

# Meet the Segments

Graduate  
Management  
Admission  
Council®



# About the study

In 2016, the Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC) kicked off a global graduate management education (GME) candidate segmentation study in partnership with IPSOS, a well-known market research firm, to help drive industry growth through insights on the motivations of the broader GME candidate pipeline. The study identified seven global segments that have distinct differences on what motivates them to pursue GME, including the desire to be a role model, provide for one's children, develop skills and impact society.

## Survey Population

**5,900**

candidates from the general population

**20-45**

years old

**2**

years, or less, since applying to GME

**15**

countries

**11**

languages

## Top five ...

### ... motivations for pursuing GME

Based on entire survey population

1. Improve my management skills
2. Advance more quickly in my career
3. Improve specific skills
4. Have a more fulfilling/satisfying career
5. Improve my leadership skills

### ... criteria for selecting schools to apply to

Based on entire survey population

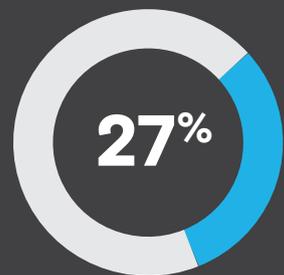
1. Has high quality instructors/faculty
2. Has good reputation for its business programs
3. Has excellent academic reputation
4. Has specific program that meets my needs
5. Ranked highly

## Interested in learning more?

Visit [gmac.com/segments](http://gmac.com/segments) or contact your GMAC account manager, and stay tuned throughout 2017 for more actionable insights and information from GMAC about these segments.

# Meet the Segments

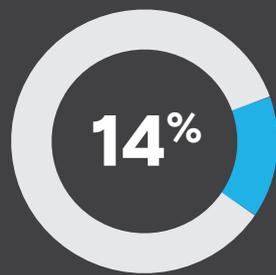
Share of Survey Population & Core Motivations



**Respect Seekers**



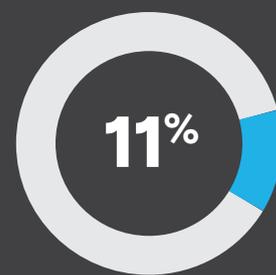
“A GME degree will give me the status and respect that I crave.”



**Global Strivers**



“I am committed to exploring the world of opportunities that awaits.”



**Socioeconomic Climbers**



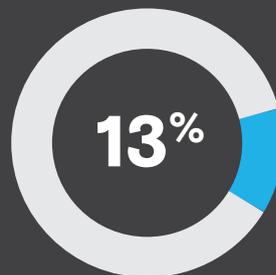
“I want to achieve everything my parents could only dream of.”



**Balanced Careerists**



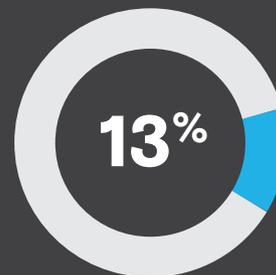
“I want to advance, but school must not disrupt my life.”



**Career Revitalizers**



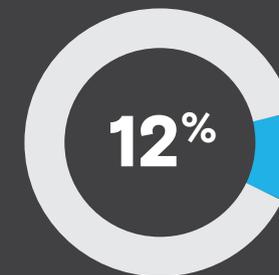
“I need to take my career to the next level to be successful.”



**Skill Upgraders**



“I want to be recognized for my expertise.”



**Impactful Innovators**



“I have great ideas — I just need the skills to bring them to life.”

For more information visit  
[gmac.com/segments](https://gmac.com/segments)



# Respect Seekers

## What drives them to pursue the degree?

### Top Five Motivations vs. Global Average

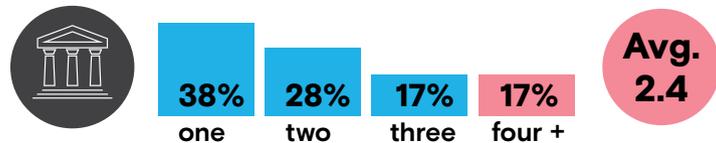
1. Be a role model
2. Make my parents proud
3. Get more respect
4. Increase my status among work colleagues, and/or friends
5. Stand out from others

## What event prompts them to apply?

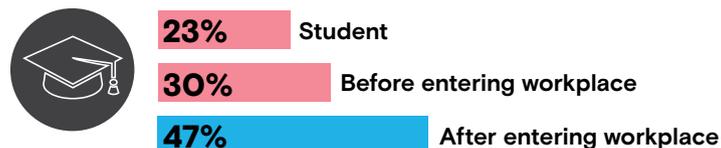
### Top Two Application Triggers vs. Global Average

1. My parent suggested that I apply.
2. I was not working at the time/recently became unemployed.

## How many schools do they apply to?



## When do they apply?



Highlighted element: Distinguishes segment from others

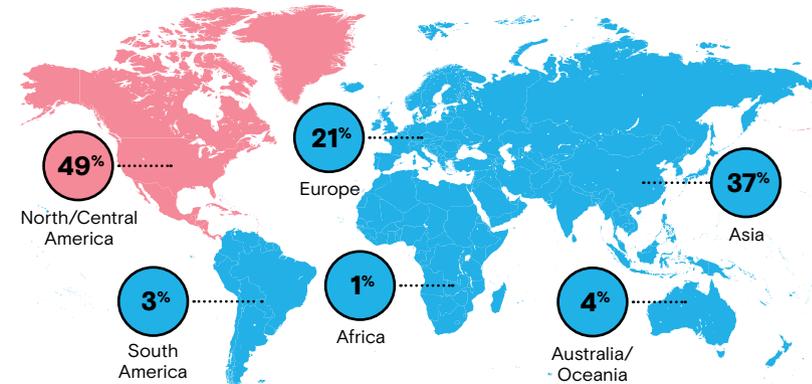
## What matters when they select schools to apply to?

### Top Five Motivations vs. Global Average

1. My parent(s) graduated from this school
2. Want to experience the location
3. Doesn't require any admissions exams
4. Requires all applicants to take the GMAT® exam
5. Fit in easily in with other students & school culture

**What is their biggest challenge?** Taking admissions exams

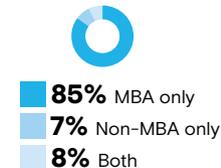
## Where do they apply?\*



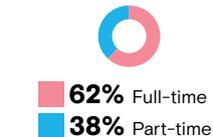
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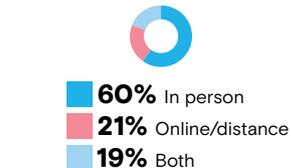
### What degree?



### What program?



### What classroom type?



## What sets them apart?

### Mindsets & Attitudes

- The MBA degree is not as highly regarded as it used to be.
- The GMAT® exam is too difficult.
- I tend to stick to the same routine from day to day.

- If you don't advance in your career/ get promotions, you are a failure.

### More likely to...

- Live in North America



# Global Strivers

## What drives them to pursue the degree?

### Top Five Motivations vs. Global Average

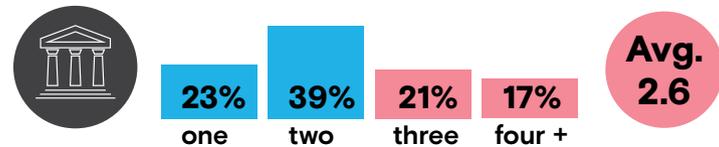
1. Gain international exposure
2. Access employment opportunities in other countries
3. Improve specific skills
4. Become an expert in my field
5. Improve my management skills

## What event prompts them to apply?

### Top Two Application Triggers vs. Global Average

1. There was no specific event/I was planning to apply at that time.
2. A professor/instructor suggested that I apply.

## How many schools do they apply to?



## When do they apply?



Highlighted element: Distinguishes segment from others

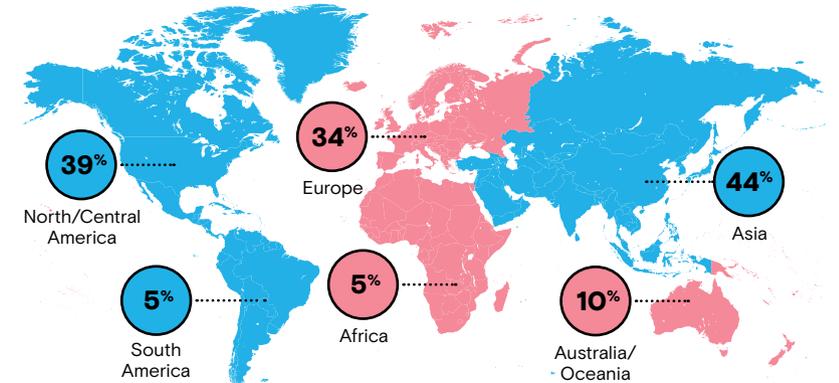
## What matters when they select schools to apply to?

### Top Five Motivations vs. Global Average

1. Recognized by global employers
2. Well-known internationally
3. Ranked highly
4. Has excellent academic reputation
5. Get better job opportunities as a graduate

**What is their biggest challenge?** Obtaining funds/financing

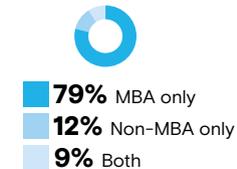
## Where do they apply?\*



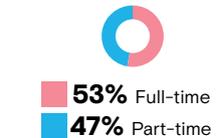
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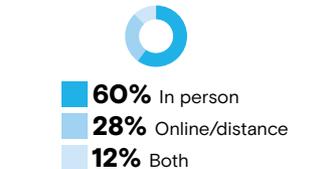
### What degree?



### What program?



### What classroom type?



## What else sets them apart?

### Mindsets & Attitudes

- I would be willing to pay whatever it takes to go to one of the top-ranked graduate schools.
- I love to learn new things.
- I like to challenge myself.

### More likely to ...

- Be employed in the computer/IT industry
- Be between ages 20-24
- Apply to schools on a different continent



# Balanced Careerists

## What drives them to pursue the degree?

### Top Five Motivations vs. Global Average

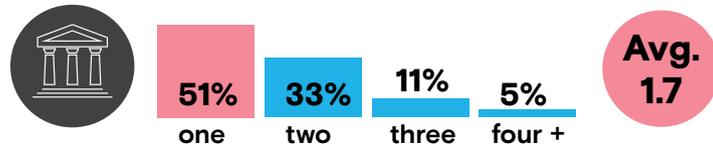
1. Earn more money
2. Provide stability in my career
3. Advance more quickly in my career
4. Have a more fulfilling/satisfying career
5. Get a promotion

## What event prompts them to apply?

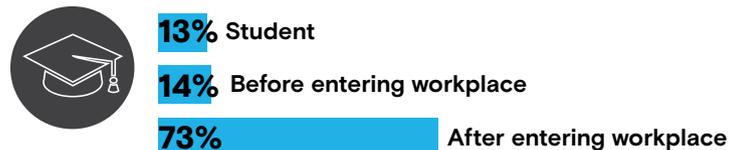
### Top Two Application Triggers vs. Global Average

1. There was no specific event/I was planning to apply at that time.
2. It was a convenient time to go to school.

## How many schools do they apply to?



## When do they apply?



Highlighted element: Distinguishes segment from others

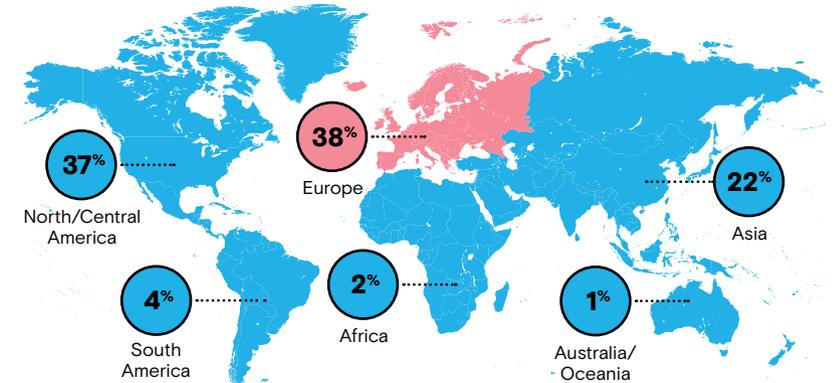
## What matters when they select schools to apply to?

### Top Five Motivations vs. Global Average

1. Located nearby so I can commute from home
2. Located in my current country
3. Has lower tuition cost than other schools
4. Offers online classes/programs
5. Has specific program that meets my needs

## What is their biggest challenge? Obtaining funds/financing

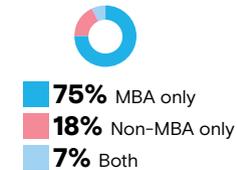
## Where do they apply?\*



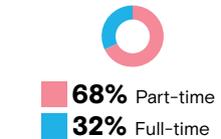
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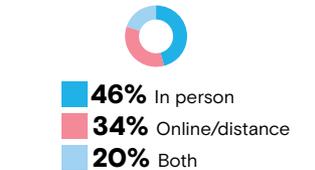
### What degree?



### What program?



### What classroom type?



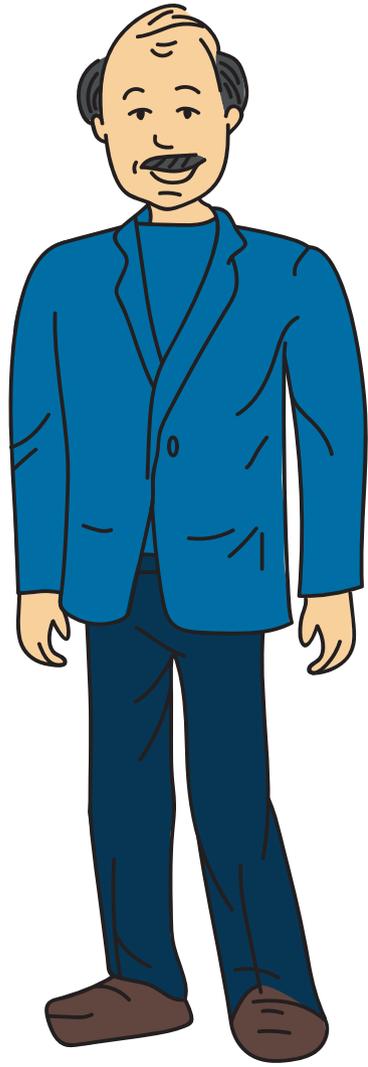
## What else sets them apart?

### Mindsets & Attitudes

- I would rather go to a lower-ranked graduate school if it means I would have a better chance of success.
- The MBA degree is not as highly regarded as it used to be.
- Work/life balance is important.

### More likely to ...

- Live in Europe
- Reside in a suburban or rural area
- Have worked 10+ years with current employer
- Be in the public service sector



# Career Revitalizers

## What drives them to pursue the degree?

### Top Five Motivations vs. Global Average

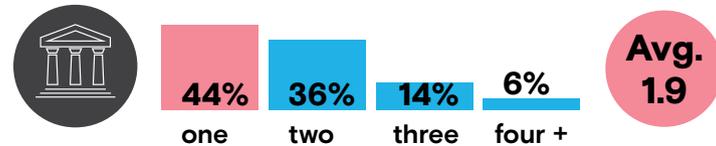
1. Have more control of my future
2. Advance more quickly in my career
3. Reinvent myself
4. Learn something different
5. Improve my management skills

## What event prompts them to apply?

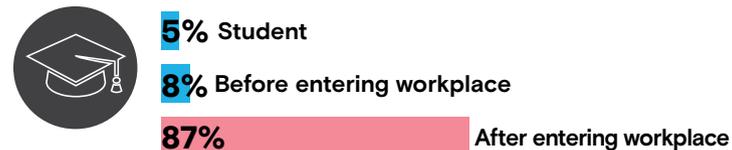
### Top Two Application Triggers vs. Global Average

1. Wanted to apply for a job, but lacked the required skill/degree.
2. An issue at work (e.g., not promoted, negative review, etc.).

## How many schools do they apply to?



## When do they apply?



Highlighted element: Distinguishes segment from others

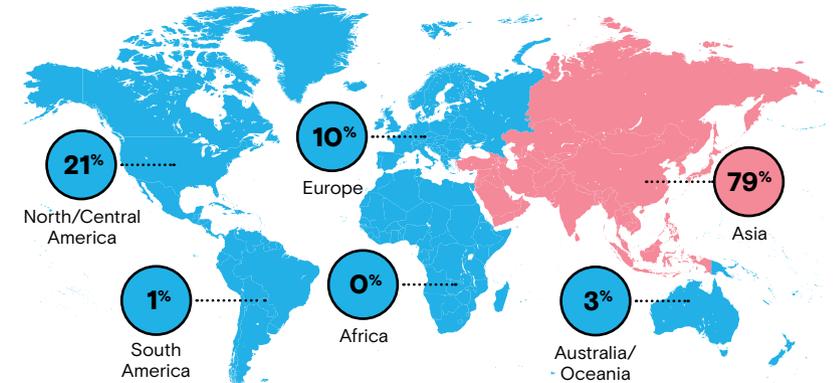
## What matters when they select schools to apply to?

### Top Five Motivations vs. Global Average

1. Has state-of-the-art/modern facilities
2. Has higher quality instructors/faculty
3. Has specific program that meets my needs
4. Has good reputation for its business programs
5. Offers online classes/programs

**What is their biggest challenge?** Studying for admissions exams

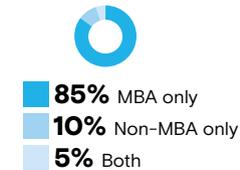
## Where do they apply?\*



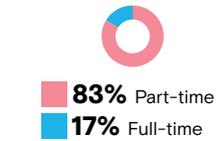
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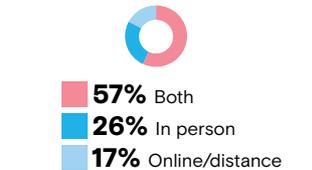
### What degree?



### What program?



### What classroom type?



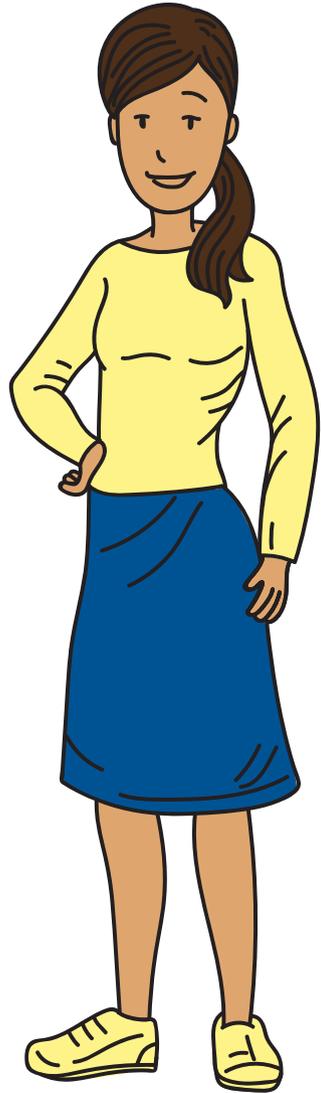
## What else sets them apart?

### Mindsets & Attitudes

- I would rather go to a lower-ranked graduate school if it means I would have a better chance of success.
- I love to learn new things.
- I am in charge of my own destiny.

### More likely to ...

- Live in China
- Be between ages 35-45
- Be living in an urban setting
- Pursue a degree not taught in English



# Socioeconomic Climbers

## What drives them to pursue the degree?

### Top Five Motivations vs. Global Average

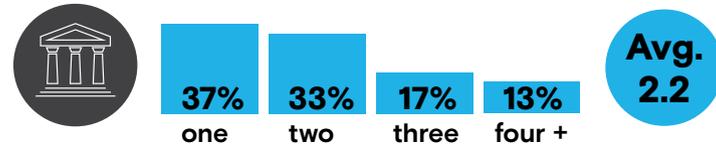
1. Earn more money
2. Provide stability in my career
3. Have more fulfilling/satisfying career
4. Improve my socioeconomic status
5. Give my children a better future

## What event prompts them to apply?

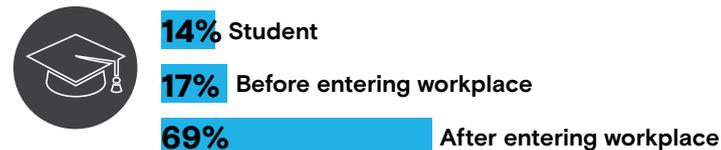
### Top Two Application Triggers vs. Global Average

1. A professor/instructor suggested that I apply.
2. My employer asked/suggested that I apply.

## How many schools do they apply to?



## When do they apply?



Highlighted element: Distinguishes segment from others

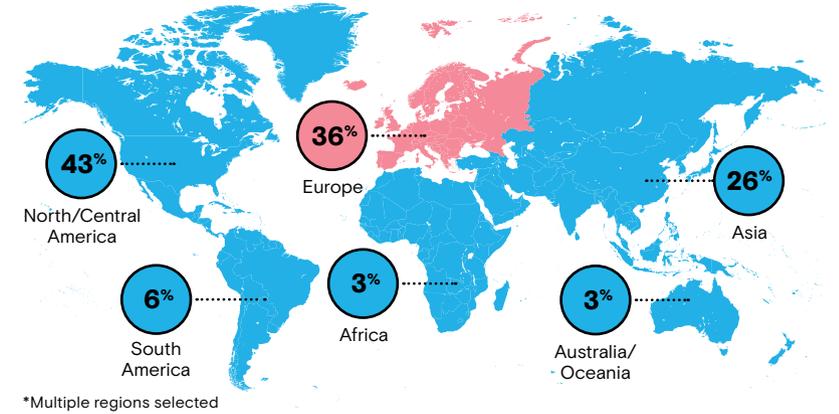
## What matters when they select schools to apply to?

### Top Five Motivations vs. Global Average

1. Ranked highly
2. Has excellent academic reputation
3. Has good reputation for its business programs
4. Get better job opportunities as a graduate
5. Recognized by global employers

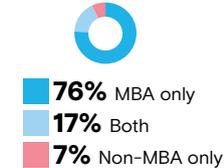
**What is their biggest challenge?** Obtaining funds/financing

## Where do they apply?\*

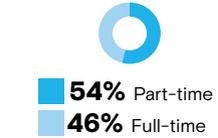


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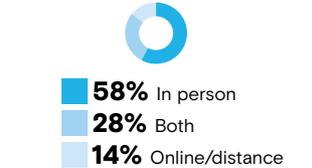
### What degree?



### What program?



### What classroom type?

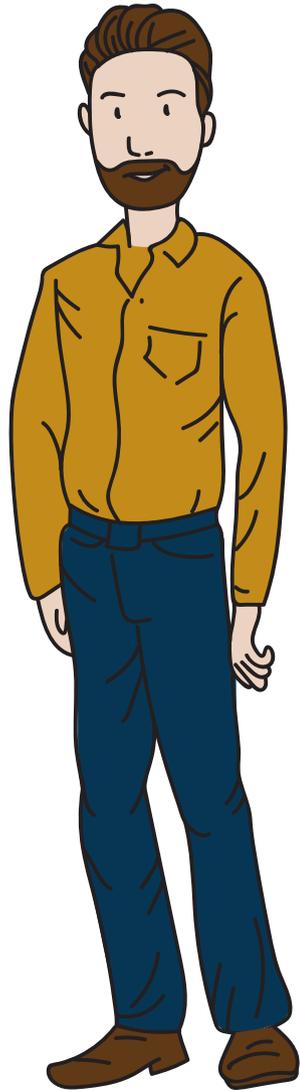


## What else sets them apart?

### Mindsets & Attitudes

- To get ahead or stand out at work, you must get a master's degree.
- Even if an admissions exam is not required by the program/school, submitting exam scores can make the application stronger.

- I love to learn new things.
  - Making a lot of money is the best indicator of success.
- More likely to ...**
- Live in North/Central America or Europe



# Skill Upgraders

## What drives them to pursue the degree?

### Top Five Motivations vs. Global Average

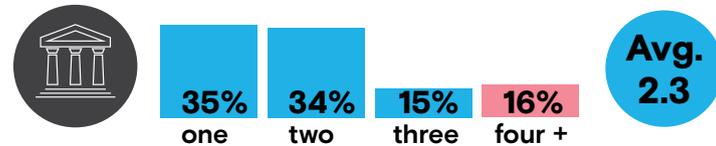
1. Improve my leadership skills
2. Develop skills to have a greater social impact
3. Improve specific skills
4. Improve my management skills
5. Become an expert in my field

## What event prompts them to apply?

### Top Two Application Triggers vs. Global Average

1. My parents suggested that I apply.
2. My employer asked or suggested that I apply.

## How many schools do they apply to?



## When do they apply?

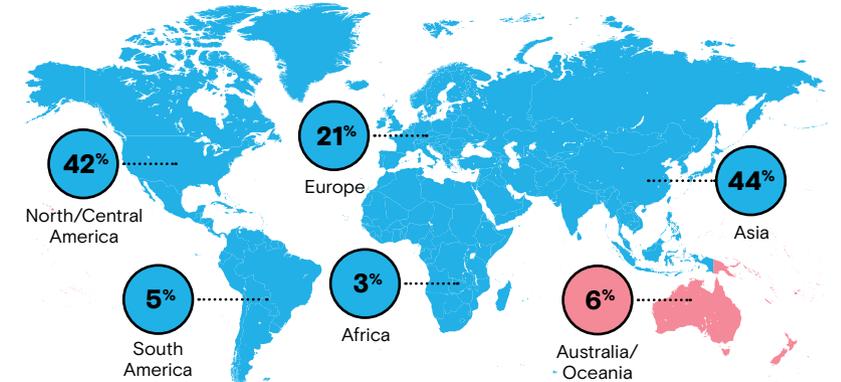


## What matters when they select schools to apply to?

### Top Five Motivations vs. Global Average

1. Want to experience the location
2. Fit in easily with other students & school culture
3. Requires all applicants to take the GMAT exam
4. My parent(s) graduated from this school
5. Recommended highly by my employer

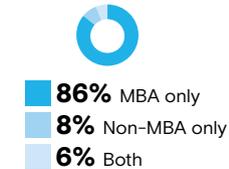
## Where do they apply?\*



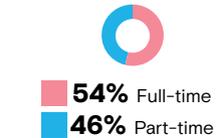
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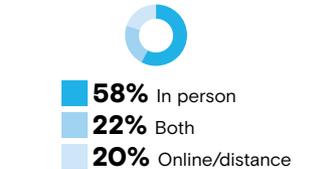
### What degree?



### What program?



### What classroom type?



## What else sets them apart?

### Mindsets & Attitudes

- I would rather go to a lower-ranked graduate school if it means I would have a better chance of success.
- I tend to stick to the same routine from day to day.
- There is a point in your life when

your course is set and there is nothing you can do.

### More likely to ...

- Be employed in the computer/IT industry
- Be employed with current employer for 2 to 3 years

## What is their biggest challenge? Taking admissions exams

Highlighted element: Distinguishes segment from others



# Impactful Innovators

## What drives them to pursue the degree?

### Top Five Motivations vs. Global Average

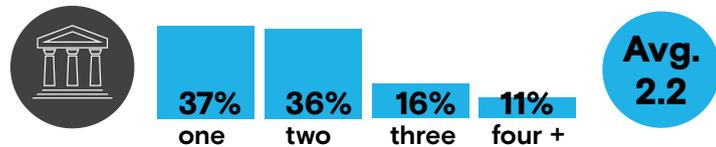
1. Improve specific skills
2. Develop skills to have a greater social impact
3. Improve my management skills
4. Gain international exposure
5. Improve my leadership skills

## What event prompts them to apply?

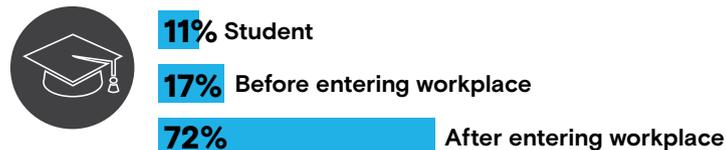
### Top Two Application Triggers vs. Global Average

1. There was no specific event/I was planning to apply at that time.
2. It was a convenient time to go to school.

## How many schools do they apply to?



## When do they apply?

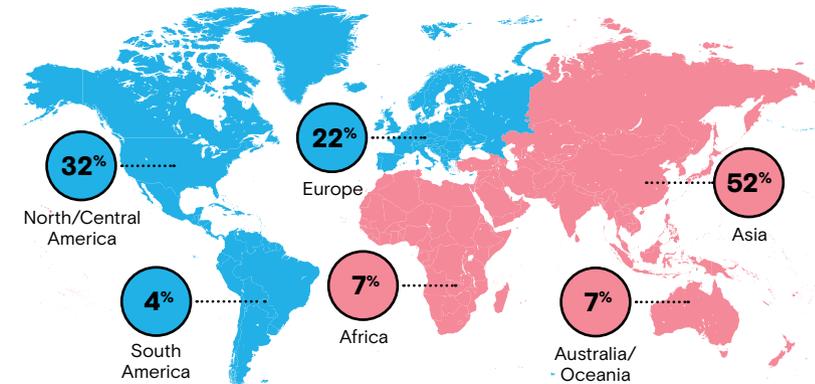


## What matters when they select schools to apply to?

### Top Five Motivations vs. Global Average

1. Has excellent academic reputation
2. Has a good reputation for its business programs
3. Has specific program that meets my needs
4. Has high quality instructors/faculty
5. Recognized by global employers

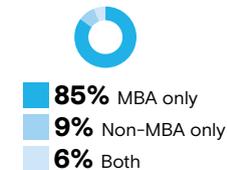
## Where do they apply?\*



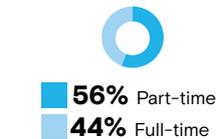
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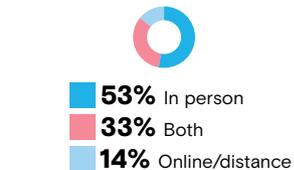
### What degree?



### What program?



### What classroom type?



## What else sets them apart?

### Mindsets & Attitudes

- People with an MBA make better decisions and/or are better leaders.
- I am optimistic about the future.
- I love to learn new things.
- I am a curious person, and I like to continuously discover new things.

### More likely to ...

- Live in Asia or Africa
- Be self-employed
- Have only an undergraduate degree

## What is their biggest challenge? Taking admissions exams

Highlighted element: Distinguishes segment from others

For more information visit

[gmac.com/segments](https://gmac.com/segments)

# Want to learn even more about this study?

The Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC) is committed to advancing the *art* and *science* of admissions. *Beyond Demographics: Connecting With the Core Motivations of Business School Candidates* white paper provides a market segmentation analysis of the global graduate management education (GME) candidate population. Unlike the segmentation approaches used today by some business schools, which segment prospective students on the basis of demographic or geographic data, this segmentation study is based on candidates' core motivations — specifically, the factors that most motivate them to pursue a graduate business degree and the factors that most motivate them to apply to a specific graduate business school. The approach taken in this study is universal in its applicability, avoids cultural bias, and is stable over time, thereby ensuring reliable and relevant results on which schools can base long-term strategic initiatives.

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Management  
Admission  
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