

# Don't Leave Your Employer's Assistance on the Table; It's a mistake to 'take a career break' and accumulate huge debt getting an M.B.A.

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## FULL TEXT

With respect to " Help Really Wanted: Firms Ease Hiring " (Page One, Nov. 8) and " How Much M.B.A. Debt Should Students Take On? " (Personal Journal, Nov. 8): Is no one connecting the dots? This is the best time in decades for employers to pitch tuition assistance as their secret weapon in the recruitment process and to benefit from improved employee retention.

Ambitious employees, including candidates for employment, should negotiate for the flexibility to study part-time while working as many hours as necessary to be eligible for tuition assistance. Anyone planning to "take a career break" and accumulate huge debt getting an M.B.A. is exercising such poor business judgment that university admissions officers should reject the application.

Employees who fail to take advantage of tuition assistance are leaving tens of thousands of pretax dollars on the table: dollars with a huge salary-multiplier effect. If your employer's tuition-assistance program pays for only one course per semester, and that's not fast enough for you, negotiate for the flexibility to take more courses, even if you pay the balance yourself. Involve management in your plan, so it will have a stake in your success.

In my decades working in human resources in industry and in higher education, I urged countless employees to use this program and watched them distinguish themselves in the workplace and reap the rewards. This is a mutually beneficial no-brainer in the current market.

Joyce D. Yaffee

Boston

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