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Doctorate of Business Administration

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This third issue of Impact & Knowledge is largely dedicated to the White Paper on the Doctorate of Business Administration (DBA), published by FNEGE - a project I had the honour of initiating and the pleasure of coordinating alongside Professor Jean-Pierre Helfer.

This publication, with contributions from 12 DBA-granting institutions, including the Business Science Institute, serves three key objectives: raising awareness of the DBA, securing its recognition, and providing strategic recommendations. In the following pages, you will discover - or rediscover - the impact of the Business Science Institute's DBA, along with the profiles of two Doctors featured in the publication.

Finally, this issue concludes with Impact(s), an article highlighting the research findings of Doctor Aubin Mwansa Museka. His thesis, defended in 2024 under

the supervision of Professor Emmanuel Kamdem, explores the theme Doing Business in a Crisis and Hostile Environment: A Cross-Section of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Guinea.

Pr. Michel Kalika
President Business Science Institute
Editor-in-Chief

White Paper
Doctorate of Business Administration (DBA).
Management Research for the Benefit of Companies

LIVRE BLANC
DOCTORATE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (DBA)
La recherche en management au bénéfice des entreprises

Coordonnateurs :

Pr. Michel KALIKA & Pr Jean-Pierre HELFER

Avant-propos de **Marie-Christine CHALUS SAUVANNET**, Présidente du réseau des IAE
& **Vincenzo VINZI**, Président de la Conférence des Directeurs des Ecoles Françaises de
Management

Préface de **Jérôme CABY**, Délégué Général de la FNEGE



**Livre Blanc remis au Ministre de l'éducation,
du supérieur et de la recherche
au Ministre du travail, de la santé,
des solidarités et des familles**

Management Research for the Benefit of Companies

In an era of multiple crises, where the business environment is increasingly unstable, complex, and unpredictable, companies are faced with the need to enhance their capacity for strategic reflection and critical analysis. The role of management research is to advance knowledge while developing managerial tools that are best suited to evolving contexts.

Doctoral research - an essential stage in this process - plays a crucial role in bridging theory and practice. This is particularly true when a thesis is conducted by a practitioner, as it equips companies with actionable insights to address contemporary

challenges. The collaboration between a company, a manager-researcher, and a professor creates a dynamic that cultivates both academic rigour and practical impact. This is precisely the foundation of the DBA: a programme that enables managers to conduct doctoral research on a specific managerial challenge, guided by the expertise of an experienced professor.

The DBA was established in 1953 by Harvard University in response to demand from practitioners who, while not necessarily pursuing an academic career, sought to engage in in-depth conceptual reflection on managerial challenges encountered in their professional practice. Through the DBA, these managers receive academic support to develop a thesis rooted in their real-world business issues.

As explained by EQUAL, an international organisation that brings together the three leading management accreditation agencies (AACSB, AMBA, EFMD) along with around twenty academic associations, the DBA is a doctoral programme distinct from the PhD (known in France as the Doctorat en Sciences de Gestion), primarily in terms of its purpose.

This White Paper was initiated in response to the regrettable lack of awareness of the DBA among French companies and its limited recognition by public authorities. Professors **Michel Kalika**, Chairman of the Business Science Institute, and **Jean-Pierre Helfer**, Chairman of its Academic Council, launched the initiative and sought the support of FNEGE. As a leading institution dedicated to advancing management education and research in France, FNEGE actively supports initiatives that enhance the quality of programmes offered by its member institutions. In line with this mission, it agreed to support the development of the White Paper.

Objectives of the White Paper

This White Paper pursues three main objectives:

- **Raising awareness of the DBA** – Showcasing its structure, originality, and impact in companies while emphasising its doctoral nature and the value of DBA research for organisations. The goal is to enhance the visibility of the DBA among businesses.
- **Securing official recognition** – Advocating for formal recognition of the DBA by relevant public bodies as a doctoral programme in its own right.
- **Providing strategic recommendations** – Outlining concrete measures to achieve the first two objectives.

These ambitions highlight the strategic role of the DBA in bridging research and managerial practice, as well as its potential to address contemporary challenges. The White Paper includes a comprehensive definition of the DBA and its key characteristics, along with concrete illustrations of its impact. These examples are drawn from DBA theses defended at the ten institutions that contributed to this publication. The final section presents a series of recommendations developed by the contributors to support the growth and recognition of the DBA. It also details the participating contributors and DBA programmes.

Kalika, M., Helfer J.-P. (2025) *Livre blanc. Doctorate of Business Administration (DBA). La recherche en management au bénéfice des entreprises*, FNEGE, 86 p.

The impact of the DBA: illustrations



Dr. Barbara Ofstad
(DBA Frankfurt DE n°2)

Barbara Ofstad, a German national, is Director of Siemens Professional Education in Germany. In this strategic role, she leads a team of 280 professionals across 19 training centres nationwide. Each year, her department oversees the training of 3,500 work-study students and apprentices.

In 2022, Barbara achieved a long-held ambition by earning her Doctorate of Business Administration (DBA) from the Business Science Institute. Driven by a desire to bridge the gap between industry and academia, she saw the DBA as an opportunity to deepen her expertise while contributing to the development of future professionals. Her aspiration to teach and share her knowledge with the next generation further motivated her decision to pursue the degree.

DBA Journey

Barbara's research focused on *Boundary Spanning in Digital Transformation: A Single Mixed-Method Case Study of Learning in a Vocational Training Department*.

Under the supervision of Professor **Anne Bartel-Radic**, she examined how a vocational training department within a multinational company can navigate the balance between traditional training methods and the evolving demands of 'new work'

in the digital age. Her study employed a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative analyses. This included 21 interviews with managers and learning experts, as well as an in-depth examination of internal practices.

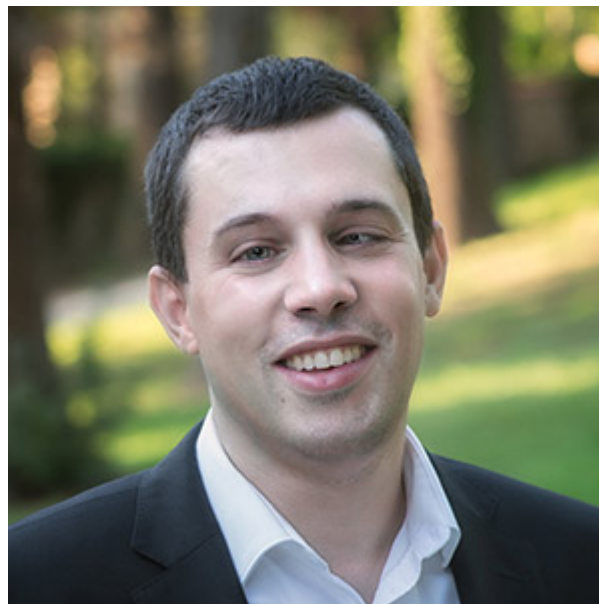
Managerial Recommendations

Barbara emphasised the need to strengthen the role of boundary spanning by empowering trainers who can seamlessly navigate between different training centres, facilitating the exchange of knowledge and the adoption of innovative learning methods. She also advocated for fostering social and open learning by creating collaborative environments and organising Learning Day events.

In terms of leadership and organisational culture, Barbara highlighted the importance of leaders acting as role models, fostering a culture of trust, and making time for learning to support digital transformation. She recommended adapting structures and processes to enhance organisational resilience by investing in targeted digital skills.

Her research suggests using the boundary spanning model as a framework for other teams facing digital transformation challenges and encouraging cross-departmental interactions to strengthen cooperation. She extended this model by demonstrating its relevance within a single organisational entity and introducing the concept of boundary spanning propensity.

As a DBA graduate, Barbara now feels validated in applying her extensive professional experience - gained from a high-level leadership role, balancing family life with three children, and meeting academic demands - to drive meaningful organisational change.



Dr. Cyril Vidal
(DBA Distance Learning n°3)

A self-taught entrepreneur since the age of sixteen, Cyril Vidal has founded or acquired fourteen companies in the IT sector. His entrepreneurial journey began at seventeen when he launched his first business, setting the stage for a prolific career. Despite his

successes, Cyril felt the need to deepen his academic knowledge. At thirty-four, he decided to return to formal education, earning a bachelor's degree, followed by a master's and an MBA—ultimately leading him to the DBA programme. In 2023, at the age of forty, he obtained his Doctorate of Business Administration (DBA) from the Business Science Institute.

Why the DBA?

Driven by a desire to generate knowledge that could reshape how his clients – notaries - perceive their profession and address complex challenges, Cyril saw the DBA as an opportunity to step back from day-to-day operations while making a lasting impact on the future of his business.

His goal was to "stop pedalling and look further ahead", to anticipate industry developments - or even be the one to initiate them. The DBA proved to be the ideal fit, allowing him to create actionable knowledge that contributes to the evolution of notarial practice.

DBA Journey

Cyril focused his research on *The managerial uncertainty of the notary? What strategic (re)positioning should be adopted for the future?* Under the supervision of Professors **Jean-Philippe Denis** and **Damien Mourey**, he focused on the figure of the notarial entrepreneur and strategies for coping with the managerial uncertainty associated with the future of this profession. His research is based on a constructivist epistemological approach. Using an inductive approach, Cyril identified a research problem based on semi-directive interviews conducted during an exploratory phase with notaries. Analysis of these interviews was based on a mixed-method design, combining a qualitative approach to bring out concepts and a quantitative analysis to highlight existing oppositions between these different concepts. This approach revealed tensions between the notary, his function and his role vis-à-vis the State and the citizen. By integrating IT tools and conforming to standards, the notary's role has evolved from that of authenticating agreements to that of certifying standardized contracts. Translated with DeepL.com (free version)

DBA Research Focus

Cyril's research examined Managerial Uncertainty in the Notarial Profession: What Strategic (Re)Positioning for the Future? Under the supervision of Professors Jean-Philippe Denis and Damien Mourey, he investigated the concept of the notarial entrepreneur, and the strategies used to navigate the managerial uncertainty surrounding the profession's future. His study followed a constructivist epistemological approach and adopted an inductive methodology. The research problem emerged from semi-structured interviews conducted during an exploratory phase with notaries. He employed a mixed-method design, combining qualitative analysis to identify key concepts and quantitative analysis to highlight tensions and contrasts between them. This approach revealed fundamental tensions between the notary, their function, and their role in relation to both the State and citizens. With the increasing integration of IT tools and evolving regulatory standards, the notary's role has shifted—from

authenticating agreements to certifying standardised contracts.

Managerial Recommendations

Cyril's research revealed that the uncertainty surrounding the notarial profession is closely tied to the authentic deed, its legal framework under the Ministry of the Economy and Finance, and its perceived value.

He identified that the adoption of IT tools - widely considered essential for the profession's future - has played a key role in facilitating normative justice, particularly in the collection of taxes and duties. These digital advancements have fundamentally reshaped the role of notaries, shifting their function from authenticating agreements in accordance with the law to certifying contracts in compliance with evolving standards.

Impact(s) Article

Succeeding in business within a crisis-prone and hostile Environment: A comparative view of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Guinea



Dr. Aubin Mwansa Museka
(DBA Distance Learning n°4)

Graduate of UNILU in applied economics since 2001, Aubin Mwansa began her career at British American Tobacco in 2002. He has been involved in many different positions in various multinational companies. As of now, he is the CEO of CANAL+ Ethiopia. He founded NOTIS AFRICA, a company powered by this research. In September 2024, he defended his thesis in Executive Doctorate of Business Administration (EDBA), on

the theme “The Factors of Success in Business in a Crisique and hostile Environment”. Crossed view on the Democratic Republic of Congo and Guinea”. Under the direction of Professor **Emmanuel Kamdem**, University Professor.

Africa is abundant in business opportunities, but its entrepreneurial ecosystem faces multiple crises -economic, political, health-related, climate, and energy, among others- that heavily impact the success of both local and, especially, multinational companies. This reality prompts a closer examination of the key factors for achieving business success in Africa’s crisis-prone and challenging environments...

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