The CEO of GE explains why his math degree is more useful than his MBA

By Portia Crowe
20 hours ago

General Electric CEO Jeff Immelt has all the qualifications you would expect of a Fortune 500 chief executive.

The Cincinnati-born son of a GE employee studied at Dartmouth and earned a Harvard MBA before working his way up at the industrial giant he now helms.

But Immelt says his most invaluable qualification is not the MBA — it's his undergraduate degree in math.

"I use my math major every day — I don't use the MBA quite as much," Immelt said, speaking at Business Insider's IGNITION 2015 conference on Wednesday.

"My intellectual curiosity goes more toward problem solving than spreadsheets."

Of course, Immelt said, he understands the mechanics of running a business — all the things you learn in business school.

(Justin Sullivan/Getty Images)

General Electric CEO Jeff Immelt.
But running a company, to Immelt, is really about problem solving. And that’s something he learned about in his undergraduate studies, due to “the inherent intellectual curiosity around math and physics.”

That has stayed with Immelt throughout his career.

“I’m just curious about everything,” he said. “I can view every situation as a problem to be solved, and I’ve never lost my passion for that as I’ve grown in my career.”

Read more about the IGNITION 2015 conference here.

NOW WATCH: Verizon CEO Lowell McAdam explains why he bought AOL

More From Business Insider

- IMMELT: ‘There’s going to be trillions of dollars of wealth created in the industrial internet’
- Verizon CEO Lowell McAdam explains why he bought AOL
- Gene Munster’s big predictions for Apple in 2016

View Comments (89)