

From Inception to the Stars

Imperial's Global Growth

2nd Annual Online MBA Conference. 2 October 2018

Gavin Symonds, Senior Manager, Online Programmes

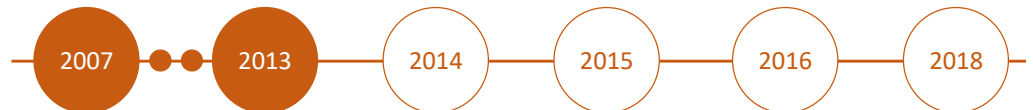
Phil Carter, Head of Programmes Marketing & Recruitment



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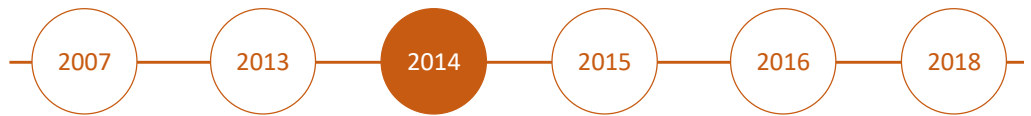
Timeline



Background

- From 2007 to 2013, Imperial College Business School had a Distance Learning MBA programme.
- This was run as a correspondence programme and outsourced (in a similar way as offered by companies like 2U, Pearson) where the recruitment, admissions, development and delivery is handled externally.
- When this contract was up for renewal, we decided the time was right to bring it back in house and redesign the programme to be delivered fully online.
- It was seen as an opportunity to capacity build, including our:
 - Edtech Lab
 - Faculty
 - Marketing, Admissions, Recruitment, Careers
 - Programme delivery

Timeline



Development of new programme

- Global Online MBA agreed by senior management to be designed, developed & delivered in house, fully online.
- This included equivalency with the Full-time MBA in terms of syllabus, academic rigor, faculty engagement, assessment and learning outcomes. This would be a full Imperial MBA studied online.
- Designed a new pedagogy for online learning based upon active engagement, medium appropriacy, feedback loops and community.
- Built a bespoke learning experience platform to ensure we met the goals of the new pedagogy.
- Faculty engagement - development paid as one-off fee. Faculty bid to join project, we had lots of sign up! Was a great learning process for Faculty & Edtech Lab.

Timeline



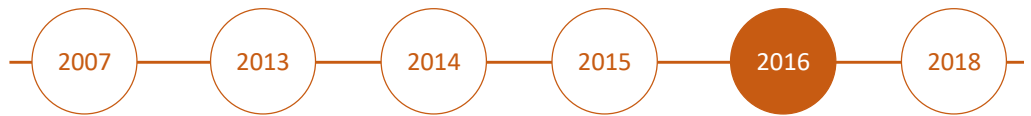
Learning design process

- Time commitment: Up-to 80 hours
- This wasn't a conversion from face-to-face content to online, each course was designed from scratch, crafted for online delivery.

Our process

- Course outline (balanced pedagogy, medium appropriacy)
- Storyboarding (each activity and exercise mapped out in detail)
- Scripting and filming (filming scripted and completed only once storyboard signed off)
- Alpha review and testing (review and testing of all activities and exercises)
- Beta review and sign-off (final sign off from Faculty)

Timeline



Development and delivery is a team event

Learning Designers

Working with Faculty to design and develop a crafted online learning experience.

Teaching Assistants

First line of support for students and providing information to Faculty about student performance



Faculty

Programme Team

Supporting the student experience.

Development Team

Building the platform and learning activities, and ensuring everything works smoothly.

Student Experience

- Creating a community has been an imperative of the programme, this is predominantly on-line and facilitated by the hub
- Students need to spend 13 days in London for the Programme
- Programme starts in London with a 5 day induction and towards the end of the programme students come back to campus for 8 days for a Capstone Business Game designed and delivered by our Innovation and Entrepreneurship faculty
- Students are in Study Teams for the duration of core modules and group assessment is as big a part of the programme as any other MBA
- Students are offered the opportunity to do 2 out of their 5 electives on campus. All other MBA students can do up to 2 on-line electives
- Students are our partners on this programme and they are encouraged to feedback and actively engage in the development of the programme

Use of Student Feedback to Enhance Learning Experience

- to identify students needs in terms that have the biggest impact on learning experience (*satisfaction, engagement & learning outcome*)
- to improve effectiveness of the Hub
- to optimise our approach to designing and delivering online courses – *How can learning design better respond to students needs and expectations?*

Use of Learning Analytics to Enhance Learning Experience

Comparing student pathways

The majority of **under performing** we found in the purple community. This community was know to **skip or miss tasks** relative to the other communities.

The **highest performing** community of students were evenly distributed throughout the rest of the communities. However, they were generally associated with **high task completion and binge learning**.

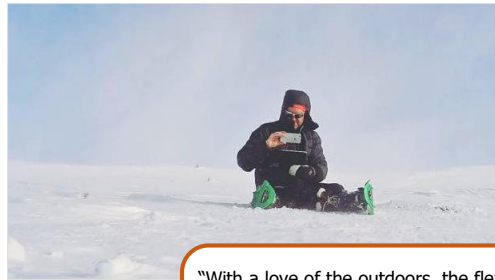


Reception

Student satisfaction

.. is generally higher on online courses than on face-to-face courses

Case example : Professor Richard Green



"With a love of the outdoors, the flexibility of the Global Online MBA is key to me. It's always great to push limits. With the right clothing and getting over the mountain to just in range of a mobile network, it was possible to attend the latest online sessions in Digital Business elective whilst moving across the border from Norway to Sweden. Although taking off the gloves to participate in detail in the always lively and engaging group discussions was a little more challenging!"

Dr. Adam Tacy
Global Online MBA 2016-18

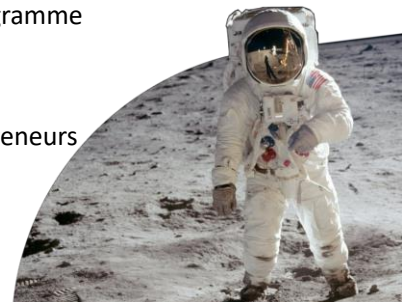
"Students on the Global Online MBA get to see me at my best on my best day as many of the sessions are recorded and tailored to each programme session"

Professor James Sefton

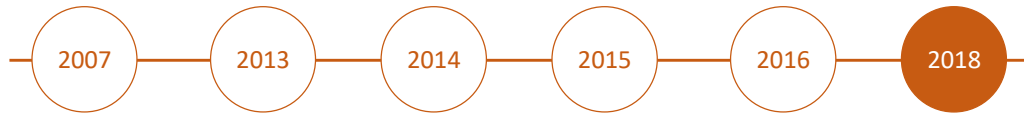


Student Profile and Careers

- Actively choosing on-line
- Students are senior with an average of 11 years of experience (we require 5 years minimum) they are comfortable with tech and very mobile
- Careers take them through our bespoke Personal Leadership Journey, all MBA cohorts do a version of this, there is a strong emphasis on coaching for this programme
- Dedicated careers support with access to sector specialists
- Students are in the majority career accelerators with some entrepreneurs
- Students on the programme do not expect us to find them jobs



Timeline



Student numbers

- Launched with 66 students in January 2015
- Introduced 2nd stream in September 2016
- First class graduated with over 90% awarded degree at first exam board
- As of September 2018 we have 400 students on the programme across the 2 years
- Going forwards...future objectives are 120 students each intake

Timeline Revisited

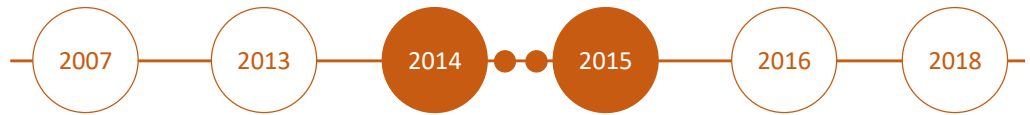
Meanwhile in the parallel world of Marketing and Recruitment...



Timeline Revisited

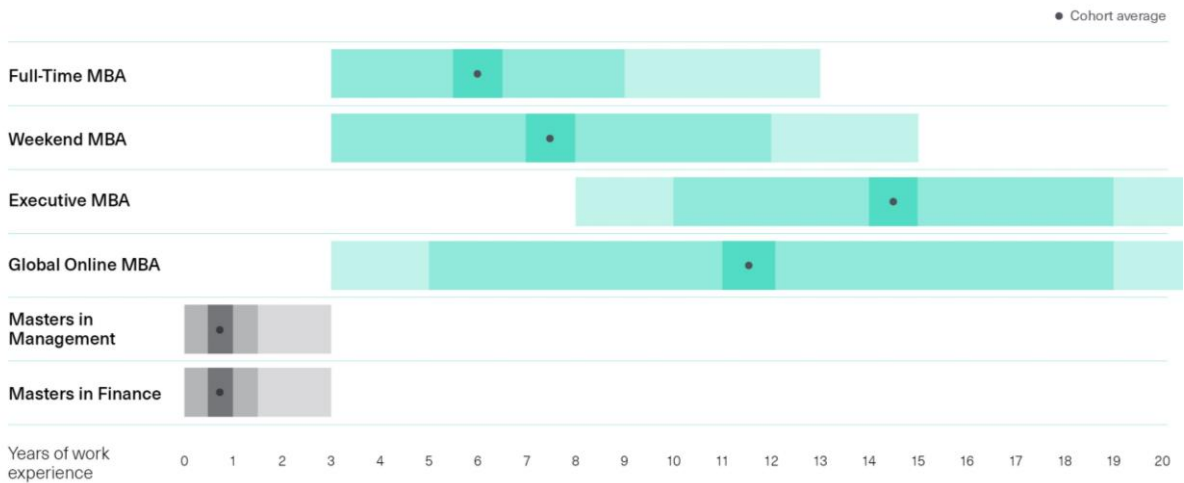
Meanwhile in the parallel world of Marketing and Recruitment...

- 1400 students enrolling annually
 - Only 200 of these are MBA
- Global Online MBA launched to accept first intake in **January 2015**
- Start recruiting **February 2014** for 100 students
(rapid growth to 300 students in 2017 targeted)
- Marketing and Recruitment partner selected **May 2014**



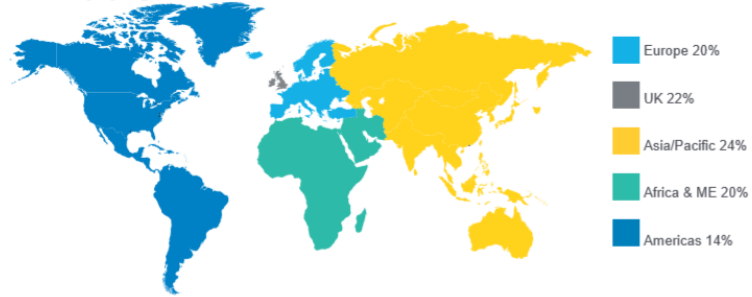

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Our MBA Portfolio

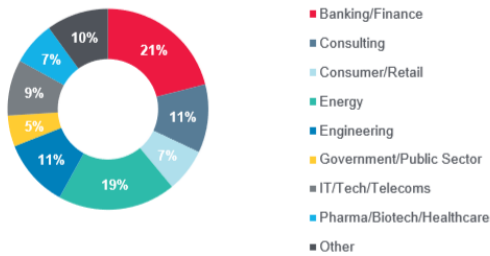


- 162 Cohort size
- 36% Female students
- 35 Average age
- 50 Nationalities represented

Nationality by region

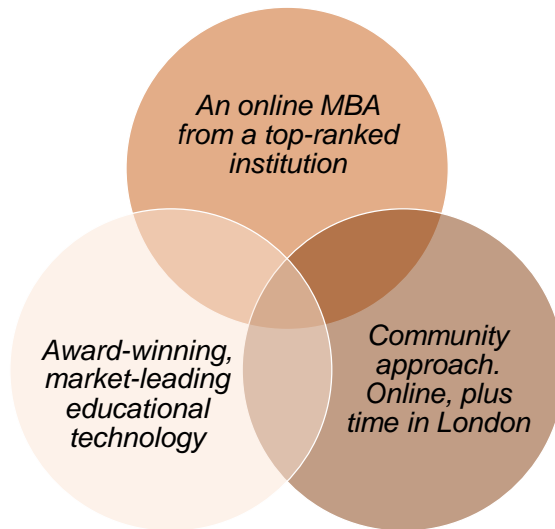


Pre-MBA employment



11 Average work experience (years)

Strengths and Opportunities



- Comfort factors**
- The same MBA certificate
 - The same faculty
 - Access to facilities
 - Careers support
 - Equal alumni status
 - Face-to-face elective option
 - Relative affordability
 - London

Key Challenges

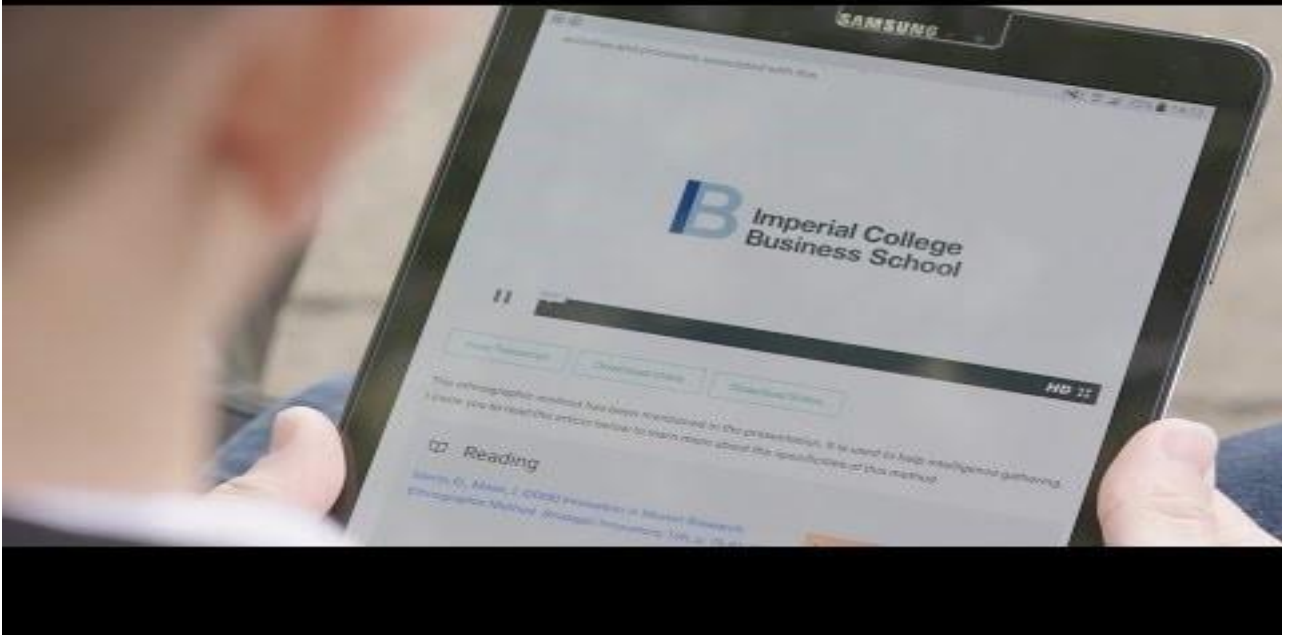
Overcoming key objections. Is it the same? What about networks?	<p><i>Make it the same where possible</i></p> <p>We sacrificed some flexibility to make it so</p> <p>Communicate via e-mail nurture, recruitment sales pitch</p>
How to prove the 'superior' Ed Tech?	<p>Show not tell >> The Hub trial</p> <p>Develop recruiter sales pitch</p> <p>Programme not ranked yet</p> <p>Use our overall brand strength (STEM)</p>
Finding our market	Analytics and insight to inform agile marketing
Challenging targets	ARM and Programme cross-functional team. Yield focus.
Be engaging and tell our story.	<p>Regional variation in brand awareness.</p> <p>Interesting story where we cannot rely on reputation.</p>

Key Decisions

- Product Design
 - Belief in our technology and teaching model > maximum convenience MBA
- Positioning and Pricing = Premium
- Outsourcing
 - Nurturing leads would require a recruitment-led approach
 - Executive MBA profile emerges, requiring high-quality service
 - Need to learn fast through a data-driven approach. And so, the need for CRM.



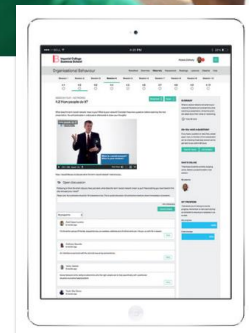
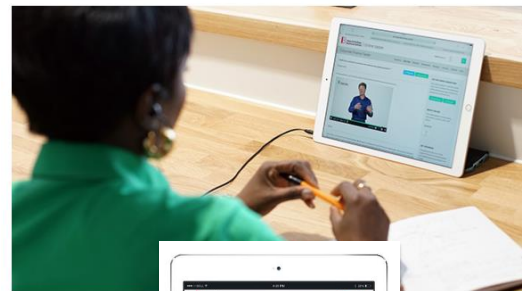
Our Marketing Approach



Our Marketing Approach

- Recognise regional challenges and tailor
 - China – lack of Government recognition of Online
 - India – candidate emphasis on networking and preference for FT MBA
 - USA – lack of brand awareness, well-established home market, if you're studying online anyway...?
 - Nigeria – affordability
 - UK – small market size, risk of cannibalisation

- Lead Generation and 'Selling'
 - MBA studies
 - Facebook
 - GMASS (80% US)
 - Greater emphasis on lead capture in Google spend



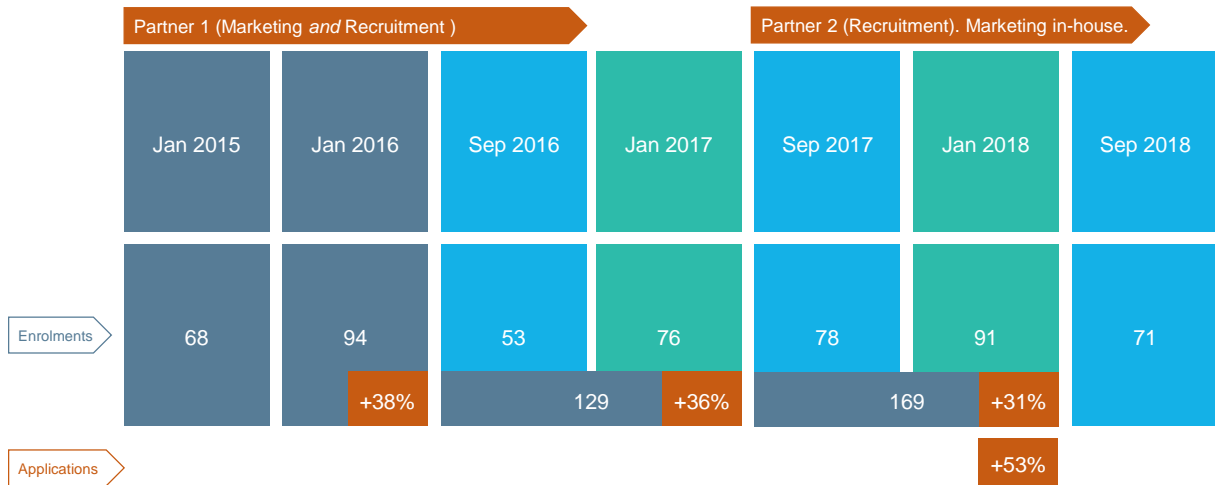
Our Marketing Approach

- Profile-building – lead with our identity and reputation rather than flexibility and affordability
 - Lead nurture emails make use of content-led marketing (paid and in-house), again adapted to regions
 - IVY EXEC
- Showcase the product – The HUB trial
 - Taster classes in Finance, Entrepreneurship and Economics
- In-country events
- Always the MBA *portfolio*
- We are learning with a view to going it alone




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Growth in numbers




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Other Discoveries

- The importance of a cross-functional team
- Treat the Online programme as an equal member of your portfolio
- Online MBA students aren't so different
 - *Executive profile*
 - *In terms of their experience*
 - *...and their expectations*
 - *Able to build our most evenly distributed programme regionally*
 - *Female representation is disappointing, but on the rise at 36% in 2018*



Topics 'to boldly explore'

- Are online MBAs from a different planet?
 - What can you do differently?
- Cannibalisation of your MBA portfolio
- To infinity and beyond: Barriers to growth?

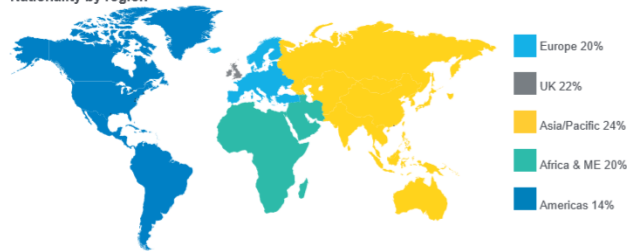




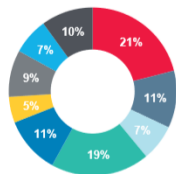
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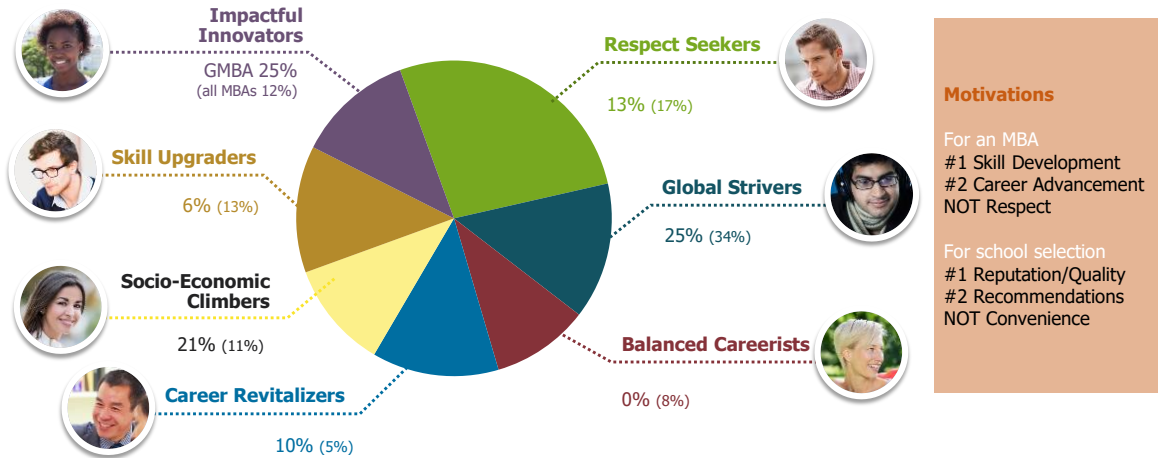
Pre-MBA employment



- Banking/Finance
- Consulting
- Consumer/Retail
- Energy
- Engineering
- Government/Public Sector
- IT/Tech/Telecoms
- Pharma/Biotech/Healthcare
- Other

11 Average work experience (years)

Are online MBAs from a different planet?

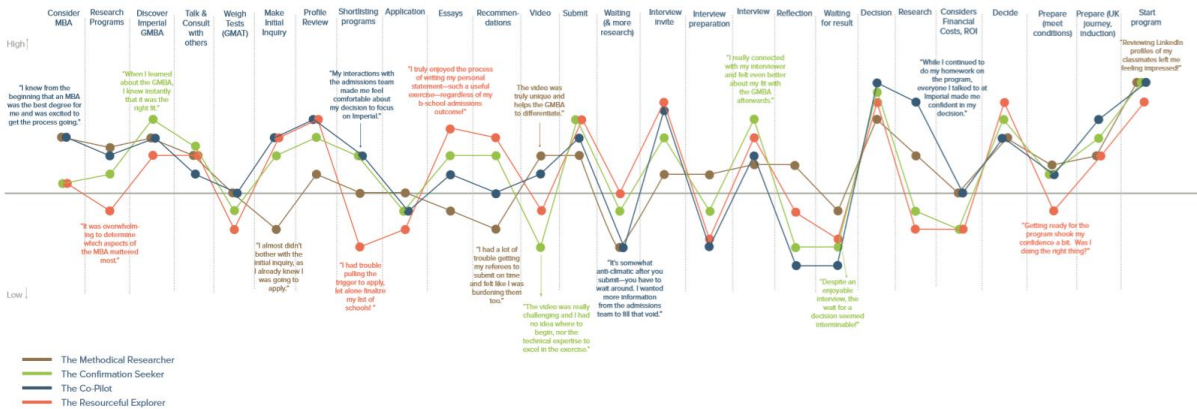


Source: Graduate Management Admissions Council segmentation study

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Are online MBAs from a different planet?



- They experience highs and lows in their customer journey in a very *similar* way

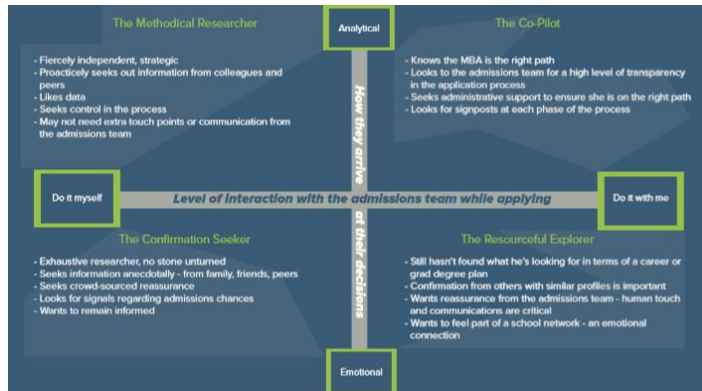
Source: Research project with Southwark Consulting

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Are online MBAs from a different planet?

- They approach the research and application in a similar way to time-poor Executive MBAs
- High levels of support and emotional engagement still wanted by many



Source: Research project with Southwark Consulting

