

## ***Jana Lechelt, Engineering Manager, Intel, Class of 2019***

Congratulations, Class of 2021, on making the decision to invest in yourself! You are in for an exciting adventure, which is certain to provide you many opportunities you wouldn't otherwise encounter. If you're in this program, you're likely at a point in life where you're pretty good at things like organization, prioritization, and time management, and those things will certainly all serve you well. So instead of tactical advice, I'd like to offer some other perspectives on how to make the most out of this unique experience.

- ***Be present...*** You made the decision and set the goal to be part of this EMBA program, so make the decision up front to fully commit to it, and hold yourself accountable. Be physically in class (for the whole class), but also mentally engaged in order to maximize your personal benefits, as well as for your teammates and fellow cohort members.
- ***...and be absent.*** Make every effort to separate from work for the time that you're in classes and EMBA activities, and set expectations for your availability with your boss and co-workers ahead of time. Condition them all to understand that you are not available on program days so you can fully dedicate yourself to class time. They might seem unhappy about this idea at first, but (1) they'll get used to it eventually, and (2) you can explain to them how you developing yourself is also good for them. It can also present many development opportunities for others in your team to step up.
- ***Go "all in."*** Capitalize on every "extra" activity and opportunity presented by the program (networking, speakers, class gatherings, practicums, career advising, special lunchtime sessions). The more you participate, the more you will get in return.
- ***Make time for fun.*** It can be difficult to fit in fun activities and family time, but make an effort. Dedicate a certain day or certain hours; set some boundary conditions or "rules" for yourself with regard to family time, and then ask them to hold you accountable to it.
- ***You can do it!*** To steal the excellent quote from Erica's newsletters, "When you feel like stopping, think about why you started."

### **An Extra Note to the Commuters**

When people would first hear I was a commuter from Oregon, the typical response went something like, "Ohhhh, it must be so challenging to add the travel on top of the demands of the rest of the program." While it does present a certain set of

unique challenges, in many ways I think being a commuter actually enhanced my EMBA experience.

First, I think the geographic separation between where I work and where I was physically located every other Friday really helped to facilitate a mental separation from my job, which in turn helped me to be more dedicated to the program during class times. I think it also helped my boss and co-workers to be more accepting of the fact that I really was gone and not easily accessible for work-related items on class days.

The other big advantage I had as a commuter was dedicated time on the plane ride home to gather my thoughts immediately following the conclusion of each class weekend, before diving right back into "real life." I used this time for various things like reflection on the previous weekend's class work and experiences, thinking about how I might want to apply something from that weekend in the upcoming week, making a game plan for how to tackle upcoming papers and projects, or even getting a two-hour jump start on the next round of assignments. This approach helped me stay organized for the coming weeks, which can help to take some of the stress out of juggling, life, work, and school.

And lastly, I got to expand my network of friends and colleagues far beyond my own city or state, and meet so many people who I never would have had the opportunity to meet otherwise.