MBA Alumni Perspectives Surveys

Methodology

Background
In order to reach graduates from around the world and make participation convenient, the MBA Alumni Perspectives Surveys were conducted over the Internet. Background for the survey design was provided by 1) prior GMAC® research on graduates from MBA programs; 2) prior GMAC® experience in surveying this audience; and 3) ongoing input from alumni, schools, and corporate recruiters on their information needs.

Sample Selection and Response
The sample selection for the MBA Alumni Perspectives Survey was created by asking respondents of the Global MBA® Graduate Surveys to volunteer to participate in follow-up research by providing a permanent e-mail address—55 to 79 percent of the Global MBA® Survey respondents did. Those volunteers received an e-mail pre-notification followed a week later by a survey invitation, along with an incentive offer to be placed in a drawing for one $500 and four $100 prizes. Two weeks after the initial invitation, respondents who had not yet completed the survey at that time were sent a reminder. The surveys were active for about four weeks. Response rates ranged from 20 to 61 percent, based on the number of valid e-mail addresses.

MBA Alumni Perspectives Surveys—Response Rates

	Aug-01	Mar-02	Aug-02	Mar-03	Aug-03	Apr-04	Sept-04	Apr-05	Sept-05
Number of Alumni Invited	1,928	692	3,960	7,042	8,185	9,148	11,286	10,937	14,166
Number Valid Responses	692	425	1,252	2,383	2,622	2,350	3,392	2,209	3,113
Response Rate	36%	61%	32%	34%	32%	26%	30%	20%	22%

Online Questionnaire Administration
Administration of the questionnaire online offered several advantages over a paper-and-pencil administration. First, responses automatically went into a database that was available for analysis at all times. This allowed for monitoring survey progress and eliminating the time and cost associated with data entry. Second, the site was programmed to check for the accurate completion of each question before the respondent was allowed to proceed to the next question, which eliminated the typical problems associated with item non-response. Third, skip patterns allowed respondents to move quickly and appropriately through the questionnaire. They never saw questions that did not pertain to them, such as race/ethnicity for non-US citizens.

Data Analysis
Data were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, version 11). Two weeks before the completion of data collection, a preliminary analysis was conducted of the data. Frequency distributions were examined for both topical questions and classification questions. Based on this examination, response categories for some questions were collapsed in order to make the final analysis more robust. In this preliminary analysis, variations to all topical questions were cross tabulated with each classification question. This made it possible to determine which classification questions offered the most promise in the interpretation of survey responses. In the final analysis, most topical questions were cross tabulated with the following classification items: gender, race/ethnicity (for U.S. citizens), and citizenship. A Chi-square analysis was used to evaluate the statistical significance in cross-classification tables ($p<0.05$). (A relationship between a topical item and a classification item was considered statistically significant only when it could have been produced by chance less than 5% of the time.) T-tests, analysis of variance, and nonparametric tests were used whenever appropriate. Percentages in charts and tables might not always add exactly to 100 percent due to rounding.