



# Brandon Hall Group™

## How Boehringer Ingelheim Turned Learning Into a Business Strategy



2026

### Executive Interview



**Boehringer  
Ingelheim**



**Executive Education**  
*Terry College of Business*  
**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**

## About Michael Murphy

**Michael Murphy** is the Director of the U.S. Office of Sustainable Development for Generations at Boehringer Ingelheim, where he leads change management and organizational activation across the company's 8,500 U.S. employees. In this role, he is responsible for stakeholder management, communications, education, and program engagement in support of Boehringer's enterprise-wide sustainability commitments. Murphy was a driving force behind the creation of the Sustainable Development Excellence (SDX) Certificate Program, a custom-designed learning initiative developed in partnership with the University of Georgia's Terry College of Business. Under his leadership, the SDX program has earned more than ten awards in learning, talent, and excellence in action from Brandon Hall Group™.



## About Boehringer Ingelheim



**Boehringer  
Ingelheim**

**Boehringer Ingelheim** is a global, research-driven biopharmaceutical company founded in 1885 by Albert Boehringer in Ingelheim am Rhein, Germany, where it remains headquartered today. A fourth-generation, family-owned enterprise, the company operates across Human Pharma, Animal Health, and Biopharmaceutical Contract Manufacturing, with more than 54,500 employees in over 130 markets worldwide. Its therapeutic focus spans cardiovascular and metabolic diseases, oncology, respiratory diseases, immunology, and central nervous system disorders, as well as a broad portfolio of animal health products. The company has consistently ranked among the top pharmaceutical companies globally for R&D investment and has received numerous sustainability recognitions.

## About Jason Parrish

**Jason Parrish** is the Director of Corporate Programs at UGA Executive Education. In his role, he collaborates with organizations to design customized learning experiences that strengthen leadership and deliver real-world business results. Throughout his career, Jason has held leadership positions at Georgia Tech's Scheller College of Business and the Savannah College of Art and Design. Jason's specialty is helping organizations bridge the gap between learning and performance by finding the intersection of academic expertise and practical business needs.



## About UGA Terry College of Business Executive Education



**Executive Education**  
*Terry College of Business*  
**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**

**The University of Georgia's Terry College of Business Executive Education**, The University of Georgia's Terry College of Business is a premier, research-driven

institution founded in 1912, with its dedicated Executive Education Center established in 2005 in Atlanta's Buckhead community. A top-ranked provider of professional development, the program operates across open enrollment, custom corporate solutions, and executive degree programs, leveraging a network of more than 80,000 alumni worldwide. Its educational focus spans strategic leadership, crisis management, data science, and operational excellence, featuring a robust portfolio that includes the #1 ranked Executive MBA in Georgia and specialized certifications in Lean Six Sigma and Financial Planning. The program consistently ranks among the nation's best public business schools for its faculty expertise and commitment to driving measurable organizational growth.

## About Rachel Cooke

Today's conversation is moderated by **Rachel Cooke**, she is the Chief Operating Officer and Principal HCM Analyst at Brandon Hall Group™. She is responsible for business operations, including client and member advisory services, marketing design, annual awards programs, conferences and the company's project management functions. She also leads Advancing Women in the Workplace and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives, research and events. Rachel worked in the HCM research industry for 20+ years and held several key management and executive positions within the Talent and Learning Research and Performance Improvement industries.



**Q Rachel**

What sparked the creation of the SDX program, and why was it a priority for Boehringer Ingelheim?

**A Michael**

The Sustainable Development Excellence Program is a custom-created certificate program in sustainability co-developed with the University of Georgia. What really sparked the need for it is that sustainability at Boehringer is a corporate priority, and we needed to ignite the organization around execution against internal goals that map back to the United Nations sustainability goals with deadlines of 2030. The program was really about bringing the entire organization onto the journey of helping us meet those commitments. As a fourth-generation, privately held company, we want to be around for four, five, six more generations. Sustainability is how we come to work each day. We think in generations. The program was about education and activation of our employee base.

**Q Rachel**

How does the SDX program connect to Boehringer's broader sustainability and business strategy?

**A Michael**

We've been around a long time, and we work in both human and animal health. One of our pillars, More Green, speaks to creating a healthier environment. A second pillar, More Health, is about bringing access to care to more patients. Our third critical priority under SD4G, Sustainable Development for Generations, is More Potential, which is about creating healthy communities where we live and work. The program is structured along those three pillars. We have a module on More Green covering environmental safety, a module on More Health addressing access to care for vulnerable communities, and a third module on More Potential focused on driving sustainability in the communities where we live, in partnership with organizations like the University of Georgia.

**Q Rachel**

What makes this program truly different or innovative compared to traditional learning and development programs?

**A Jason**

Boehringer is a longtime corporate partner of UGA, and we had a great relationship already, but it really came together around the topic of sustainability. The program is truly innovative in its design and particularly in the way it is delivered. It combines traditional classroom-based learning, synchronous and self-paced virtual learning, and a capstone project. Participants form groups and work on community and company-based projects while they are with us. The participants self-nominate, so they come from all levels within the company, which increases impact. They are committed to 80 hours of service toward a sustainability goal during and after the program. There is no other program we have done with this kind of reach and delivery.

**Q Rachel**

Can you walk us through the capstone projects and the service component in more detail?

**A Michael**

What is unique about our approach to the projects is that they are both internal and external. We select projects in support of nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations that need skills-based volunteerism to solve real problems at no cost to them. We always have multiple project opportunities for the class that involve actual external entities we partner with from a consultative perspective. Some projects are internal and come from our animal or human businesses, but taking on community projects goes above and beyond what we normally see in programs like this.

**Q Rachel**

What part of the experience has had the biggest impact on participants?

**A Michael**

One element that is unique is a concept called leader teachers. Our curriculum is co-delivered by a UGA faculty member, who covers the theory, and then a Boehringer leader teacher comes in and applies the practical, showing how that theory is coming to life at our company. What has stood out year over year, and we are now in our third delivery, is the value of covering both areas. You set the foundation and then share how it is being executed within the company. What students tell us is that it is a very holistic approach. They come away understanding, for example, what carbon neutrality is and why it matters, but they also leave knowing specifically what Boehringer is doing to drive carbon neutrality globally at all of our operating sites.

**Q Rachel**

What do the metrics look like, and what kind of impact has the program delivered?

**A Michael**

We do level-one participant satisfaction using a five-point scale, and we are netting out year over year at a 4.7 or 4.8 on both content quality and delivery quality. We also assess net promoter score, and that tends to be in the 80th percentile range or higher. Even more important are two additional areas. One is program ROI: the capstone projects have netted cost savings opportunities in the millions of dollars, which means we have a tenfold return on the investment of this program. The other measure is employee engagement. We track how many employees each graduate has touched and activated, and that metric has traditionally been one advocate reaching 140 employees on average over the course of their service requirement, really engaging others in sustainability and moving them toward our goals.

**Q Rachel**

How are you tracking and measuring that success?

**A Michael**

We use a SharePoint tracking model. All graduates are required to enter data on what they have done, when they did it, how many people they estimate they have reached, and when possible, any quantified financial saving or opportunity. We do a quarterly reminder to the class since people sometimes forget. We are reporting metrics up to our senior-most board, so it is important that they enter the data. There is a lot of self-accountability in the program. Because people self-nominate to come in, they are already motivated and take personal accountability to drive results and report what they have done. They know the results are published internally and help us share externally as well, including through the Brandon Hall Group™ Award application.

**Q Rachel**

How has the program changed behavior or mindset inside the organization?

**A Michael**

I have a couple of tangible examples. Graduates leave the program fully educated around our sustainability goals as well as the general theories of sustainability. What we have seen culturally is that they start identifying opportunities or, more importantly, taking accountability to solve a sustainability problem within their own function. A recent example is a marketplace we launched. Think about a lab that has finished using a piece of equipment that still has many years of useful life left, but that lab no longer needs it. Graduates of the program conceived and helped build an equipment marketplace where labs across human pharma and animal health can give away equipment rather than putting it in a landfill. That creates two savings opportunities: we avoid reordering equipment that still has useful life, and we save tonnage from going into a landfill. What that tells us is that graduates are finding opportunities within the business and taking accountability to solve problems that contribute to our sustainability goals.

**Q Rachel**

What is next for SDX, and how do you think about scaling or evolving the program?

**A Michael**

Interestingly, one of our capstone projects was specifically about how to scale SDX globally. A member of our corporate sustainability team came from our home office in Ingelheim to sponsor that project. The goal is to look at how we take what the U.S. is doing and broaden it. We have already started by inviting peers from our other operating units in Canada, Mexico, South America, and Brazil, and we are thrilled to have our first international participant this year. Our goal is to continue expanding the invitation. We have colleagues from our British operating unit who are interested for next year, and we are focusing on geographies closest to us first to ensure that travel does not become a burden to participation.

**Q Rachel**

Jason, what advice would you offer organizations trying to build something similar?

**A Jason**

Boehringer has a very clear vision, and I think that is extremely important in something like this. They came to us knowing exactly what they wanted and where they wanted to go. When you are finding a partner, especially an academic partner, you want to make sure they share that vision. It was very clear that what Boehringer was building tied right into our core pillars, our values, and our faculty expertise. We were able to respond and deliver on those needs in a meaningful way. Really, it comes down to that clarity and then finding a solid partner that is equally as excited and can deliver. That is what helped bring this together and make it a success.

**Q Rachel**

Michael, in one sentence, why does this program matter?

**A Michael**

Solving the world's sustainability challenges is not something any one company can do on its own. Why we are so interested in sharing this story, including through a white paper we have crafted on this topic, is because for any organization wondering how they might do something similar, we are here to consult on that. Sustainability challenges are not a corporate secret, not intellectual property. They are world challenges. Coming together to unite on solutions is really our goal.



Here are some ways to listen to the interview on Brandon Hall Group's Excellence at Work Podcast:





# Brandon Hall Group™

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