



# JOE HANDY A BIG FISH IN A BIG POND

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**Q.** Can you tell me about your slightly unusual path to the Georgia Aquarium?

The shortest distance between points is a straight line. My path is a little less linear.



department, the Museum decided I was probably the best person to speak to.

I later chatted to one of Bernie's team, not imagining that was to come, and was asked to be part of the Georgia Aquarium's opening team. So, although the Georgia Aquarium had not been on my radar, the fact could not have been better in terms of my desire to help people.

**Q. As a New York native, you're used to giving and receiving exemplary customer service. How has this influenced your time at the Georgia Aquarium?**

My time at the Museum taught me a lot about people. Whilst you cannot control the eternal factors that may have impacted someone's day prior to meeting you, you can control the experience they have when meeting you.

When I meet with my staff, and I meet with all of them, I remind them of this, and that people make a choice to spend time with us and visit our attraction. It's important to recognise and value that.

We also have to be focused on the experience that people leave with, and 'leave with'. This is how we measure experiences. If you stay at a fantastic hotel and receive great customer service, you'll measure the next hotel by this experience.

**Q. How has your EMBA guided your management of the Georgia Aquarium?**

The EMBA at Kennesaw taught me to work on, rather than in, the business. Working this way, you're able to step away from the day-to-day and take a mile-high view in terms of what needs to be done and when.

Take repeat visitors as an illustration. Through good attendance we're able to build cash reserves and reinvest in, for example, a new signature animal, gallery, presentation or experience. These are the things we 'need to do' in order to keep people coming back. However, it's also a matter of 'when' these things are done.

As a new facility, bringing in high footfall is straightforward, but in three to five years being new isn't enough, so it's recognising this and making the necessary investment at the right time.

**Q. Why did you choose the EMBA over the full-time or professional MBA?**

There are a lot of high-quality programmes out there, but as I progressed in my career, I realised that what I really needed was that holistic approach offered by executive schooling; I wanted an overarching view of business tied to those all-important soft skills. Kennesaw's EMBA programme ticked those boxes.

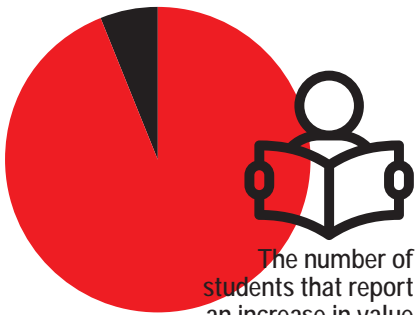


"If you're willing and open to learning more about yourself and others, Kennesaw's EMBA is the right programme for you."

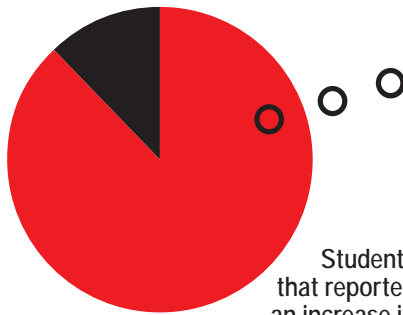




# KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY'S EMBA



The number of students that report an increase in value to their employer



Students that reported an increase in promotion prospects

