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LÉON LAULUSA

SHAPING A BOLD AND UNITED FUTURE FOR GLOBAL MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

Shweta Singh | The CEO Magazine

For Léon Laulusa, Executive President and Dean of ESCP Business School, leadership in global academic institutions has been shaped by a career that bridges international consulting, research, and education. After studying Financial Accounting and Management in Paris, he spent 15 years in international audit and consulting, eventually becoming a partner. Yet during those leadership years, he felt the need to realign his work with what mattered most. That turning point led him to pursue a PhD, where research and teaching quickly became a calling focused on helping others learn, grow, and lead. In 2009, after combining his role at Deloitte with teaching at ESCP Business School, Léon chose academia full-time. Since then, he has held several academic leadership roles, including Executive Vice President for Academic and International Affairs, before becoming Executive President and Dean in 2023.

A VISION FOR A CHANGING WORLD

Today, Léon is guiding ESCP Business School through an ambitious transformation shaped by Bold & United, the institution's 2026–2030 strategic plan. Designed for a world defined by disruption, technological acceleration, and geopolitical complexity, the plan builds on ESCP's historic strengths while advancing a distinctive European model of management education that combines bold innovation with collective purpose.

While the Business School remains the core of ESCP, the institution is expanding its mission. Plans are underway to launch the ESCP School of Technology in 2027 and the ESCP School of Governance in 2029, positioning the institution as the first European University of Management. The ambition is to nurture accountable, bold, and creative leaders capable of driving meaningful transformation in business and society.



LEADERSHIP ACROSS CULTURES

Léon's leadership philosophy has been shaped by his experience living and working across cultures. These experiences have reinforced his belief that authentic leadership requires both strategic clarity and genuine empathy, anchored in adaptability.

His multinational and multi-disciplinary career has cultivated an approach that is intellectually agile yet grounded in ethical responsibility. At its core lies the conviction that education must break down silos between theory and practice, business and society, and across cultures.

RETHINKING MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

Management education itself is undergoing profound change. Léon believes the future belongs to hybrid leaders who combine strong business fundamentals with fluency in technology, geopolitics, critical thinking, and creativity.

At ESCP Business School, students are encouraged to develop diverse expertise, soft skills, and what the institution calls "mad skills", the ability to adapt, connect, and reinvent themselves by building on their passions.

This represents a shift from the traditional "T-shaped" leadership model, where individuals combine one deep area of expertise with broad knowledge across fields, toward a "W-shaped" mindset defined by

successive learning cycles, multiple specialisations, and lifelong growth.

EXPANDING INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT

Transforming ESCP into the first European University of Management stands at the centre of the institution's strategic priorities.

The ESCP School of Technology will deepen expertise in digital innovation, artificial intelligence, and data science, while the ESCP School of Governance will prepare leaders to navigate complex geopolitical and public policy landscapes. These schools complement existing programmes and reflect the hybrid competencies future leaders increasingly require.

At the same time, ESCP Business School is embedding AI responsibly across its programmes through partnerships with organisations such as OpenAI and Hugging Face, while strengthening lifelong learning through flexible formats including the ESCP Extension School.

COLLABORATION WITHOUT BORDERS

International collaboration remains central to ESCP Business School's identity. Its six European campuses, Berlin, London, Madrid, Paris, Turin, and Warsaw, serve as living laboratories for cross-cultural learning. The institution's relationship with India dates back to 1985 with IIM Ahmedabad and now includes collaborations with IIM Bangalore, Calcutta, Lucknow, Kozhikode, Udaipur, MDI Gurgaon, SPJIMR, and forthcoming partnerships with IIT Madras and IIT Bombay.

For young academics and future leaders, Léon offers simple advice: *"Stay curious and courageous, embrace complexity, cultivate both depth and breadth, and commit to lifelong learning across cultures and disciplines. Leaders who combine competence with conscience, he believes, will shape the future of global business and education."*