the financial means they have the marketing power to actually disrupt our industry essentially in a second. Right.

Jacob: [00:40:33](#) Wow. So in other words, it sounds like competition is now coming from organizations outside of your industry. So you know what, it's crazy to think that somebody in the banking sector is worried about like a Facebook or an Apple. Like you, you would have never thought about this 10 years ago cause you would think, Oh Apple, they, they make iPhones, [inaudible 00:40:54] they make they can create credit cards. Facebook is talking about their own currency. So it seems like the big challenge for organizations now is competition. Everyone is your competitor, big company, small company, whether they're in China, in Europe, Japan, it's just complete madness that's out there. And so we need people who can thrive in that kind of a world.

Martin: [00:41:19](#) Yeah. So I think I'm going to let, let me actually quote someone that I recently interviewed as well. I don't know whether you heard of Simon Sinek again, right and he's probably one of the most viewed speakers on TEDx. And he just recently launched a book, right? Where he talks about the infinite mindset and he actually says that nowadays competition is not like a soccer or a football game. Where I have a clear start and I had a clear end and I have it clear opponent. I have a clear enemy, right? I mean everything is set, everything is happening on a certain pitch and a certain football fields for instance, right? This is not the reality anymore. We actually are in an infinite game, there is no start there is no end. So I can't proclaim myself as the winner because there's never an end to the game.

Martin: [00:42:14](#) And interesting enough as well, my opponents might actually change over time. It might be this team, it might be another team. The team composition might change and so forth. Even the boundaries might not stay the same. It might not be always the same football field I might be playing outside of the football field. So we clearly see, I think yes, the concept of competition clearly has changed and that obviously has fundamental implications as well on, on, on education or how do we prepare our students for such a such an environment for such a world.

Jacob: [00:42:47](#) Yeah, I heard he had that book. I haven't read that one, but I read the original one by James Carse, I think it was called finite and infinite games. And it came out what, 20 years ago? It was very ahead of its time and yeah, it was a very interesting read. I'm curious now, we only have like 15 minutes left here, so I want to shift gears again and talk a little bit more about the future workforce and just to get your general perspectives. When you think about the future of work, how are you seeing that change?

Martin: [00:43:26](#) So I think obviously I think the good thing is rather than looking forward let's look a little bit back, right? And let's only think back 20 years ago and we compare 20 years to today. I think we already see fundamental changes having taken place in the workforce. Many jobs that are relevant today that exist today, clearly 20 years ago that didn't exist and probably nobody could even envision them. I mean before we spoke a little bit about the social media experts, 20 years ago, social media didn't even exist. So social media marketing for instance, was not a thing. So how could you be a social media marketer? Right? And obviously this is going to continue to happen in the future as well. And I even argue that this is going to happen increasingly more often. There are tons of studies out there where different consulting firms, different research organizations essentially say that well, in 20 years time, 80% of the job that, of the jobs that will exist in 20 years don't exist today.

Martin: [00:44:37](#) Right. Obviously, I don't know whether it's going to be 80% whether it's 70% or 90% but I truly believe that a large majority of the jobs that would probably exist in 15 to 20 years from today don't exist today. I mean like that I'm 100% convinced and that clearly links back to what I said before, how we have to educate our students, how we have to prepare them for such a future. Because if you can't really predict the future, you have to give them options. Right? And you have to give them options in a way that saying, well, I give you the necessary skills, so whatever the future might hold, that you can actually adapt as quickly as possible in order to maintain and stay relevant as well in the future. If your job disappears or something new comes actually up.

Jacob: [00:45:29](#) I think that makes a lot of sense as well. And by the way we, we've only been talking about this kind of assuming that it's like new people going to school or kind of the younger generation, but there are also a lot of people who are 40, 50, 60 years old who are constantly trying to figure out how do we reinvent ourselves? I studied, I was in school 30 years ago and now the world is changing so quickly I need to reinvent myself. So this isn't just about younger people, this is applicable I think for somebody, regardless of how old they are.

Martin: [00:46:03](#) Oh, I completely agree. Right. And it comes back a little bit to what we discussed a couple of minutes ago about having to reinvent ourselves, constantly updating ourselves, constantly adapting to the new environment, to the new challenges. And, and my recommendation would be to some extent to think of educational think of learning more in the form of a portfolio. Well how many days, clearly college education and yes,

sometimes it might make sense over the course of my lifetime to actually go back to university, go back for the metal facts to a business school. But I think it's not only that, so I'm learning can take place as well in the so called MOOCs that we, that we mentioned a little bit before. The advantage here is that obviously many of them are actually free of charge. They're much more bite sized, organized.

Martin: [00:47:04](#) So I could focus on the MOOC that I mentioned before, learning how to learn for instance. And in a couple of weeks I can try to get up to speed on that particular subject. Right? So they're much more bite sized and I probably can prepare for some of the challenges that I'm facing in my job right now. So I would think a little bit more about this as a portfolio of, well there might be very structured education such as a college degree or university degree, a business school degree.

Martin: [00:47:35](#) There might be, let's say more unstructured learning in a sense that, well at the end I'm not getting a certificate, I'm not getting a degree, but it's more bite sized. That might, maybe it's a little bit more just in time learning. And I think we certainly shouldn't forget that probably the biggest chunk of learning actually takes place at work, right? So it could actually be in the day to day that we just tried to take on new challenges, new projects, new tasks that widen my scope and that allow me to practice new skills or to acquire something else. So I think it is about building that portfolio or having a combination of these different forms of learning in order to try to stay relevant in the future.

Jacob: [00:48:22](#) Whose responsibility is it to stay relevant? So is it up to the individual, is it up to the company to make sure that they're constantly teaching their employees things? Is it up to educational institutions like I E business school to teach these new skills? Who's ultimately accountable for being that perpetual learner and learning new things?

Martin: [00:48:45](#) I would argue all of the above, right? Because I think it depends a little bit on the situation. I really believe that learning is something that requires intrinsic motivation. If you don't have that intrinsic motivation, I'm sorry, but learning is not going to take place. So I think you have to take a little bit of responsibility.

Martin: [00:49:08](#) You yourself have to be accountable for your learning to take place, right? But at the same time, there might be certainly situations where a company has to be accountable for that as well. And the best example is, for instance, if I as a CEO, if I as an organization understand that my company is going or my

industry for the matter of fact is undergoing a fundamental transformation that is going to leave many of my employees and their skills as obsolete. I think I have an obligation. I think I have a responsibility as well to push them, to help them to actually transform in line with the industry in order to be able to acquire these skills in order to remain and stay relevant. So I would say, well there's clearly the intrinsic motivation. There is the accountability for myself, for my own learning. But I think in some situations, especially in situations that we see in many industries right now, I think leaders, companies, maybe even society, I think that obviously society includes us as well. I think we have an obligation as well.

- Jacob: [00:50:19](#) Couldn't agree more and I like that some of the accountability actually rests on the individual themselves because I think for a long time we assume that, Oh you know, if I need to learn something the company will teach me something, the school will teach me something. But you as an individual are also responsible over your lifelong learning and you need to have a little bit of that intrinsic motivation in there. Is there a way to create that intrinsic motivation? Because what if somebody is listening to this or watching this and they just say, you know what, I'm just not motivated to learn anything new. Can it be like a muscle that you can build and exercise to become a lifelong learner?
- Martin: [00:50:56](#) I think you can train it. I think it is like a muscle that you can exercise, right? Because when we think about an intrinsic motivation to a large extent comes from curiosity, right? And I think I'm like all of us who have observed small kids, I'm in the fortunate situation that my kids are only three and two years old. They are intrinsic.
- Jacob: [00:51:21](#) I have a 3 year old as well.
- Martin: [00:51:27](#) Congratulations. So Jacob, I think you might feel with me, I think they are intrinsically curious. I'm like they want to understand how things are working or the world is working. They have an incredible passion to understand things, right? And that is the starting point of learning to protect place. So I think we all have the capability of being curious. We all have the capability, I think to be intrinsically motivated. I think sometimes we forget this capability.
- Martin: [00:51:59](#) We unlearn it to some extent. So I think we have to practice this. We have to train it like a muscle. But I think sometimes we actually have to approach this as well and maybe with a more logical way or more analytical way. And basically we have to

make ourselves clear sometimes that, well actually it's in my self interest of learning this because otherwise I might be out of job, otherwise I might be irrelevant. Well that can't be a nice situation to be in so maybe I shouldn't develop that motivation. Why we should create my incentives for myself in order to learn.

Jacob: [00:52:38](#) I suppose the good thing is now sort of in the year that we're living in as opposed to 10, 15, 20 years ago, we've never had more tools and resources at our disposal. I mean we have the internet, we have Google and YouTube and so many MOOCs that are out there that there's kind of no excuse anymore for why you can't be that perpetual learner. You know, you don't need to have \$200,000 to go to a two or three or four year MBA program. Now there's something like micro that you want to learn. You can find a movie, you can find a YouTube video and people just need to remember that it's up to them to do that. Nobody's going to push you to get to that step. So I think that's fantastic I know we only have a couple minutes left here.

Jacob: [00:53:25](#) No, go ahead. Go ahead.

Martin: [00:53:28](#) You would argue, I think people sometimes when they think about learning it's like wow, it's like this major task. No learning is anything. I mean it might be the little things as well. What am I, so you can do this as well step-by-step.

Jacob: [00:53:41](#) Yep. Couldn't agree more. So in the last few minutes, maybe we can just wrap up with some advice that you have for people and maybe we can break this up into kind of two categories. So one is maybe for more entry level employees who are just entering the workforce and they're thinking about how do I stay relevant in the future? Do you have any advice for things that they should be focusing on? And the second piece of advice is specifically for leaders, leaders who are responsible for other people and leaders who want to cultivate that sense of perpetual learning and curiosity in their teams. What can they do that kind of,

Martin: [00:54:21](#) Okay. So I think when we think about the recent graduates that basically are at the beginning of their career, I think my recommendation or my advice would be to see any job as a learning opportunity. What I sometimes actually recommend as well, our students who graduate from our programs, I sometimes tell them as well, well you might have your ideal job, you might have your dream job, but well sometimes it's really challenging right out of university being ready for that job, right? I'm like, so think about this a little bit more as a career

plan. Let's say this is my dream. Well then it's work in this direction. Take your first job, see this as a unique learning opportunity. See this as an opportunity as or see this as a springboard to the next opportunity and from that opportunity to the next and to the next.

Martin: [00:55:19](#) And that I think is even true within the job, within the very first role. I think right now as well, individuals, employees have more opportunities than ever before to be engaged in multiple projects at the same time. So if someone asks you whether you want to volunteer for a project or want to be involved into something else besides maybe your day to day job, I would always argue take that opportunity, take the chance because it's going to help you to broaden your scope to gain visibility and obviously learn and as we discussed, I think throughout most of the time of this podcast. It's really about learning and broadening, broadening your skillset. And when I think about leaders, I think clearly what I believe is what the role of a leader should be is really make sure that everybody in your organization, everybody in your team actually plays to his or her strength.

Martin: [00:56:28](#) The other day I did attend a conference and we, we spoke a little bit about different metaphors as well for leadership and then actually one of the metaphors we discussed, we said, well it's a little bit like if Jazz ensemble, I mean this is really how leadership should be about nowadays, right? Different players and the team might take leadership. So this is my solo.

Martin: [00:56:53](#) Now I dominate the others are going to the background. But once I'm done with my solo, I step back, I'm going to be essentially a follower and someone else is going to take the leadership. So I think nowadays it's much more about that is that it's more a fluid way of leadership. Sometimes I'm a leader, sometimes I, I'm a follower. I take on different roles, different, different responsibilities. And that obviously I think requires us to be much more agile in how we see our responsibility and what we represent. And it actually requires us to sometimes as well as we step back how others support others to assume this leadership role, to take the lead and lead the organization or lead the team in a certain direction. Right. So I think, I think nowadays this is probably important as a leader or being at the helm of an institutional being in the leadership team.

Jacob: [00:57:53](#) I like that analogy. So for my new book that's coming out next year, I use the analogy of a lighthouse. Somebody who is guiding others, showing them the way, helping them stay safe, helping make sure that they become successful. So I really liked

the jazz ensemble analogy as well. I think that that makes a lot of sense for people. So I mean the advice is simple, right? If you're younger in your career, I again use the analogy there of like taste testing. You know, if you've ever gotten to like an ice cream store and they ask you, which flavor do you want to try? And they give you the little spoons and you try them and then you say, Oh, I really like the cha. And then that's the one that you pick. How much pressure on younger people where they feel like they need to stay at a company for three years, for five years.

Jacob: [00:58:36](#) They feel like they need to right when they graduate, they need to have that company in mind. Like they need to have everything figured out right when they're 21 and they graduate college. But that's not the case. So don't be scared to be that kind of a taste test or to experiment. And like you said, use these jobs as learning points in springboards. And I love the advice for leaders of thinking about it like a jazz ensemble. You don't always have to be in the spotlight. You can kind of get out of the spotlight, do your solo, step out of the way and then let somebody else kind of have their spotlight and do their solo and you support them. I think that makes a lot of sense. Well, where can people go to learn more about you, about IE business school? I mean anything that you want to mention for people, please feel free to do so now so that can connect with you and check out the school.

Martin: [00:59:24](#) Obviously certainly I'm like check us out on [www.ie.edu](http://www.ie.edu). It actually takes you to I university and then that obviously will take you immediately as well to ID business school. I think you will learn a little bit more about what we're doing in terms of the programs, but I think more importantly as well, I think what our faculty is working on in terms of leadership. Obviously I think and educational institution is always a player in a larger ecosystem as well. So we obviously work with multiple stakeholders around us. We spoke about students, we spoke to some extent about recruiters, alumni as well, so obviously as well I make, if you want to collaborate with us and whatever you are, whatever your role is, and we work with the different stakeholders and so please do reach out, would love to hear from you and collaborate.

Jacob: [01:00:22](#) Very cool. Well Martin, thank you so much for taking time out of your day to share some of your insights on, on learning and education. I learned a lot and I'm sure everybody watching and listening.

Martin: [01:00:36](#) Thank you so much Jacob. It was a pleasure being with you.  
Thank you so much for the time

Jacob: [01:00:42](#) Of course. And thank you everyone for tuning in. Everybody  
who has been watching live and everybody who's listening to  
the podcast. My guest again has been Martin Boehm and he is  
the Dean of IE business school and I'll see all of you very soon.  
Bye bye.

Martin: [01:00:58](#) See you, bye bye. Thank you.