

LEN MIDDLETON

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A global strategic thinker who develops distributive technologies, starts and scales companies, assesses and turnarounds organizations, and has extensive corporate, family, and non-profit board experience.

Len teaches all aspects of business and has an extensive international network.

ROSS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

Teaching Professor (2023-Present)

Adj Professor (Lecturer IV), Strategy and Entrepreneurial Studies (1999-2023)

- Developed and taught courses in entrepreneurship, social venturing, family business, and international projects to undergraduate, graduate, and executive-level business school students
- Worked with over 120 high-tech companies in Ireland and 500 companies in Israel. Honored by the Prime Ministers of Ireland and Israel for this work
- Recruited Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Jerry White to the EMBA program and organized his graduation speech. The only business school to have a Nobel Peace Prize recipient
- Worked with Women for Women International Founder/CEO Zainab Salbi as a board member and MAP faculty adviser. Zainab was the 2011 graduation speaker and the recipient of the 2010 Michigan Women Business Award
- Originated the Tamid Group at UM which now operates 61 university chapters
- MAP sponsor development and management of project relationships with Fortune 500 companies, world-class non-profit organizations, and incubators in China, Ireland, and Israel. Started the non-profit MAP sector and worked with high profile projects with King Abdullah of Jordan, President Carter, Rosalyn Carter, Sting, Bono, Meryl Davis, and Queen Noor
- Led a turnaround MAP project with Sting's Rainforest Foundation and reset Bono's DATA Foundation to the ONE Campaign focused on ending extreme poverty and disease
- Worked with a MAP team that wrote Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) first business plan that started the organization in London. Today, CDP has offices in 14 countries, employees 150 people, and has all Fortune 500 as clients. CDP is one of the top environmental organizations in the world
- Created the non-profit and entrepreneurial sectors in four different MAP courses
- Developed a relationship with the University of Exeter to build a Net Zero Financial Tool that every corporation, government, and non-profit will be using to establish and track these goals. Exeter has the best and most climate scientists
- Work with the UN Climate Champions who manage the annual COP meetings where the world comes together to work on climate initiatives
- A Tauber Institute for Global Operations faculty advisor for 20 years. In 2023, recipient of the Tauber Trailblazer Award for service to the Institute and outstanding teaching
- Recipient of the 2019 Global Entrepreneurship Teaching Award conference at The Hague
- Wrote a case study on Berkshire Hathaway and met with Warren Buffet to review
- Co-founding member of the University President's China Advisory Group and Subcommittee
- Since 2017, nominated every year for the UM Apple Teaching award
- Successfully work with the largest university donors for over two decades
- The Playbook course was featured on CBS Sunday Morning (Sept 2015) for being the first course to help pro potential athletes not go broke. No student who has taken the course has had financial issues

- Faculty advisor for the Michigan Fashion Media Summit that attracts 1,200 students to the conference
- Founded the UM Private Equity Conference with Professor Dave Brophy that's celebrating its 20th year
- Member of the University President's International Committee and created the Global Engagement Team to provide international safety protocols. Experienced with moving MBA students and faculty out of global conflicts or dealing with health issues
- The faculty advisor and board member that created the Salokaya Nursing School in New Delhi, India. This was the first western nursing school in India. Also, setup the partnership and student exchange program between Salokaya and the UM Nursing School
- Co-director and faculty member of the MBA Essentials and Entrepreneurship program for 50 faculty members and doctoral students (2008)
- Co-Founder and Board member of the Samuel Zell & Robert H. Lurie Institute for Entrepreneurial Studies (2018). Worked with local and national venture capital firms to develop partnerships and utilize resources
- Designed and executed the Honigman Family Business conference with the top 25 family businesses in Michigan. It's the first time these families have come together
- Helped start the Michigan Fashion Media Summit as faculty advisor. In five years, the event now attracts 3,000 students from 40 different universities and attracts the biggest names in fashion to help get students jobs
- Together with a Michigan Ross BBA student, co-founded and serve as a board member for the Spill the Honey Foundation, an organization that promotes human dignity and advances public knowledge of the Holocaust and Civil Rights Movement through educational and artistic expression
- An advisor to Hawke Ventures Scout program that helps minority students learn about a career in venture capital. The pilot program has 25 students
- Organized President Colemans outreach program to help the State of Michigan by offering seminars and providing counsel to help improve the state's current economic situation
- Started the MBA Open Road program with an MBA team at UM and worked to setup initial funding

Innovation

- Developed the VentureStart I- IV programs with MAP teams for Shannon Development/Enterprise Ireland, and worked with MAP teams to develop the Ryan Academy which focuses on second-stage companies in Dublin, Ireland
- Created and taught an International corporate MAP program for the Chinese company Shui On in Shanghai. This partnership includes executive education courses, an annual China CEO leadership conference, and the first China-wide business plan competition at a new entrepreneurship academy
- Built the Jordan Small Business Administration with a MAP team to help entrepreneurs create companies
- Co-organized the Grand Rapid Entrepreneurship event with the Grand Rapids Grand Angels and brought six university presidents together to facilitate the program for 12 years

Donor Management

- Manage high net-worth donors and foundations to secure MAP project funding. These are long-time relationships with the biggest university donors that goes back 20, 30, and 50 years
- Developed grant proposals for MAP funding from several foundations
- Secured a funding gift from the Apple President

Rookie Success Program – Incoming Student-Athletes (2024-present)

- The Michigan Rookie Success Program aims to empower first-year football players with essential skills for success, both in academics and on the field, as well as in all facets of life. It serves as the initial step in nurturing versatile student-athletes equipped with crucial business, financial, and life skills, enabling them to make informed decisions that influence their futures.

NFL Business Academy - Director and Professor of Learning (2014-2021)

- An Executive Education program with the NFL to help athletes understand about a business/entrepreneurship career while playing football or immediately after they retire from the sports career
- The May 2019 webinar on financial literacy had 1,200 attendees, and was covered by 145 newspapers around the world

Executive Education – Asia Program Director (2006-2019)

- Taught the Hong Kong Executive Education Family Business: Generational Challenges and Growth program
- Created the Asia corporate Action-Based Learning program that included the following courses:
- Business Essentials, four baseline business courses, and ended with corporate MAP projects
- Taught additional courses in business strategy, entrepreneurship, innovation, and marketing.
- Offered the first Asia CEO conference

Co-Director of ExecMAP (2003-2015)

- The first-year student rating was 1.0 on a 5.0 scale, after we took over the course the second year, it went to 4.6 rating and regularly scores in the 4.7-4.9 range
- Highest project satisfaction rating and teaching scores for eighteen years

Co-Director of Global MBA Projects Course (2000-2008)

- Responsible for co-directing 46 international MBA project teams (200+ students) per year
- Taught 17 FT MAP project teams and received a 5.0 rating (2004)
- Develop and direct 20 academic faculty members and support staff
- Provided the \$500,000 funding, created the course budgets, and fundraised with individuals and foundations to cover project expenses. Co-managed the university's biggest donor
- Created program pedagogy and teaching sessions for faculty and students
- Established business communication faculty and librarians as cornerstones of the program

MICHIGAN INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL INNOVATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN***Executive Director and Professor (2014-2018)***

- Created the Michigan Institute for Medical Innovation that reported to President Coleman and EVP Ora Pescovitz
- Raised donor funding for the program
- Developed a Medical School innovation and entrepreneurship program
- Taught the VentureStart program
- Developed and funded an ovarian cancer solution while working with MAP teams

COURSES DEVELOPED AND TAUGHT

Undergraduate BBA

- Entrepreneurial Management: Team-based course in which students develop and research an idea, do a feasibility analysis, and write a complete business plan.
- Introduction to Entrepreneurship: Created this course to teach sophomores the basics of entrepreneurship and how to properly assess a business idea.
- The Playbook: The first of its kind course to help pro potential student athletes learn budgeting, personal finance, estate planning, brand management, and public relations
- Personal Finance: The course focused on all aspects of personal finance

Graduate MBA

- Global Projects – Entrepreneurial Field Study Projects: Second-year graduate course in which teams of students do projects for entrepreneurial start-up companies in China, Ireland, Israel, non-profit organizations, and Fortune 500 corporations. The projects include a variety of areas such as strategic plans, business plans, marketing plans, fundraising plans, market entry strategies, and acquisition evaluation
- Continuing a Legacy - Leading a Family Business: Explores the strategic, operating, financial, family and career issues found in family-owned and managed companies or privately held firms
- Strategies for Management Consulting: Students gain knowledge of the methodologies used in the consulting process and develop the skills that are essential to becoming a manager or partner in a consulting firm
- Weekend and Day MAP – International Field Study Projects: Students apply their knowledge and business skills to evaluate an international business issue facing the sponsor and provide potential solutions

Executive MBA

- Executive MBA – Entrepreneurial Ventures: The course is the highest bid elective course in the EMBA program. The focus is on how to find and assess business ideas both in a startup and corporate settings
- Executive MBA MAP – Field Study Projects: This course provides an opportunity for teams of Executive MBA students to work with worldwide organizations to identify important organizational issues, engage in data collection and analysis, and recommend insightful solutions

Weekend MBA

- Weekend MAP – Field Study Projects: The weekend MAP program is similar in format to the Executive MBA MAP course

Masters of Entrepreneurship

- MAP – Field Study Projects: An entrepreneurial MAP program

Executive Education (Ann Arbor and Hong Kong)

- International Corporate MAP Program: Created an international MAP course for a large Chinese company
- Entrepreneurial Edge: Innovation Process: Explores the entrepreneurial mind-set to begin the process of identifying and assessing opportunities and building an environment where change and innovation is accepted
- Entrepreneurial Edge: Business Planning for Managers and Entrepreneurs: Participants learn how to develop a full business plan with financial models for either a new product or service within an existing business, or for an entirely new venture

- Family Business Executive Program: Explores the strategic, operating, financial, family and career issues found in family-owned and managed companies or privately held firms with an emphasis on executive and owner-level participants
- MBA Essentials and Entrepreneurship: This program provides participants with the frameworks, concepts and tools necessary to commercialize their ideas

AUTHORED WORKS

Articles:

- Linking Strategy and Performance Management in a Continuously Changing World
- How to Teach Entrepreneurship – A New Model
- Family Business Venture Office
- STRATEGY: Past, Present, & Future
- Revolutionizing the Biotech Incubation Model
- Action-Based Entrepreneurial Learning

Case Studies:

Entrepreneurship:

- The Tanaka Consulting Company
- Golden Motors
- Campus Reports
- The Great Catalog Company
- Ventura Beach Cafe
- How to Buy a Company
- VentureStart 3 – Growing the Entrepreneurial Organization

Family Business:

- Shafer Wines with video
- Asian Family Business Harmony

Corporate:

- Intel Corporation with Professor Tom Kinnear
- Hawaiian Guava & Coffee Company: Entering a Foreign Culture
- Berkshire Hathaway
- Overview of the Consulting Process

Non-Profit:

- Landmine Survivor Network - Economic Opportunity Model
- Women for Women International – Sustainable Enterprise
- US Olympic Committee - Non-Profit Scorecard
- Evaluating a Non-Profit Business
- Branding and Marketing Non-Profits
- A Call to Action: Selecting and Managing a Non-Profit Board

Books:

- Impacting the World: Teaching at the Edge of Business (in-progress)
- How to Teach Entrepreneurship – A New Model (in-progress)
- Linking Strategy and Performance Management in a Continuously Changing World
- The Wishbone Factor: A Strategy for Achieving Short-Term Success and Long-Term Dominance

- Creating Entrepreneurs, “Teaching Global Entrepreneurship Through Action-Based Learning” (chapter)

SELECTED SPEAKING ENGAGEMENT

- NFL Webinars – May 2015-2021
- ASEAN Conference – Bangkok, Thailand – August 2020
- Global Entrepreneurial Symposium – The Hague, Netherlands - Speaker – June 2020
- CEO Connect – February 2011 and 2017
- China Entrepreneurship Innovation Conference – Keynote Speaker – November 2010
- Hong Kong Young Presidents’ Organization – 2009, 2015
- Hong Kong Entrepreneurship Organization – 2008, 2019
- Grand Rapids Angels – Celebrating Entrepreneurship – May 2008
- Industry Association Conference – Family Business – May 2008
- European Business Incubation Centers – Entrepreneurship – June 2007
- US Association for Small Business Educators Conference – 2005, 2006

SPECIALTIES

- Entrepreneurship – Business Planning and Second Stage Growth Development
- Family Business Strategy and Management
- Venture Capital and Private Equity
- Corporate and Non-Profit Governance
- Strategic Business Planning and Execution
- International Market Entry Strategies

ASSOCIATIONS

- US Association of Small Business Educators
- Small Business Institute
- US Family Business Institute

EDUCATION

University of Michigan - Bachelor’s degrees

University of Michigan and Eastern Michigan University - MBA

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

ASCEND LEARNING

Founder and Professor of Learning (2021-present)

An innovative education company focused on teaching professional actors, artists, athletes, and armed services personnel how to create or acquire businesses. Its mission is to equip them with essential business skills for successful career transitions. This work was featured on the CBS Sunday Morning.

- ELITE BE (Business Entrepreneurship) – A newly designed program for high-net-worth individuals looking to explore startup opportunities while diversifying their income at a pace that suits their lifestyles
- STARTUP PROGRAMS – Educational courses for professionals who are beginning a new career:
 - Business Academy I, 2, & 3
 - Franchise Workshop
 - Personal Playbook
 - VentureStarts (4)
 - Broadcasting
 - Captain Role
 - Real Estate Workshop I & II
 - Personal Finance
- ENTERPRISE BUILD – A center to build their ideas into companies
- VENTURE FUND – Resources to invest in select opportunities
- RECRUITING and CAREER SERVICES – Future service to help with recruiting and career placement
- CHAMP HEALTH – A holistic approach to specialty healthcare that's focused on professions
- SUCCESS – A series of hot topic webinars
- CORPORATE PROGRAMS - Courses for corporate leaders

BIG IDEAS CHALLENGE

Founder/Executive Director (2014-present)

The goal is to educate and inspire student teams to tackle humanity's global challenges. Through an innovative pedagogical approach, students will co-create their learning experiences, assess challenges, develop solutions, and create actionable plans. This process fosters creative thinking, problem-solving, and leadership skills, while also cultivating a new perspective on global citizenship, helping students confront rather than fear these challenges. A comprehensive program, incorporating dynamic learning models and AI, supports teams throughout the entire project.

NFL PLAYER ENGAGEMENT

Director and Professor of Learning (2021-present)

- Taught the following programs to current and legends (former players):
- Business Academy
- Real Estate Workshop
- Franchise Program
- Offer webinars on business, personal finance, venture capital, and company growth

ECOLIX

Founder and CEO (2016-present)

A pure energy company dedicated to creating carbon-free solutions that are sustainable, healthy, affordable, and have no environmental impact on our planet. Ecolix specializes in pioneering solutions in the following areas:

- Reformulation of CO2
- Hydrogen Transformation
- Modular Fusion
- Kseq Ignition
- Proto Light Diffusion

TRIDENT VENTURE LAB ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

Director and CEO (2020-present)

A breakthrough technology hub that transforms innovative ideas into ventures using an agile fabrication center to address global challenges or threats. Operating like a ‘special forces’ group, TVL brings together top talent with a build-first mentality to develop next generation solutions. The emphasis is on the following areas:

- AI and Comms
- Defensive Drones
- Military Hardware - Critical Infrastructure
- Space Technology
- K-C/R Solutions
- Agtech

RIVER ROCK GROUP

Founder and Chair (2000-present)

A private equity company and foundation.

M FARM

Gentleman Farmer (1999-present)

AMERICAN MEDICAL PRODUCTS

Co-Founder and CEO (1991-1998)

A medical device company sensors, pacemakers, stethoscopes, catheters, and coding systems

BOARD EXPERIENCES

CONSUL CGO

Chair and Vice Chair (1999-present)

INTERNATIONAL CHILD CARE / GRACE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Board Member – Co-Chair and Treasurer (2013-present)

Led the turnaround of a children's hospital in Port-au-Prince, Haiti that treats 140,000 children a year, and is a leader in the diagnosis and treatment of TB and HIV

RKA

Board Member and Secretary (2021-present) and Advisor (2011-2021)

NAVY SEAL FOUNDATION

Reviewer (2019-present)

SALOKAYA NURSING SCHOOL

Non-Executive Board Member (2003-present)

SPORTSTECH IRELAND

Board Member (2017-present)

SPILL THE HONEY FOUNDATION

Board Member (2019-2022)

The foundation promotes human dignity and advances public knowledge of the Holocaust and Civil Rights Movement through educational and artistic medium to move people to act for social change

IHEED

Board Chair (2012-2021)

A leading online medical education company

ZELL LURIE INSTITUTE

Board Member (1999-2018)

UNITED BANK & TRUST

Board Member – Audit Committee (2010-2015)

WOMEN FOR WOMEN INTERNATIONAL

Board Member and Co-Chair of Governance (2006-2010)

ANN ARBOR HANDS ON MUSEUM

Board Member (2004-2012)

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY INTERNATIONAL

Member of the Board of Advisors (2004-2008)

CASTER CONCEPTS

Board Member (2003-2006)