Advocating for B-School in an Evolving Landscape

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Maite Salazar
Chief Marketing Officer
The need to give GME a voice is becoming more pressing

Pre Covid-19:

• Data shows a slight decline of global GME applications

• Significant geographical shift in application destinations and origins (e.g. USA ▼ Europe ▲ China ▲ India ▲).

During Covid-19:

• Covid-19 is impacting significantly candidates’ decision to pursue GME (29%)

• 47% of candidates are considering delaying their GME decision, 43% target 7-12 months
Advocating on Behalf of Business Schools

A multi-year initiative that leverages the connecting points and opportunities to more cohesively unify GMAC efforts driving GME

Elevate the value of, and preference for GME

- Media Response: Reshape GME narrative
- Calling All Optimists: Increase GME preference
- Public Policy: Influence GME policies

GMAC INITIATIVES
Tania Hernandez-Andersen
Sr. Director, Corporate Brand Communications
Engaging the Media

Challenge
How to influence the media and manage the narrative around GME that tends to be sometimes inaccurate and partial

Our data and reach as cornerstone:
• 14m candidates visit our GMAC sites annually
• Candidates get researched 5+ during their GME journey, from undergraduate to Alumni to keep the pulse
• 1200 companies from 45 countries participate in Corporate Recruiters Survey
• COVID-19 research: 2200 candidates and 300 schools

Proactive and reactive initiatives:
• GMAC → Media: Feeding media and publications with initiatives, data and stories that are relevant and timely
• Media ← GMAC: Do not let any inaccurate major story around GME to go without a response
GMAC, in partnership with AACSB, EFMD and MBA CSEA, formally requested that the ranking organizations delay their rankings publications.

In recognition of the unprecedented impact of the global pandemic on the admissions process, a formal request was made to the major rankings institutions postpone their work and publication on business school rankings.

Please read the letter at www.gmac.com/news-center
Responding to the Media around Covid-19

What we have been hearing:

• Journalists are focused on a looming global recession and the impact on b-schools. Storylines that have been put forth include the potential for uptick in domestic demand and more regional growth in Asia given the potential for students to stay closer to home.

• Interest in trends around one-year MBAs

• Interest in data and insights on deferments

• Questions on the likelihood for growth with online MBAs given uncertainty around classroom and blended learning models

Our response:

The media continues to value GMAC’s market intelligence. We’ve gained valuable perspective into trending storylines through the sharing of GMAC’s COVID-19 sentiment data.
Resources for you to help us shape the narrative
GME continues to be a valuable investment

Alumni rating of the overall value of their graduate management education

Projected median base starting salary, by program location

Adjusted for inflation, MBA starting salaries from US companies have increased 9% since 2002 and are at the highest recorded level.

Median starting salaries of Economist and Financial Times ranked programs, 2018 - 2019

Available at gmac.com/alumniperspectives
What impact is COVID-19 having on the aspirations of prospective business school students?

Our data shows candidates are keen to stay on the path to business school and stay connected with your programs.

A recent GMAC survey snapshot shows aspirations aren’t necessarily disrupted, but planning is.

- **7%** of respondents say they will no longer pursue a graduate business education
- **47%** say they will delay the pursuit of graduate management education (most by 7-12 months)
- **70%** say COVID has no impact, a little or only moderate impact on their decision to pursue GME

Read the latest updates at [www.gmac.com/gmac-advisor](http://www.gmac.com/gmac-advisor)
Longitudinal Study of B-School Alumni

520 b-school alumni, surveyed between May 22 and June 9, 2020

- 85% said their graduate business education increases their employability.
- 79% became aware of job opportunities through their business school network.
- 66% are confident in their employability even in times of economic uncertainty.

Key Takeaways

Data shows that:

• GME continues to have a high value proposition for candidates from a Salary and Employability perspective.

• Because of Covid-19 business school aspirations aren’t necessarily disrupted, but planning is.

• Candidates are more keen than ever to stay on the path to b-school and stay connected with your programs.

Media Strategy:

• In order to influence the narrative, you need data to feed information, engaging in the push/pull.

• GMAC is monitoring the media landscape and testing the dual approach of pitching relevant data and taking a ‘no bad story stands alone’ approach.

Business Schools can:

• Leverage GMAC data and research for your media communications.

• Join Rankings initiative.

• Sharing information and program initiatives through mba.com.

• Participate in research – www.gmac.com/surveysignup.
Julie Slovin
Sr. Director, Strategic Marketing
Calling All
Optimists
Engaging a new audience

**Challenge**
How might GMAC inspire and engage future business leaders to consider GME as a viable option for them?

**Marketing Pilots (2017 & 2018)**
- Two 3-month marketing campaigns

**Targeting**
- Students and working professionals, 18-34, in the Awareness or early Consideration stages of their GME journey
- US, UK, India, Indonesia, South Africa
Insights at the core

Candidate insights formed our value prop, related messaging and content

The power of optimism
There is a strong correlation between optimism and success in b-school and beyond

GME motivators
Motivators from the GMAC Global Segmentation Study drove the core messaging and content strategy
  • Career acceleration, change and exploration
  • Skill development

Concept testing
Primary research revealed generational and regional preferences for messaging, content and channels
Lessons learned

• Don’t ‘sell’ GME. Instead, offer it as a path to career success

• Social media can be a powerful channel for both reach and conversions

• For global campaigns, regional needs and behaviors should inform tactics and metrics

• A varied content mix will maximize reach and engagement

• Ongoing messaging and content testing will help increase downstream conversions

24% lift in positive perception of MBA

55% increase in desire to learn more about GME
## Research insights

### Type of Information
- Career paths and professional options
- Access to experienced professionals
- Tailored information
- Career change advice
- Access to peers and mentors

### Comms Channels
- Email
- Videos
- **Online chats**
- Facebook groups
- **Webinars**
- **Live events**

### Professional Resources
- **Money talk**
- Interactive tools
- ‘Reinvent Yourself’ fairs
- Real life decision-making
- **Mentoring program**

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- **Gen Z (18-24)**
- **Younger Millennials (25-29)**
- **Older Millennials (30-39)**
Key takeaways

- True upper-funnel audiences need time and guidance to see GME as a viable option for them.

- Generational and cultural differences should factor into your marketing decisions, balancing breadth and depth depending on your specific objectives.

- A test and learn approach, leveraging audience insights, will ensure optimization against priorities and goals over time.
Geoff Basye
Director, Media Relations
Q&A

Please use the chat feature to ask your questions
Take our one question poll
Visit us in the GMAC Lounge
Set a meeting with us
Online @ Gmac.com/advocacy
Key takeaways

*Key takeaways from the session and the presentation deck are available in the handouts section*

*Please visit gmac.com/advocacy to let us know you’d like to stay connected with us as we move our GME advocacy efforts forward*
Thank you!