



Executive  
Education



# Avolon and INSEAD: Rising to the Challenges of Rapid Growth



# Executive Summary

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### The Partners

### The Challenge

### The Commitment

### The Initiative

### The Impact

### Conclusion

In just ten years, aircraft leasing business, Avolon, has grown from a 10-person start-up to 265 people turning over \$2.6 billion annually – the third biggest player in the industry.

In 2017, its executives approached INSEAD to write a case study about their entrepreneurial success story and the resulting challenges. The initial discussions led to the formation of an institutional partnership and the creation of a customised Executive Education programme to help address the challenges of rapid growth and remaining a market leader.

By early 2020, 65% of Avolon employees had attended part or all of a three-module leadership programme at “strategic” or “accelerated” level. The overarching learning objective is to drive professionalisation by optimising processes and enhancing leadership skills, through a curriculum based on: strategy, structure, culture and execution, as well as talent management and leadership.

Using innovative techniques, such as live real-time simulations and group coaching, the parallel programmes have had a major impact on the company. In particular, they have inspired the creation of a Project

Management Office, which in 2019 completed 33 process-optimisation projects and implemented 2 transformational organisation-wide IT systems. In addition, managers across the company have freed up their time to become leaders and strategic thinkers, rather than focusing on transactions and day-to-day details.

The partnership also encompasses special sessions for the Executive Committee; collaborations with MBA students; and the publication of a case study on Avolon. The learning culture thus created, along with the enhancements to process and people management, have recently helped the company to achieve a major strategic goal: “investment grade” status.

