

MBA.COM REGISTRANTS SURVEY 2003

GENERAL REPORT

**BY
GRADUATE MANAGEMENT ADMISSION COUNCIL®
(GMAC®)**

**MBA.COM REGISTRANT SURVEY
GENERAL REPORT**

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Stage in Progress toward a Degree

Application Stage

Respondents were asked to indicate their stage in the application process. Thirty-eight percent of the survey respondents had applied to at least one graduate business school at the time of the survey. Fifty percent had not yet applied but planned to do so; 11% had not yet applied and were not sure whether they would; and 2% had decided not to apply to graduate business school.

STAGE IN APPLICATION PROCESS		
		<i>n</i> = 10,029
Applied to any graduate business schools?	No, not yet, but I plan to	50%
	Yes	38%
	No, not yet, and I am not sure if I will	11%
	No, I have decided not to apply to graduate business school	2%
	Total ¹	100%

Of those who had decided not to apply to graduate business school², more than half (58%) had decided to apply to another kind of graduate program.

DECISIONS OF THOSE WHO HAVE DECIDED NOT TO APPLY TO GRADUATE BUSINESS SCHOOL		
		<i>n</i> = 186
Decided to apply to another kind of graduate program?	Yes	58%
	No	42%
	Total	100%
		<i>n</i> = 108
Other graduate program to which most likely to apply	A social science—related master's or PhD	16%
	A science—related master's or PhD	14%
	Education	13%
	Law school	12%
	A liberal arts master's or PhD	9%
	Medical school	3%
	Social work	3%
	Other	31%
	Total	100%

Demographic Differences by Stage in the Decision Process

Respondents who had applied to graduate business school share the following characteristics:

- male (59%);
- white (75%);
- thirty-three years old or older (30%);
- work in the finance/accounting (21%) or products/services (20%) industry;
- have a household income of at least U.S. \$25,000 but less than U.S. \$75,000 (42%);
- have a household size of three or more people (41%);
- have an undergraduate degree in business/management/economics (50%); and
- plan to pursue an MBA (75%) on campus (73%) in a full-time program (56%).

¹ Percentages do not always equal 100% due to rounding.

² The terms *graduate business school*, *graduate management program*, and *business school* are used interchangeably in this document.

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Respondents who had not applied to graduate business school but planned to do so share these characteristics:

- male (62%);
- white (65%);
- twenty-five to 28 years old (32%);
- work in the finance/accounting (21%), products/services (21%), or high-technology (21%) industry;
- have a household income of at least U.S. \$25,000 but less than U.S. \$75,000 (42%);
- have a household size of three or more people (47%);
- have an undergraduate degree in business/management/economics (48%); and
- plan to pursue an MBA (75%) on campus (72%) in a full-time program (59%).

Respondents who had not applied to graduate business school and were uncertain if they would share these characteristics:

- male (56%);
- white (76%);
- thirty-three years old or older (30%);
- work in the finance/accounting (20%), products/services (18%), or high-technology (19%) industry;
- have a household income of at least U.S. \$25,000 but less than U.S. \$75,000 (41%);
- have a household size of three or more people (39%);
- have an undergraduate degree in business/management/economics (39%); and
- plan to pursue an MBA (70%) on campus (63%) in a full-time program (46%).

Respondents who had decided not to apply to graduate business school share these characteristics:

- female (59%);
- white (76%);
- thirty-three years old or older (32%);
- work in the nonprofit or government industry (36%);
- have a household income of at least U.S. \$25,000 but less than U.S. \$75,000 (41%);
- have a household size of one person (39%);
- have an undergraduate degree in business/management/economics (42%); and
- plan to pursue a MBA (62%) on-campus (71%) in a full-time program (57%).

When Respondents First Considered Graduate Business School

Eighty-eight percent of the people who participated in the survey had either already submitted an application to a graduate business program or planned to do so. When these respondents were asked when they had first considered attending graduate business school, the majority answered that they had thought about it for two or more years.

WHEN FIRST CONSIDERED ATTENDING GRADUATE BUSINESS SCHOOL	
	<i>n</i> = 8,759
Less than a year ago	28%
One year, but less than two years ago	31%
Two years or longer	41%
Total	100%

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Differences by Stage in the Decision Process

Of those who had applied to at least one graduate business school by the time of the survey, 22% had thought about the decision for less than one year; 32% had considered it for more than one year but less than two; and 46% had thought about it for two or more years. Of those who planned to apply but had not yet done so, 32% had considered graduate business school for less than a year, 30% had considered it for more than one year but less than two, and 37% had considered it for two or more years.

Application Timeframe

Application submission vs. mba.com registration

Of those who submitted an application after registering on mba.com (63%), more than one-fifth (22%) did so within one month. And more than two-fifths (43%) did so within two months. Sixty percent did so within three months. The average registrant who submitted an application *after* registering at mba.com did so in 93 days or 3.1 months (based on the mean).

TIMING OF APPLICATION AFTER REGISTRATION ON MBA.COM (OF THOSE WHO HAVE APPLIED)		
Timeframe	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than 1 month	22%	22%
1, but less than 2 months	21%	43%
2, but less than 3 months	17%	60%
3, but less than 4 months	13%	73%
4, but less than 5 months	8%	81%
5, but less than 6 months	6%	87%
6, but less than 7 months	4%	91%
7, but less than 8 months	3%	94%
8 months or more	6%	100%
Total	100%	
Mean	3.1 Months	

Of those who submitted an application *before* registering on mba.com (37%), one-fourth did so less than one month before registering on mba.com. One-half did so less than four months *before* registering on mba.com. A somewhat surprising 29% submitted their first application one year or more *before* registering on mba.com. The average registrant who submitted an application *before* registering at mba.com did so 10 months before (based on the mean).

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TIMING OF APPLICATION BEFORE REGISTRATION ON MBA.COM (OF THOSE WHO HAVE APPLIED)		
Timeframe	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than 1 month	25%	25%
1, but less than 2 months	13%	37%
2, but less than 4 months	12%	46%
4, but less than 6 months	5%	53%
6, but less than 8 months	5%	58%
8 months, but less than 1 year	10%	70%
1 year, but less than 2 years	13%	84%
2 years or more	16%	95%
Total	100%	
Mean	10 Months (Before registration)	

Fifty percent of respondents had not yet submitted an application to any graduate business school at the time of the survey, but they planned to do so. More than one-fourth of these respondents (27%) planned to do so within six months after registering on mba.com. Sixty percent planned to do so within one year after registering on mba.com. Forty percent had longer planning horizons; and most of these indicated they would submit an application in one, but less than two years after registering on mba.com.

TIMING OF APPLICATION AFTER REGISTRATION ON MBA.COM (OF THOSE WHO PLAN TO APPLY)		
Timeframe	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than 3 months	7%	7%
3 months, but less than 6 months	19%	27%
6 months, but less than 9 months	17%	44%
9 months, but less than 1 year	16%	60%
1 year, but less than 2 years	35%	94%
2 years or more	6%	100%
Total	100%	
Mean	10 Months (After registration)	

Application submission vs. taking the GMAT (once)

The date that a respondent first applied to graduate business school was compared with the date they took the GMAT® (respondents taking the GMAT® only once). Results are shown in the following table. As the table shows, 26% of respondents applied to graduate business school before taking the GMAT®; and the majority of these did so less than one year before. Thirty-four percent of respondents (taking the GMAT® once) applied to graduate business school less than one month after taking the GMAT®.

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TIMING OF APPLICATION AFTER TAKING GMAT (ONCE)		
Timeframe	Percent	Cumulative Percent
2 years or more before taking GMAT	1%	1%
1 year, but less than 2 years before taking GMAT	3%	4%
Less than 1 year before taking GMAT	22%	26%
Less than 1 month after taking GMAT	34%	60%
1 month, but less than 3 months after taking GMAT	25%	85%
3 months, but less than 5 months after taking GMAT	7%	92%
5 months, but less than 7 months after taking GMAT	3%	94%
7 months, but less than 9 months after taking GMAT	2%	96%
9 months or more after taking GMAT	4%	100%
Total	100%	

Application submission vs. taking the GMAT (more than once)

When the date that respondents most recently took the GMAT® (those who took it more than once) is compared with the date of their first application, results are as shown in the following table. Forty-six percent of these respondents applied to graduate business school before most recently taking the GMAT®. Twenty-five percent applied to graduate business school less than one month after most recently taking the GMAT®, and another 18% applied one month, but less than three months after most recently taking the GMAT®.

TIMING OF APPLICATION AFTER TAKING GMAT (ONCE)		
Timeframe	Percent	Cumulative Percent
2 years or more before taking GMAT	6%	6%
1 year, but less than 2 years before taking GMAT	8%	15%
Less than 1 year before taking GMAT	32%	46%
Less than 1 month after taking GMAT	25%	71%
1 month, but less than 3 months after taking GMAT	18%	89%
3 months, but less than 5 months after taking GMAT	5%	95%
5 months, but less than 7 months after taking GMAT	1%	96%
7 months, but less than 9 months after taking GMAT	1%	97%
9 months or more after taking GMAT	3%	100%
Total	100%	

Application Behavior

Respondents who had applied to graduate business school were asked how many schools they had applied to and how many more they planned to apply to. Respondents who had applied to a graduate business school had applied to on average (mean) two at the time of the survey and planned to apply to one additional school. Among respondents who had already applied to graduate business school at the time of the survey, the total average (mean) number of actual and planned applications to graduate business school was slightly over three (3.1).

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NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS			
	Actual	Additional Planned	Total
	<i>n</i> = 3,771	<i>n</i> = 3,771	<i>n</i> = 3,771
0		57%	
1	56%	15%	32%
2	19%	11%	22%
3	10%	7%	13%
4	6%	4%	11%
5	4%	3%	7%
6 or more	5%	4%	15%
Total	100%	100%	100%
Mean	2.0	1.0	3.1

Acceptance Rate among Applicants

Respondents who had applied to graduate business school were asked if they had received any acceptances, and if yes, how many. Twenty-six percent of respondents who had already applied to graduate business school at the time of the survey had not yet received acceptances. Fifty-three percent had received one acceptance, and 21% had received two or more acceptances. On average, there was a 63% acceptance rate among those who had applied.

NUMBER OF ACCEPTANCES	
	<i>n</i> = 3,771
None so far	26%
1	53%
2 or more	21%
Total	100%
Mean Percent Acceptances	63%

Timing of Enrollment

Thirty-eight percent of respondents had already submitted an application at the time of the survey. Of these respondents, 3% indicated they had begun graduate study prior to submitting their first application. Among the balance of respondents who had already submitted an application, 45% expected to begin graduate study in less than six months from the time they submitted their first application. Seventy percent expected to begin graduate study in less than a year, while 30% expected to begin graduate study one year or more after submitting their first application. The average respondent expected to begin graduate study 10 months after submitting their first application (based on the mean).

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TIMING OF ENROLLMENT AFTER APPLICATION SUBMITTED		
Timeframe	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than 3 months	18%	18%
3 months, but less than 6 months	27%	45%
6 months, but less than 9 months	15%	60%
9 months, but less than 1 year	10%	70%
1 year, but less than 2 years	19%	89%
2 years or more	11%	100%
Total	100%	
Mean	10 Months	

The results of a comparison between when respondents completed their undergraduate (or first degree) with the time they plan to begin graduate study is shown in the following table. Thirty percent of the respondents planned to begin graduate study in less than three years after completing their undergraduate degrees; and one-half expected to begin in less than five years and 29% expected to begin eight years or more after completing their undergraduate degrees.

TIMING OF ENROLLMENT AFTER COMPLETION OF UNDERGRADUATE (OR FIRST DEGREE)		
Timeframe	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than 2 years	19%	19%
2 years, but less than 3 years	11%	30%
3 years, but less than 4 years	11%	40%
4 years, but less than 5 years	10%	50%
5 years, but less than 6 years	8%	59%
6 years, but less than 8 years	13%	71%
8 years, but less than 10 years	9%	81%
10 years or more	20%	86%
Total	100%	

Possible Reasons for Entering a Graduate Management Program

Respondents were asked to indicate the truth or falsehood of each of 17 possible reasons for deciding to enter a graduate management program—in their particular case. They rated the reasons on a 7-point scale, with +3 being true and -3 being false. The primary reasons they gave for possibly deciding to enter graduate business school are listed in mean rank order.

POSSIBLE REASONS FOR ENTERING A GRADUATE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM		
		<i>n</i> = 9,950
Develop my management knowledge and technical skills	True	96%
	Neither true nor false	3%
	False	1%
	Mean	2.3
Allow me to remain marketable (competitive)	True	95%
	Neither true nor false	3%
	False	2%
	Mean	2.3

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POSSIBLE REASONS FOR ENTERING A GRADUATE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM		
Give me a sense of personal satisfaction and achievement	True	94%
	Neither true nor false	4%
	False	2%
	Mean	2.3
Improve my long term income and financial stability	True	95%
	Neither true nor false	3%
	False	2%
	Mean	2.3
Provide the professional credentials I need for advancement	True	95%
	Neither true nor false	3%
	False	2%
	Mean	2.2
Be an exciting challenge	True	90%
	Neither true nor false	6%
	False	4%
	Mean	2.0
Prepare me to get a good job in the business world	True	89%
	Neither true nor false	7%
	False	4%
	Mean	2.0
Provide the specific skills I need to do my job and get ahead	True	87%
	Neither true nor false	8%
	False	5%
	Mean	1.8
Provide the right connections for getting a good job in the short- or long-term	True	85%
	Neither true nor false	10%
	False	6%
	Mean	1.7
Allow me to change from my current occupational area to a specific new one	True	70%
	Neither true nor false	16%
	False	14%
	Mean	1.2
Prepare me to start or manage my own business	True	67%
	Neither true nor false	17%
	False	16%
	Mean	1.0
Increase my short-term earning power	True	70%
	Neither true nor false	16%
	False	14%
	Mean	1.0
Allow me to switch industries	True	66%
	Neither true nor false	19%
	False	16%
	Mean	1.0
Give me a chance to gain valuable experience before re-entering the job market	True	66%
	Neither true nor false	15%
	False	19%
	Mean	1.0
Prepare me to seek international employment	True	64%
	Neither true nor false	16%
	False	20%
	Mean	0.9
Be looked upon favorably by people who are important to me	True	62%
	Neither true nor false	20%
	False	18%

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POSSIBLE REASONS FOR ENTERING A GRADUATE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM		
	Mean	0.8
Allow me to build on my non-business undergraduate degree	True	52%
	Neither true nor false	19%
	False	29%
	Mean	0.3

Differences by Stage in Decision Process

Overall, compared with those who were not sure or who had decided not to apply to graduate business school, those who had applied or planned to apply found the 17 possible reasons for applying to be truer.

Potential Barriers to Graduate Management Education

Possible Reservations about Entering a Graduate Management Program

Respondents were asked to indicate the truth or falsehood to them of a list of possible reservations about attending graduate business school. They rated each possible reservation on a 7-point scale, with +3 being true and -3 being false.

Among those considering entering a graduate management program, their main reservation about doing so was that business school would require them to take on large financial debts (mean of .8), and severely limit the time they would have for people who are important to them (mean of .2).

POSSIBLE RESERVATIONS ABOUT ENTERING A GRADUATE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM		
		<i>n</i> = 9,950
Require me to take on large financial debts	True	63%
	Neither true nor false	12%
	False	25%
	Mean	0.8
Severely limit the time I have for people who are important to me	True	52%
	Neither true nor false	15%
	False	33%
	Mean	0.2
Be too expensive in the short term to be worthwhile	True	36%
	Neither true nor false	16%
	False	48%
	Mean	-0.4
Be too stressful	True	34%
	Neither true nor false	18%
	False	48%
	Mean	-0.5
Be too competitive	True	34%
	Neither true nor false	17%
	False	50%
	Mean	-0.5
Require me to postpone marriage, having a child or other personal plans	True	34%
	Neither true nor false	15%
	False	52%
	Mean	-0.7

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POSSIBLE RESERVATIONS ABOUT ENTERING A GRADUATE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM		
Require more work experience than I have now	True	31%
	Neither true nor false	15%
	False	53%
	Mean	-0.7
Require me to delay accepting attractive job opportunities	True	29%
	Neither true nor false	19%
	False	52%
	Mean	-0.7
Require more time than I am willing to invest	True	28%
	Neither true nor false	16%
	False	57%
	Mean	-0.8
Be intimidating	True	27%
	Neither true nor false	19%
	False	54%
	Mean	-0.8
Require more energy than I am willing to invest	True	23%
	Neither true nor false	15%
	False	62%
	Mean	-1.0

Differences by Stage in the Decision Process

Compared with respondents who had applied to graduate business school, respondents who planned to apply were significantly more likely to feel that business school would be too expensive in the short term to be worthwhile. Also, it would require them to take on large financial debts, it would require more work experience than they have now, and it would be too competitive.

Compared with respondents who had already applied to graduate business school at the time of the survey, respondents who were not sure whether they would apply were significantly more likely to feel that business school would be too competitive and too expensive in the short term to be worthwhile. They said graduate business school would also require them to—

- spend more time and energy than they were willing to invest;
- delay accepting attractive job opportunities;
- take on large financial debts;
- postpone marriage, having a child, or other personal plans;
- attain more work experience than they had; and
- severely limit the time they had for people who are important to them.

Respondents who had decided not to apply to graduate business school and who had decided not to consider postgraduate study at all were asked separately their reasons for being reluctant to consider postgraduate study. Four of the top five reasons for being reluctant pertained to uncertainty or unwillingness to commit.

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POSSIBLE REASONS FOR RELUCTANCE TO CONSIDER POSTGRADUATE STUDY		
		<i>n</i> = 78
Post graduate education requires too large a financial investment	Agree	59%
	Neither agree nor disagree	22%
	Disagree	19%
	Total	100%
Job prospects are too uncertain to make a commitment	Agree	44%
	Neither agree nor disagree	17%
	Disagree	40%
	Total	100%
Not ready to make a dramatic change in my current job/life situation	Agree	42%
	Neither agree nor disagree	18%
	Disagree	40%
	Total	100%
I do not think I need additional formal degrees for what I plan in my life	Agree	41%
	Neither agree nor disagree	18%
	Disagree	41%
	Total	100%
I am not sure enough about my future to make a commitment	Agree	37%
	Neither agree nor disagree	15%
	Disagree	48%
	Total	100%
Is overrated in leading to a financially rewarding career	Agree	29%
	Neither agree nor disagree	27%
	Disagree	44%
	Total	100%
I have had enough of the academic life	Agree	29%
	Neither agree nor disagree	23%
	Disagree	47%
	Total	100%
Would be too stressful	Agree	28%
	Neither agree nor disagree	17%
	Disagree	55%
	Total	100%
Means giving up too much free time	Agree	27%
	Neither agree nor disagree	22%
	Disagree	51%
	Total	100%
Requires more energy than I am willing to invest	Agree	27%
	Neither agree nor disagree	21%
	Disagree	53%
	Total	100%
Requires that I take an entrance exam on which I do not think I would do well	Agree	24%
	Neither agree nor disagree	23%
	Disagree	53%
	Total	100%
I would have to postpone marriage, having a child or other important personal plans	Agree	24%
	Neither agree nor disagree	19%
	Disagree	56%
	Total	100%
I would have to move to another city or part of the country to attend	Agree	21%
	Neither agree nor disagree	29%
	Disagree	50%
	Total	100%

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POSSIBLE REASONS FOR RELUCTANCE TO CONSIDER POSTGRADUATE STUDY		
Would not gain me the respect people important to me	Agree	9%
	Neither agree nor disagree	17%
	Disagree	74%
	Total	100%

Life Priorities

Respondents rated the importance of nine aspects of life on a 5-point scale, with five corresponding to “extremely important” and one corresponding to “not at all important.” Respondents could also choose “Not applicable”. The following table is in mean rank order.

IMPORTANCE OF ASPECTS OF LIFE		
		<i>n</i> = 9,950
One's own family (spouse and/or children)	Extremely important	73%
	Very important	19%
	Somewhat important	5%
	Not very/Not at all important	3%
	Total	100%
	Mean	4.6
Financial security	Extremely important	45%
	Very important	46%
	Somewhat important	8%
	Not very/Not at all important	1%
	Total	100%
	Mean	4.4
Career and work	Extremely important	40%
	Very important	51%
	Somewhat important	8%
	Not very/Not at all important	0%
	Total	100%
	Mean	4.3
Friends and acquaintances	Extremely important	28%
	Very important	51%
	Somewhat important	19%
	Not very/Not at all important	2%
	Total	100%
	Mean	4.1
Relatives	Extremely important	34%
	Very important	38%
	Somewhat important	21%
	Not very/Not at all important	6%
	Total	100%
	Mean	4.0
Free time and relaxation	Extremely important	25%
	Very important	47%
	Somewhat important	24%
	Not very/Not at all important	4%
	Total	100%
	Mean	3.9
Wealth	Extremely important	19%
	Very important	40%
	Somewhat important	35%
	Not very/Not at all important	6%
	Total	100%

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IMPORTANCE OF ASPECTS OF LIFE		
	Mean	3.7
Religion	Extremely important	21%
	Very important	19%
	Somewhat important	24%
	Not very/Not at all important	36%
	Total	100%
	Mean	3.1
Politics and public life	Extremely important	5%
	Very important	24%
	Somewhat important	44%
	Not very/Not at all important	27%
	Total	100%
	Mean	3.0

Differences by Stage in Decision Process

There were no differences in the importance of friends and acquaintances among individuals who had applied to graduate business school, those who planned to apply, those who were not sure whether they would apply, and those who had decided not to apply.

Financial security, wealth, and religion were relatively more important to individuals who had applied or planned to apply to graduate business school than to those who were not sure whether they would apply and those who had decided not to apply. Family (spouse and children) and relatives were relatively more important to respondents who had already applied. Career and work and politics and public life were relatively more important to those who planned to apply, but free time and relaxation were less important to this group.

Perceived Admission Difficulty

Respondents who had applied to graduate business school and had not yet received an acceptance, and those who planned to apply, or were uncertain if they would apply, were asked to indicate how difficult they felt it would be to be admitted into their school of choice. Fifty-one percent felt it would be somewhat difficult to gain admission to their school of choice. Sixteen percent felt it would be very difficult and 33% felt it would not be very difficult or not at all difficult.

PERCEIVED DIFFICULTY IN GAINING ADMISSION	
	<i>n</i> = 7,835
Very difficult	16%
Somewhat difficult	51%
Not very difficult	23%
Not at all difficult	10%
Total	100%
Mean	2.7

Respondents who thought that it would be very or somewhat difficult to be admitted to their school of choice were asked to predict the strongest potential barriers to admission. The barriers most cited were scores on admissions tests (49%), financial resources (46%), and undergraduate academic record (41%). About a quarter also cited employment history (26%), level of participation in extracurricular activities (25%), and essays they might have to write for admission (23%).

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PERCEIVED BARRIERS TO ADMISSION (AMONG THOSE PERCEIVING ADMISSION "VERY" OR "SOMEWHAT" DIFFICULT)	
	<i>n</i> = 5,246
My scores on admissions tests	49%
My financial resources	46%
My undergraduate academic record	41%
My employment history	26%
My level of participation in extracurricular activities	25%
Essays I might have to write for admissions	23%
My age	20%
Recommendations I may have to get	16%
Interviews I might have to have for admissions	13%
My racial or ethnic background	10%
Other barrier	5%
My gender	3%
No barrier	3%

Differences by Stage in Decision Process

Excluding those who had already received acceptances, those who had applied to business school were significantly less likely than those who planned to apply or who were not sure whether they would apply to believe it would be difficult to be admitted to their school of choice.

Respondents who thought that it would be very or somewhat difficult to be admitted to their school of choice were asked to predict the strongest potential barriers to admission. Compared with those who had applied, respondents who planned to apply or were not sure whether they would apply were significantly more likely to cite the following perceived barriers to admission: financial resources; undergraduate academic record; scores on admissions tests; level of participation in extracurricular activities; and possible requirements for admission, including essays, recommendation letters, and interviews.

Respondents who were not sure whether they would apply were also significantly more likely than those who had applied to say their employment history was a barrier.

PERCEIVED BARRIERS TO ADMISSION (AMONG THOSE PERCEIVING ADMISSION "VERY" OR "SOMEWHAT" DIFFICULT) BY PLANS TO APPLY				
	Applied to any graduate business schools?			
	Yes	No, not yet, but I plan to	No, not yet, and I am not sure if I will	No, I have decided not to apply to graduate business school
	<i>n</i> = 896	<i>n</i> = 3,534	<i>n</i> = 746	<i>n</i> = 70
My scores on admissions tests	57%	47%	46%	53%
My undergraduate academic record	36%	42%	47%	43%
My financial resources	33%	47%	57%	37%
My level of participation in extracurricular activities	17%	26%	30%	29%
My employment history	23%	26%	31%	23%
My age	19%	19%	21%	23%
Recommendations I may have to get	10%	17%	21%	19%

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PERCEIVED BARRIERS TO ADMISSION (AMONG THOSE PERCEIVING ADMISSION "VERY" OR "SOMEWHAT" DIFFICULT) BY PLANS TO APPLY				
	Applied to any graduate business schools?			
	Yes	No, not yet, but I plan to	No, not yet, and I am not sure if I will	No, I have decided not to apply to graduate business school
	<i>n</i> = 896	<i>n</i> = 3,534	<i>n</i> = 746	<i>n</i> = 70
Interviews I might have to have for admissions	10%	14%	15%	16%
My racial or ethnic background	9%	10%	10%	13%
Essays I might have to write for admissions	15%	26%	22%	11%
My gender	3%	3%	3%	4%
Other barrier	5%	5%	5%	4%
No barrier	6%	3%	2%	3%

Perceptions of a "Glass Ceiling"

When asked to indicate how real the "glass ceiling" (obstacles preventing women from ascending to the highest levels of management in an organization or industry) is in six industries.

Respondents said it is very real in engineering (30%), business (28%), science (16%), law (17%), medicine (12%), and education (9%).

PERCEPTIONS OF "GLASS CEILING"						
	Business <i>n</i> = 9,950	Education <i>n</i> = 9,950	Law <i>n</i> = 9,950	Medicine <i>n</i> = 9,950	Science <i>n</i> = 9,950	Engineering <i>n</i> = 9,950
Very real	28%	9%	17%	12%	16%	30%
Somewhat real	40%	15%	39%	30%	38%	43%
Not very real	20%	30%	27%	33%	29%	18%
Not at all real	12%	46%	17%	26%	18%	9%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Mean	2.8	1.9	2.6	2.3	2.5	2.9

Differences by Stage in Decision Process

Compared with those who had applied to graduate business school, those who planned to apply, and those who expressed uncertainty as to whether they would apply, respondents who had decided not to apply were significantly more likely to believe that the "glass ceiling" is real in business, law, and engineering.

Compared with those who had applied to graduate business school, respondents who had decided not to apply were significantly more likely to believe that the "glass ceiling" is real in the field of education. Similarly, those who had decided not to apply were significantly more likely to say that the "glass ceiling" is real in medicine and science, compared with those who had applied and those who planned to apply. Respondents who were not sure whether they would apply to graduate business school were significantly more likely to believe that the "glass ceiling" was real in business and science than those who had applied to business school and those who planned to apply.

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PERCEPTIONS OF "GLASS CEILING" BY PLANS TO APPLY					
		Applied to any graduate business schools?			
		Yes	No, not yet, but I plan to	No, not yet, and I am not sure if I will	No, I have decided not to apply to graduate business school
		<i>n</i> = 3,771	<i>n</i> = 4,988	<i>n</i> = 1,084	<i>n</i> = 186
Business	Very real	28%	27%	29%	48%
	Somewhat real	41%	40%	41%	29%
	Not very real	19%	20%	21%	11%
	Not at all real	12%	13%	9%	12%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Mean	2.8	2.8	2.9	3.1
Education	Very real	8%	10%	7%	11%
	Somewhat real	15%	15%	16%	23%
	Not very real	29%	30%	32%	30%
	Not at all real	47%	45%	45%	36%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Mean	1.8	1.9	1.9	2.1
Law	Very real	17%	17%	18%	30%
	Somewhat real	39%	37%	41%	44%
	Not very real	27%	28%	26%	14%
	Not at all real	17%	18%	15%	12%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Mean	2.6	2.5	2.6	2.9
Medicine	Very real	12%	11%	12%	21%
	Somewhat real	30%	29%	31%	34%
	Not very real	34%	32%	33%	26%
	Not at all real	25%	27%	24%	19%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Mean	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.6
Science	Very real	15%	15%	17%	26%
	Somewhat real	39%	37%	39%	44%
	Not very real	29%	29%	29%	19%
	Not at all real	17%	19%	15%	11%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Mean	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.8
Engineering	Very real	30%	29%	32%	41%
	Somewhat real	43%	43%	43%	35%
	Not very real	18%	18%	17%	15%
	Not at all real	9%	10%	8%	9%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Mean	3.0	2.9	3.0	3.1
All Professions	Mean	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.8

MBA.COM REGISTRANT SURVEY GENERAL REPORT

Financing Graduate Management Education

Relative Importance of Costs Associated with Graduate Management Education

Respondents were asked to weight the relative importance of costs associated with pursuing a graduate management degree. Tuition and books topped the list (39%), followed by housing and other out-of-pocket living expenses (21%), opportunity costs of lost earnings (19%), application fees of schools (12%), and the cost of the GMAT® (8%).

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH GRADUATE MANAGEMENT EDUCATION	
	Mean Percent
Tuition and books	39%
Housing and other out-of-pocket living costs	21%
Opportunity costs of lost earnings	19%
Application fees of schools	12%
Cost of the GMAT	8%
Total	100%

Differences by Stage in the Decision Process

Compared with those who planned to apply and those who were not sure whether they would apply, respondents who had applied to graduate business school at the time of the survey were significantly more likely to assign the cost of tuition and books greater importance than other costs.

Respondents who were not sure whether they would apply were significantly more likely than those who had applied and those who planned to apply to assign the opportunity costs of lost earnings more importance than other costs.

Compared with those who had applied already, those who planned to apply and those who were not sure whether they would apply were significantly more likely to consider application fees of schools more important than other costs.

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF COSTS IN DECISION TO PURSUE GRADUATE MANAGEMENT DEGREE BY PLANS TO APPLY			
	Applied to any graduate business schools?		
	Yes	No, not yet, but I plan to	No, not yet, and I am not sure I will
	n = 2,839	n = 4,027	n = 940
	Mean	Mean	Mean
Tuition and books	42%	38%	35%
Opportunity costs of lost earnings	20%	18%	23%
Housing and other out-of-pocket living costs	20%	22%	21%
Application fees of schools	11%	13%	13%
Cost of the GMAT	8%	9%	7%
Total	100%	100%	100%

MBA.COM REGISTRANT SURVEY GENERAL REPORT

Planned Sources for Financing Graduate Management Education

Respondents who had applied or planned to apply to graduate business school were asked to indicate the sources they were going to use to finance their education. Fifty-nine percent said loans, 51% said grants, fellowships, scholarships, or government benefits; 50% said employer reimbursement or sponsorship; and 49% said personal earnings.

PLANNED SOURCES FOR FINANCING GRADUATE MANAGEMENT EDUCATION	
	<i>n</i> = 8,759
Loans	59%
Grants, fellowships, scholarships, or government benefits (not a loan)	51%
Personal savings	50%
Personal earnings	49%
Employer reimbursement or sponsorship	33%
Support from parents	26%
Spouse's (partner's) earnings	12%
Other source	2%

Because respondents could select multiple ways of financing their graduate management education, an in-depth analysis was conducted to better understand the patterns reflected by their responses. This analysis revealed that 19% plan to use one source to finance their education. Five percent chose employer reimbursement as their only source of financing, followed by loans (4%), grants (3%), personal savings (2%), support from parents (2%), and personal earnings (2%).

Respondents who selected more than one source were asked to indicate which would be their main source. Thirty-five percent indicated that loans would be their main source of financing. The next most popular sources of financing were grants, fellowships, scholarships, or government benefits (17%); employer reimbursement or sponsorship (16%); personal savings (12%); personal earnings (10%); support from parents (10%); and spouse's or partner's earnings (1%).

Respondents who said they did not plan to rely solely on employer reimbursement (28%) were asked how much of their total graduate education expenses they expected their employer to pay. Thirty percent of the respondents were not sure. Of those who knew, 39% said their employer would pay some of their expenses and 35% said their employer would pay most of their expenses.

AMOUNT OF EMPLOYER REIMBURSEMENT/SPONSORSHIP		
How much of total graduate education expenses employer will pay ("Don't know" removed)		<i>n</i> = 1,679
	Some	39%
	About half	19%
	Most	35%
	All	7%
	Total	100%

MBA.COM REGISTRANT SURVEY GENERAL REPORT

Differences by Stage in the Decision Process

Compared with respondents who had already applied to business school, respondents who planned to apply were significantly more likely to indicate loans and grants, fellowships, scholarships, or government benefits as sources of financing for their degree. They were also significantly more likely to indicate one of these two categories of financing as their main source.

PLANNED SOURCES FOR FINANCING GRADUATE MANAGEMENT EDUCATION BY PLANS TO APPLY		
	Applied to any graduate business schools?	
	Yes	No, not yet, but I plan to
	n = 3,771	n = 4,988
Loans	52%	63%
Grants, fellowships, scholarships, or government benefits (not a loan)	41%	58%
Personal savings	49%	52%
Personal earnings	49%	49%
Employer reimbursement or sponsorship	34%	32%
Support from parents	25%	28%
Spouse's (partner's) earnings	13%	11%
Other source	2%	2%

Respondents who had applied to graduate business school were significantly more likely than those who planned to apply to indicate employer reimbursement or sponsorship as their main source of financing and less likely to indicate loans and financial aid.. They were also significantly more likely to say their employer would pay for most of their educational expenses.

ONE MAIN SOURCE FOR FINANCING GRADUATE MANAGEMENT EDUCATION BY PLANS TO APPLY		
	Applied to any graduate business schools?	
	Yes	No, not yet, but I plan to
	n = 3,771	n = 4,988
Loans	32%	36%
Grants, fellowships, scholarships, or government benefits	14%	20%
Employer reimbursement or sponsorship	19%	13%
Personal savings	13%	11%
Support from parents	11%	9%
Personal earnings	10%	9%
Spouse's (partner's) earnings	2%	1%
Total	100%	100%

AMOUNT OF EMPLOYER REIMBURSEMENT/SPONSORSHIP BY PLANS TO APPLY			
		Applied to any graduate business schools?	
		Yes	No, not yet, but I plan to
		n = 1,006	n = 1,384
How much of total graduate education expenses employer will pay	Some	30%	26%
	About half	16%	11%
	Most	30%	21%
	All	6%	4%
	Don't know	19%	38%
	Total	100%	100%

MBA.COM REGISTRANT SURVEY GENERAL REPORT

Debt Owed from College Loans

Respondents who had completed an undergraduate or first degree program were asked to indicate how much debt they owed from their previous schooling (undergraduate or other graduate). Sixty-seven percent of the respondents who completed undergraduate school (or first university) reported no debt. Twelve percent indicated less than U.S. \$10,000 in debt; 11% indicated at least U.S. \$10,000 but less than U.S. \$20,000 in debt; and 10% indicated U.S. \$20,000 or more in debt.

DEBT OWED FROM COLLEGE LOANS (U.S. DOLLARS)	
	n = 8,851
None	67%
Less than \$10,000	12%
\$10,000, but less than \$20,000	11%
\$20,000 or more	10%
Total	100%

There are no significant differences in debt owed by stage in decision process.

GMAT Test-Taker Behavior

GMAT Tests Taken

Respondents were asked about their plans to take the GMAT®. Thirty-three percent of the survey respondents had taken the GMAT® once, and 10% had taken the GMAT® more than once. Seven percent had registered for the GMAT® but had not taken it; 44% had not registered for the GMAT® but planned to do so; and 5% did not plan to take the GMAT®.

STAGE IN GMAT PROCESS	
	n = 10,029
I have not registered for nor taken the GMAT, but I plan to do	44%
I have registered for and taken the GMAT once	33%
I have registered for and taken the GMAT more than once	10%
I have registered for but have not taken the GMAT	7%
I do not plan to take the GMAT	5%
Total	100%

Of those who had taken the GMAT® more than once, the majority (74%) had taken it one additional time.

GMAT FREQUENCY AMONG THOSE TAKING MORE THAN ONCE	
	n = 997
2	74%
3	15%
4 or more	11%
Total	100%

The majority (42%) of respondents who have taken the GMAT® did not plan to take it again.

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PLAN TO TAKE THE GMAT AGAIN	
	n = 4,347
Definitely yes	18%
Probably yes	13%
Probably no	20%
Definitely no	42%
Uncertain	7%
Total	100%

Differences by Stage in Decision Process

The majority of the respondents who had applied to graduate business school at the time of the survey had taken the GMAT[®] exam at least once (81%). Thirteen percent had not yet registered for the GMAT[®] but planned to do so; 5% had registered but had not yet taken the test; and 6% did not plan to take the test.

Compared with those who planned to apply to graduate business school and those who were uncertain whether they would apply, significantly more respondents who had decided not to apply to graduate business school had taken the GMAT[®].

STAGE IN GMAT PROCESS BY PLANS TO APPLY				
	Applied to any graduate business schools?			
	Yes	No, not yet, but I plan to	No, not yet, and I am not sure I will	No, I have decided not to apply to graduate business school
	n = 3,771	n = 4,988	n = 1,084	n = 186
I have registered for and taken the GMAT once	57%	19%	18%	30%
I have registered for and taken the GMAT more than once	19%	5%	2%	3%
I have not registered for nor taken the GMAT but plan to	13%	64%	68%	15%
I have registered for, but have not taken the GMAT	5%	9%	4%	3%
I do not plan to take the GMAT	6%	2%	7%	49%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

The respondents who had decided not to apply to graduate business school were also significantly more likely than those in other stages of the decision process to say they do not plan to take the GMAT[®]. Compared with the respondents in other stages of the decision process, significantly more respondents who applied to graduate business school had taken the GMAT[®] more than once.

Those who planned to apply and those who were not sure whether they would apply were significantly more likely to say they planned to take the GMAT[®] again, compared with those who had applied to business school and those who had decided not to apply.

MBA.COM REGISTRANT SURVEY GENERAL REPORT

PLAN TO TAKE THE GMAT AGAIN BY PLANS TO APPLY				
	Applied to any graduate business schools?			
	Yes	No, not yet, but I plan to	No, not yet, and I am not sure if I will	No, I have decided not to apply to graduate business school
	<i>n</i> = 2,693	<i>n</i> = 1,135	<i>n</i> = 180	<i>n</i> = 51
Definitely yes	11%	40%	8%	2%
Probably yes	11%	18%	39%	10%
Probably no	21%	21%	36%	31%
Definitely no	57%	22%	16%	57%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Mean	1.8	2.8	2.4	1.6

Reasons for Taking the GMAT

Respondents who had taken the GMAT® were asked their reasons for doing so. The majority of the mba.com registrants surveyed who took the GMAT® exam took it because it was required for admission at the school they wanted to attend (59%) or required by the school in which they were enrolled (25%).

MAIN REASON TOOK THE GMAT	
	<i>n</i> = 4,347
GMAT required for admission to school want to attend	59%
GMAT required by program in which currently enrolled	25%
Wanted to see if had scores to be accepted by first-choice school	7%
Uncertain plans, thought GMAT would help decide	5%
To gauge how well he/she is likely to do in graduate school	1%
Other	2%
Total	100%

Differences by Stage in Decision Process

Respondents who had not yet applied to graduate business school and were not sure whether they would and those who had decided not to apply were significantly more likely than others to have taken the GMAT® exam to help them make a decision about their plans.

Respondents who had applied to graduate business school were significantly less likely to have taken the GMAT® exam to see if they had high enough scores to be accepted by their first choice of business schools. But, they were significantly more likely to have taken the test because it was required by the program in which they were enrolled at the time of the survey.

Respondents who planned to apply were significantly more likely than others to have taken the GMAT® because it was required for admission to the school they wanted to attend.

MBA.COM REGISTRANT SURVEY GENERAL REPORT

MAIN REASON TOOK THE GMAT BY PLANS TO APPLY				
	Applied to any graduate business schools?			
	Yes	No, not yet, but I plan to	No, not yet, and I am not sure if I will	No, I have decided not to apply to graduate business school
	<i>n</i> = 2,867	<i>n</i> = 1,201	<i>n</i> = 218	<i>n</i> = 61
GMAT required for admission to school want to attend	55%	75%	39%	21%
GMAT required by program in which currently enrolled	36%	4%	1%	8%
Wanted to see if had scores to be accepted by first choice	5%	12%	20%	16%
Uncertain plans, thought GMAT would help decide	2%	6%	30%	31%
Other	1%	2%	8%	18%
To see how well likely to do in graduate school	1%	2%	3%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Test-Preparation Behavior

Respondents who had taken the GMAT® were asked to indicate how far in advance and the length of time they had prepared for it. One-third started studying for the GMAT® exam more than six weeks before the test. The next most prepared group started studying four to six weeks before taking the GMAT® exam (31%), followed by those who studied one to three weeks before the test (21%) and those who started studying less than one week before the test (8%). Six percent did not prepare for the test. Of those who prepared for the GMAT®, 57% spent 24 hours or more preparing, and 43% spent less than 24 hours preparing.

ADVANCE PREPARATION FOR THE GMAT	
	<i>n</i> = 4,347
More than six weeks	34%
Four to six weeks	31%
One to three weeks	21%
Less than one week	8%
Did not prepare in advance	6%
Total	100%

Differences by Stage in Decision Process

Respondents who were not sure whether they would apply to business school were significantly more likely than others to have started studying no more than three weeks before they took the GMAT® exam. Respondents who planned to apply were significantly more likely than others to begin studying more than six weeks before taking the GMAT®.

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ADVANCE PREPARATION FOR THE GMAT BY PLANS TO APPLY				
	Applied to any graduate business schools?			
	Yes	No, not yet, but I plan to	No, not yet, and I am not sure if I will	No, I have decided not to apply to graduate business school
	<i>n</i> = 2,717	<i>n</i> = 1,130	<i>n</i> = 201	<i>n</i> = 56
3 weeks or less	32%	26%	41%	23%
4 to 6 weeks	32%	33%	27%	48%
More than 6 weeks	35%	41%	32%	29%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Respondents who planned to apply to graduate business school were significantly more likely than others to have studied more than 24 hours for the GMAT[®] exam.

NUMBER OF HOURS OF GMAT PREPARATION BY PLANS TO APPLY				
	Applied to any graduate business schools?			
	Yes	No, not yet, but I plan to	No, not yet, and I am not sure if I will	No, I have decided not to apply to graduate business school
	<i>n</i> = 2,717	<i>n</i> = 1,130	<i>n</i> = 201	<i>n</i> = 56
Less than 24 hours	45%	36%	53%	54%
24 hours or more	55%	64%	47%	46%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Test Materials Used

Respondents who had taken the GMAT[®] were asked to indicate the types of test preparation they used. The majority of the respondents who studied for the GMAT[®] exam used POWERPREP[®] software provided by GMAC[®] and other test-preparation books or software. Less than half used the *Official Guide for GMAT[®] Review, 10th Edition*, published by GMAC[®], less than a third reviewed sample questions on mba.com, and a quarter reviewed sample questions on other Web sites.

HOW RESPONDENTS PREPARED FOR THE GMAT	
	<i>n</i> = 4,104
Used POWERPREP software	69%
Used test-preparation book(s) or software not from GMAC	67%
Used <i>Official Guide for GMAT Review, 10th Ed.</i> , published by GMAC	46%
Reviewed sample questions on GMAC mba.com Web site	30%
Reviewed sample questions available on other Web sites	25%
Attended formal test-preparation or coaching courses	22%
Reviewed GMAT Paper Tests sold on mba.com	18%
Reviewed paper GMAT tests from other Web sites	16%
Used Essay Insight essay preparation product from mba.com	11%

MBA.COM REGISTRANT SURVEY GENERAL REPORT

Differences by Stage in Decision Process

Compared with those in other stages of the decision process, respondents who had applied to graduate business school were significantly more likely to have used GMAC's POWERPREP® software, reviewed sample questions on mba.com, and used Essay Insight® (a product that helps practice for the Analytical Writing Assessment section of the GMAT® exam) from mba.com.

Both those who had applied and those who planned to apply to graduate business school were significantly more likely than those who were uncertain about applying to have reviewed sample questions on other Web sites and to have attended formal test-preparation or coaching courses.

Those who planned to apply were significantly more likely to have used the *Official Guide for GMAT® Review, 10th Edition*, than those who had applied to business school and those who were uncertain about applying.

HOW PREPARED FOR THE GMAT BY PLANS TO APPLY				
	Applied to any graduate business schools?			
	Yes	No, not yet, but I plan to	No, not yet, and I am not sure I will	No, I have decided not to apply to graduate business school
	n = 2,717	n = 1,130	n = 201	n = 56
Used test-preparation book(s) or software not from GMAC	67%	69%	63%	68%
Used POWERPREP software	71%	66%	61%	59%
Used <i>Official Guide for GMAT Review, 10th Ed.</i> , published GMAC	45%	51%	41%	41%
Reviewed sample questions available on other Web sites	25%	28%	18%	27%
Reviewed sample questions at GMAC's mba.com Web site	33%	25%	21%	25%
Reviewed GMAT paper tests from other Web sites	16%	16%	13%	21%
Reviewed GMAT Paper Tests from mba.com	19%	16%	14%	13%
Used Essay Insight essay prep product from mba.com	12%	9%	9%	11%
Attended formal test preparation or coaching courses	21%	25%	17%	11%
GMAT preparation - other	6%	4%	6%	11%

Other Tests Taken

Respondents were asked to indicate any other standardized tests they had taken. The majority of respondents had not taken any other graduate or professional tests (66%) at the time of the survey. Eighteen percent had taken the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), 10% had taken the Law School Admission Test (LSAT), 10% had taken a test not listed as an option in the survey, and 1% had taken the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT).

MBA.COM REGISTRANT SURVEY GENERAL REPORT

Sources of Information

Respondents were asked to indicate on a five-point scale how valuable various online, printed, personal, and school sources of information had been in informing them about graduate management education and graduate business schools. Five corresponds to “extremely valuable” and one corresponds to “not at all valuable.” Respondents could also select “not applicable” if they did not use the source listed, thus making it possible to determine the reach of the sources.

Online Sources

The majority of the respondents had used mba.com (91%) and school Web sites (90%) as a source of information. Business magazine/newspaper Web sites (84%) and MBA-related Web sites (83%) were also popular. Almost three-quarters of the respondents used job/career Web sites (74%), whereas less than half used chat rooms/threaded discussions on business magazine/newspaper Web sites (49%) and chat rooms/threaded discussions on school Web sites (45%).

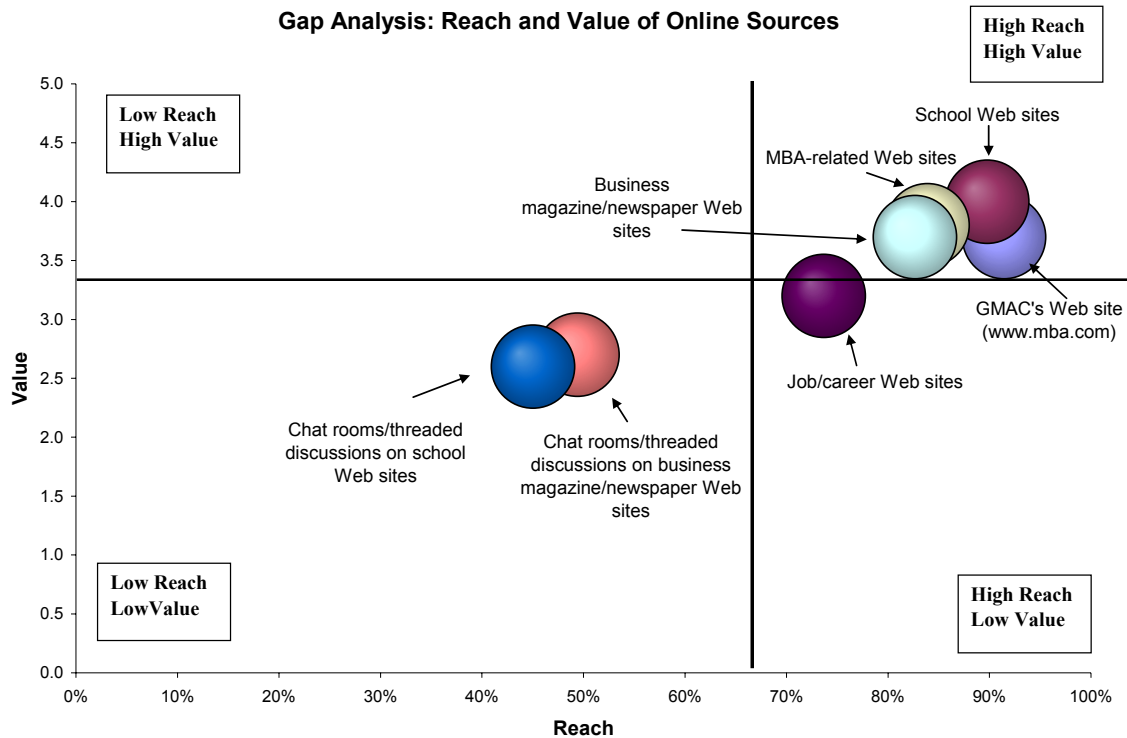
School Web sites were considered by respondents to be the most valuable online source of information, as measured by a mean score of 4.0, followed by business magazine/newspaper Web sites (3.8), mba.com (3.7), MBA-related Web sites (3.7), job/career Web sites (3.2), chat rooms/threaded discussions on business magazine/newspaper Web sites (2.7), and chat rooms/threaded discussions on school Web sites (2.6).

VALUE OF ONLINE SOURCES (NOT APPLICABLE REMOVED)		
School Web sites	Reach	90%
	Extremely/very valuable	72%
	Somewhat valuable	21%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	7%
	Total	100%
	Mean	4.0
Business magazine/newspaper Web sites	Reach	84%
	Extremely/very valuable	62%
	Somewhat valuable	30%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	8%
	Total	100%
	Mean	3.8
GMAC's Web site (www.mba.com)	Reach	91%
	Extremely/very valuable	58%
	Somewhat valuable	33%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	9%
	Total	100%
	Mean	3.7
MBA-related Web sites	Reach	83%
	Extremely/very valuable	61%
	Somewhat valuable	30%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	10%
	Total	100%
	Mean	3.7

MBA.COM REGISTRANT SURVEY GENERAL REPORT

VALUE OF ONLINE SOURCES (NOT APPLICABLE REMOVED)		
Job/career Web sites	Reach	74%
	Extremely/very valuable	11%
	Very valuable	31%
	Somewhat valuable	36%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	22%
	Total	100%
	Mean	3.2
Chat rooms/threaded discussions on business magazine/newspaper Web sites	Reach	49%
	Extremely/very valuable	7%
	Very valuable	17%
	Somewhat valuable	32%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	45%
	Total	100%
	Mean	2.7
Chat rooms/threaded discussions on school Web sites	Reach	45%
	Extremely/very valuable	6%
	Very valuable	15%
	Somewhat valuable	29%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	49%
	Total	100%
	Mean	2.6

The gap analysis below illustrates the gaps in reach and value of online sources.



MBA.COM REGISTRANT SURVEY GENERAL REPORT

Printed Sources

The majority of respondents had used school brochures/publications (87%) as a printed source of information, followed by business magazines and newspapers (79%), and MBA-related guides or publications (78%).

The value of these printed sources were judged to be about the same, with the typical respondent rating the value of school brochures or publications as very to somewhat valuable (3.8), followed by business magazines and newspapers (3.7) and MBA-related guides or publications (3.7).

VALUE OF PRINTED SOURCES (NOT APPLICABLE REMOVED)		
School brochures/publications	Reach	87%
	Extremely/very valuable	64%
	Somewhat valuable	28%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	8%
	Total	100%
	Mean	3.8
MBA-related guides or publications	Reach	78%
	Extremely/very valuable	63%
	Somewhat valuable	28%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	9%
	Total	100%
	Mean	3.7
Business magazines and newspapers	Reach	79%
	Extremely/very valuable	59%
	Somewhat valuable	31%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	10%
	Total	100%
	Mean	3.7

Personal Sources

At the time of the survey, the majority of respondents had used friends and family (89%) and peers and colleagues (85%) as sources of information about graduate management education and business schools. Seventy-five percent had used mentors or individuals in a professional organization as a source of information, followed by current or former employers/supervisors (70%), current students or alumni of business schools (67%), MBA program personnel (67%), and school or career counselors (60%).

According to mean scores, mentors or individuals in professional organizations were considered the most valuable sources of information (3.6), followed by peers/colleagues (3.5), MBA program personnel (3.5), friends/family (3.5), current students or alumni of business schools (3.4), current or former employers/supervisors (3.2), and school/career counselors (3.1).

**MBA.COM REGISTRANT SURVEY
GENERAL REPORT**

VALUE OF PERSONAL SOURCES (NOT APPLICABLE REMOVED)		
	Reach	75%
Mentors or individuals in professional organizations	Extremely/very valuable	57%
	Somewhat valuable	28%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	15%
	Total	100%
	Mean	3.6
	Reach	89%
Friends/family	Extremely/very valuable	55%
	Somewhat valuable	31%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	15%
	Total	100%
	Mean	3.5
	Reach	67%
MBA program personnel	Extremely/very valuable	52%
	Somewhat valuable	31%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	17%
	Total	100%
	Mean	3.5
	Reach	67%
Current student or alumni	Extremely/very valuable	51%
	Somewhat valuable	29%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	19%
	Total	100%
	Mean	3.4
	Reach	85%
Peers/colleagues	Extremely/very valuable	50%
	Somewhat valuable	34%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	15%
	Total	100%
	Mean	3.5
	Reach	70%
Current or former employer/supervisor	Extremely/very valuable	43%
	Somewhat valuable	29%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	28%
	Total	100%
	Mean	3.2
	Reach	60%
School/career counselor	Extremely/very valuable	39%
	Somewhat valuable	30%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	31%
	Total	100%
	Mean	3.1

MBA.COM REGISTRANT SURVEY GENERAL REPORT

School Sources

A little more than half of the respondents attended school information sessions (57%), whereas fewer than half attended MBA Forums[®]/fairs (48%), visited a school campus (47%), or attended a school reception or open house (45%) to get information. According to mean scores, information sessions were considered the most valuable source of information (3.7), followed by campus visits (3.6), MBA Forums[®]/fairs (3.6), and receptions/open houses (3.4).

VALUE OF EVENTS (NOT APPLICABLE REMOVED)		
Information sessions	Reach	57%
	Extremely/very valuable	62%
	Somewhat valuable	28%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	10%
	Total	100%
	Mean	3.7
Campus Visits	Reach	47%
	Extremely/very valuable	57%
	Somewhat valuable	28%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	15%
	Total	100%
	Mean	3.6
MBA Forums/Fairs	Reach	48%
	Extremely/very valuable	56%
	Somewhat valuable	28%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	16%
	Total	100%
	Mean	3.6
Receptions/Open houses	Reach	45%
	Extremely/very valuable	50%
	Somewhat valuable	33%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	17%
	Total	100%
	Mean	3.4

Differences by Stage in Decision Process

Online Sources

Respondents who planned to apply to graduate business school were significantly more likely to use business magazine/newspaper Web sites, MBA-related Web sites, and job/career Web sites as online sources of information, compared with others in different stages of their decision process. Those who had already applied to business school and those who planned to apply were more likely to use chat rooms/threaded discussions on business magazine/newspaper and school Web sites than those who were not sure whether they would apply.

Respondents who were not sure whether they would apply to graduate business school rated school Web sites and business magazine/newspaper Web sites as less valuable sources of information than those in other stages. Respondents who planned to apply were more likely to rate mba.com and other MBA-related Web sites as valuable sources.

MBA.COM REGISTRANT SURVEY GENERAL REPORT

VALUE OF ONLINE SOURCES BY PLANS TO APPLY				
		Applied to any graduate business schools?		
		Yes	No, not yet, but I plan to	No, not yet, and I am not sure if I will
School Web sites	Reach	90%	90%	87%
	Extremely/very valuable	73%	74%	59%
	Somewhat valuable	20%	19%	31%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	7%	7%	10%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
	Mean	4.0	4.0	3.7
Business magazine/newspaper Web sites	Reach	82%	86%	80%
	Extremely/very valuable	60%	65%	51%
	Somewhat valuable	30%	28%	38%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	10%	7%	10%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
	Mean	3.8	3.8	3.6
MBA-related Web sites	Reach	79%	86%	79%
	Extremely/very valuable	56%	66%	49%
	Somewhat valuable	31%	27%	40%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	13%	7%	11%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
	Mean	3.6	3.8	3.5
GMAC's Web site (www.mba.com)	Reach	89%	93%	92%
	Extremely/very valuable	49%	65%	54%
	Somewhat valuable	38%	29%	38%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	13%	6%	8%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
	Mean	3.5	3.8	3.6
Job/career Web sites	Reach	72%	75%	74%
	Extremely valuable	40%	45%	37%
	Somewhat valuable	35%	35%	41%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	25%	20%	22%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
	Mean	3.2	3.3	3.2
Chat rooms/threaded discussions on business magazine/newspaper Web sites	Reach	50%	51%	40%
	Extremely/very valuable	22%	25%	20%
	Somewhat valuable	29%	34%	30%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	49%	41%	50%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
	Mean	2.6	2.8	2.5
Chat rooms/threaded discussions on school Web sites	Reach	45%	47%	36%
	Extremely/very valuable	21%	24%	15%
	Somewhat valuable	27%	31%	28%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	52%	45%	57%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
	Mean	2.5	2.7	2.3

MBA.COM REGISTRANT SURVEY GENERAL REPORT

Printed Sources

Respondents who had applied to graduate business school were significantly more likely than others to use school brochures/publications as printed sources of information; respondents who planned to apply were more likely to use business magazines and newspapers. Both those who had applied and those who planned to apply to graduate business school used MBA-related guides or publications more than those who were not sure whether they would apply. Respondents who planned to apply rated all three print sources as more valuable sources of information than did those who had applied and those who were not sure whether they would apply.

Personal Sources

Respondents who had applied to business school were significantly more likely to use their current or former employers/supervisors, peers/colleagues, and MBA program personnel as personal sources of information than those in other stages of the decision process. Both those who had applied and those who planned to apply used mentors or individuals in professional organizations, current students or alumni of business schools, and school/career counselors as personal sources of information significantly more than those who were not sure whether they would apply.

All personal sources were considered more valuable sources of information to those who had applied or who planned to apply than to those who were not sure whether they would apply.

VALUE OF PERSONAL SOURCES BY PLANS TO APPLY				
		Applied to any graduate business schools?		
		Yes	No, not yet, but I plan to	No, not yet, and I am not sure if I will
Current or former employer/supervisor	Reach	74%	69%	67%
	Extremely/very valuable	55%	43%	37%
	Somewhat valuable	28%	29%	32%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	27%	28%	31%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
	Mean	3.2	3.2	3.1
Friends/family	Reach	88%	89%	87%
	Extremely/very valuable	54%	56%	44%
	Somewhat valuable	30%	31%	36%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	16%	13%	20%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
	Mean	3.5	3.6	3.3
Mentors or individuals in professional organizations	Reach	77%	76%	67%
	Extremely/very valuable	59%	59%	47%
	Somewhat valuable	27%	28%	33%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	14%	14%	20%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
	Mean	3.6	3.6	3.3
Peers/colleagues	Reach	86%	84%	81%
	Extremely/very valuable	51%	52%	42%
	Somewhat valuable	33%	34%	40%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	16%	14%	18%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
	Mean	3.5	3.5	3.3

MBA.COM REGISTRANT SURVEY GENERAL REPORT

VALUE OF PERSONAL SOURCES BY PLANS TO APPLY				
		Applied to any graduate business schools?		
		Yes	No, not yet, but I plan to	No, not yet, and I am not sure if I will
School/career counselor	Reach	61%	60%	51%
	Extremely/very valuable	41%	40%	27%
	Somewhat valuable	28%	31%	30%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	32%	29%	43%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
	Mean	3.1	3.1	2.7
Current student or alumni	Reach	71%	66%	58%
	Extremely/very valuable	52%	53%	42%
	Somewhat valuable	29%	29%	31%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	20%	17%	26%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
	Mean	3.4	3.5	3.2
MBA program personnel	Reach	77%	63%	53%
	Extremely/very valuable	54%	53%	37%
	Somewhat valuable	30%	31%	38%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	16%	16%	25%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
	Mean	3.5	3.5	3.1

School Sources

Respondents who had applied to graduate business school were more likely to have visited campuses and gone to receptions or open houses to get information about schools than respondents in other stages of the decision process. Both those who had applied and those who planned to apply were more likely to have attended MBA Forums®/fairs and information sessions than those who were not sure if they would apply to graduate business school.

Respondents who planned to apply rated campus visits, receptions or open houses, and MBA Forums®/fairs as more valuable sources of information than those who had applied and those who were not sure whether they would apply. Both those who had applied and those who planned to apply rated information sessions as a more valuable source of information than did those who were not sure whether they would apply.

VALUE OF EVENTS BY PLANS TO APPLY				
		Applied to any graduate business schools?		
		Yes	No, not yet, but I plan to	No, not yet, and I am not sure if I will
Campus Visits	Reach	56%	42%	34%
	Extremely/very valuable	57%	59%	43%
	Somewhat valuable	26%	27%	38%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	17%	14%	19%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
	Mean	3.6	3.7	3.4
Receptions/Open houses	Reach	52%	43%	33%
	Extremely/very valuable	50%	52%	42%
	Somewhat valuable	32%	33%	39%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	18%	15%	20%
	Total	100%	100%	100%

MBA.COM REGISTRANT SURVEY GENERAL REPORT

VALUE OF EVENTS BY PLANS TO APPLY				
		Applied to any graduate business schools?		
		Yes	No, not yet, but I plan to	No, not yet, and I am not sure if I will
MBA Forums/Fairs	Mean	3.4	3.5	3.3
	Reach	49%	51%	36%
	Extremely/very valuable	49%	63%	49%
	Somewhat valuable	30%	26%	34%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	21%	11%	17%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
	Mean	3.4	3.7	3.4
Information sessions	Reach	62%	57%	40%
	Extremely/very valuable	61%	65%	52%
	Somewhat valuable	27%	27%	36%
	Not very/Not at all valuable	12%	8%	12%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
	Mean	3.7	3.8	3.5

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MBA.COM REGISTRANT SURVEY GENERAL REPORT

Background

The Graduate Management Admission Council® (GMAC®) conducted the mba.com Registrants Survey online in order to reach prospective students from around the world and to make participation convenient. Knowledge gleaned from prior GMAC® surveys and research on GMAT® test takers, MBA Forum attendees, MBA graduates, and MBA alumni, as well as input from schools regarding their information needs, served as the basis for the survey design.

Sample Selection and Response

The sample selection was drawn from registrants of GMAC's Web site, www.mba.com, who had expressed a willingness to participate in GMAC® research. These registrants were randomly drawn from a group that had registered between September 1, 2002 and September 1, 2003.

We invited 42,688 people by e-mail to participate on October 1, 2003. (See Exhibit 1 for the invitation.) We chose a large sample due to interest in the behavior of select groups (those who have chosen not to pursue graduate management education, U.S. subgroups, and non-U.S. citizens) Of that number, 37,791 of the e-mail addresses we used were valid and 11,099 people responded. A total of 10,029 people completed the survey, yielding a response rate of 26.5%.

On October 15, 2003, a reminder e-mail was sent to those people who had not yet completed the survey or who had only partially completed it. (The follow-up e-mails are Exhibits 2 and 3.) The questionnaire was available at the online survey site from October 1, 2003 to October 30, 2003. As an incentive for people to participate in the survey, we offered to place them in a drawing for one of four prizes of \$500.

Sample and Respondent Profile

Sixty percent of the respondents were male and 40% were female.

Forty-six percent of the respondents held citizenship in the United States, 24% in Asia, 12% in Europe, 6% in Latin America/Caribbean, 5% in Africa, 4% in Canada, 2% in the Middle East, and 1% in Australia/New Zealand.

Significantly more non-U.S. citizens lived in the United States and significantly fewer Asian citizens live in Asia.

WORLD REGIONS		
	Citizenship	Residence
	<i>n</i> = 9,926	<i>n</i> = 9,926
United States	46%	54%
Asia	24%	17%
Europe	12%	12%
Latin America	6%	5%
Africa	5%	4%
Canada	4%	5%
Middle East	2%	2%
Australia	1%	1%
Total	100%	100%

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Seventy-one percent of the U.S. respondents were white, 13% were black/African American, 7% were Hispanic American, 7% were Asian American, and 1% were Native American Indian/Alaskan Native.

MAJOR U.S. SUBGROUP	
	<i>n</i> = 4,179
White (non-Hispanic)	71%
Black/African American	13%
Asian American	7%
Hispanic	7%
Native American Indian/Alaskan Native	1%
Total	100%

Twenty-six percent of the respondents were 24 years old or younger, 30% were 25 to 28 years old, 19% were 29 to 32 years old, and 25% were 33 years old or older. The average age of the typical respondent was 29.5.

AGE	
	<i>n</i> = 10,029
24 and under	26%
25–28	30%
29–32	19%
33 and over	25%
Total	100%
Mean	29.5

Thirty-three percent of the respondents had worked less than three years; 26% had worked at least three years, but less than six years; and 41% had worked six years or longer at the time of the survey.

WORK EXPERIENCE		
Years of full-time work experience (collapsed)		<i>n</i> = 10,029
	Less than 3 years	33%
	3, but less than 6 years	26%
	6 years or more	41%
	Total	100%

Seventy-three percent of the respondents were working full time when they took the survey. Of those working full time, 21% were in the finance/accounting industry, 20% were in the high technology industry, 20% were in the products and services industry, 13% were in the nonprofit/government industry, 10% were in the consulting industry, 8% were in the manufacturing industry, 6% were in the healthcare/pharmaceutical industry, and 3% were in the energy/utilities industry.

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BUSINESS/INDUSTRY		
		<i>n</i> = 7,027
Industry Groups (Respondents working full time)	Finance/Accounting	21%
	Products and services	20%
	High technology	20%
	Nonprofit/Government	13%
	Consulting	10%
	Manufacturing	8%
	Healthcare/Pharmaceutical	6%
	Energy/Utilities	3%
	Total	100%
Specific Industries (>100 Respondents working full-time)		<i>n</i> = 5,393
	Information technology or services	9%
	Banking	9%
	Education or educational services	7%
	Consulting services	7%
	Finance and insurance	6%
	Accounting	6%
	Telecommunications	6%
	Engineering	6%
	Government (non-military)	5%
	Retail or wholesale	4%
	Marketing services	4%
	Health care	4%
	Information technology consulting	3%
	Nonprofit or not for profit	3%
	Consumer goods	3%
	Automotive	3%
	Food, beverage, and tobacco	2%
	Insurance	2%
	Energy/Utilities	2%
	Pharmaceutical	2%
	Investment banking or management	2%
	Aerospace and defense	2%
	Construction and installation	2%
	Total	100%

Of those who have completed undergraduate (or first university) degrees, 48% studied business, management, or economics; 23% studied engineering or computer science, 9% studied social sciences or law; 8% studied science or mathematics; 7% studied humanities; and 1% studied fine arts.

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UNDERGRADUATE MAJOR	
	<i>n</i> = 9,018
Business/ Management/ Economics	48%
Engineering/ Computer science	23%
Social sciences/Law	9%
Science/ Mathematics	8%
Humanities	7%
Other	3%
Fine arts	1%
Total	100%

The majority (63%) reported an undergraduate GPA of 3.9 to 3.0, whereas 26% reported a GPA of 2.9 to 2.0.

UNDERGRADUATE GPA	
	<i>n</i> = 9,016
4.0	8%
3.9–3.0	63%
2.9–2.0	26%
1.9–1.0	2%
0.9–0.0	1%
Total	100%

Seventy-four percent planned to pursue an MBA or a Masters in Science. Seventy-two percent planned to pursue an on-campus degree, 56% planned to be a full-time student, 23% planned to be a part-time student, 13% were undecided, and 7% planned to be an executive MBA student.

Fifteen percent of the respondents planned to concentrate in finance in their MBA program, whereas 11% planned to concentrate in general management, 10% in marketing, 7% in international business, 7% in information systems or information technology, and 6% in accounting. Twelve percent were undecided about their area of concentration.

Comparison Profiles

Comparison tables have been created to determine how similar survey respondents were to all mba.com registrants and to GMAT[®] test takers. Comparisons were made on the basis of the data collected when people registered on mba.com.

The following table compares characteristics of survey respondents to mba.com registrants that had registered between September 1, 2002 and September 1, 2003. No significant gender differences emerged when we compared survey respondents with all mba.com registrants. However, Asian Americans were underrepresented and whites were overrepresented in the survey. U.S. citizens were underrepresented and non-U.S. were overrepresented in the survey. And those with one to three years of work experience were underrepresented and those with ten or more years of experience were overrepresented in the survey.

MBA.COM REGISTRANT SURVEY GENERAL REPORT

Background Variables	Survey Respondents		mba.com Registrants	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Gender				
Male	6,001	60%	136,242	62%
Female	4,028	40%	84,905	38%
Total	10,029	100%	221,147	100%
Ethnicity				
African American	555	13%	6,444	12%
American Indian/Alaskan Native/Other Native American	41	1%	590	1%
Asian American*	309	7%	6,376	11%
Mexican American	101	2%	1,456	3%
Puerto Rican	53	1%	616	1%
Other Hispanic American	152	3%	1,880	3%
White (Non-Hispanic)*	2,968	68%	35,354	64%
Multiracial or Multiethnic	110	3%	1,469	3%
Other	68	2%	1,451	3%
Total	4,357	100%	55,636	100%
Citizenship Region				
United States*	4,583	46%	65,934	60%
Non-U.S.*	5,446	54%	44,402	40%
Total	10,029	100%	110,336	100%
Work Experience				
None	1,435	14%	13,471	13%
1 to 3 years*	2,912	29%	37,888	36%
4 to 9 years	3,409	34%	36,798	35%
10 or more years*	2,273	23%	16,071	15%
Total	10,029	100%	104,228	100%
*p = < .05				

The following table compares survey respondents' characteristics with the information gleaned from GMAT[®] tests taken between September 1, 2002 and September 1, 2003. No significant gender differences emerged. However, blacks/African Americans were overrepresented and whites underrepresented in the survey. And, similar to the comparison between survey respondents and all mba.com registrants, U.S. citizens were underrepresented and non-U.S. were overrepresented in the survey. And those with one to three years of work experience were underrepresented and those with ten years or more experience were overrepresented in the survey.

MBA.COM REGISTRANT SURVEY GENERAL REPORT

Background Variables	Survey Respondents		Tests Taken	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Gender				
Male	6,001	60%	145,311	62%
Female	4,028	40%	88,226	38%
Total	10,029	100%	233,537	100%
Ethnicity				
African American*	555	13%	9,626	9%
American Indian/Alaskan Native/Other Native American	41	1%	936	1%
Asian American	309	7%	10,044	9%
Mexican American	101	2%	2,120	2%
Puerto Rican	53	1%	937	1%
Other Hispanic American	152	3%	2,982	3%
White (Non-Hispanic)*	2,968	68%	77,008	71%
Multiracial or Multiethnic	110	3%	1,671	2%
Other	68	2%	2,739	3%
Total	4,357	100%	108,063	100%
Citizenship Region				
United States*	4,583	46%	125,414	53%
International*	5,446	54%	109,793	47%
Total	10,029	100%	235,207	100%
Work Experience				
None	1,435	14%	24,552	11%
1 to 3 years*	2,912	29%	79,275	36%
4 to 9 years	3,409	34%	82,668	38%
10 or more years*	2,273	23%	33,439	15%
Total	10,029	100%	219,934	100%
*p = < . 05				

The following table compares mba.com registrants that had registered between September 1, 2002 and September 1, 2003 and expressed willingness to participate in GMAC® research and mba.com com registrants that had registered between September 1, 2002 and September 1, 2003 and did not express willingness to participate in GMAC® research. No significant gender differences emerged when comparing mba.com registrants who agreed to participate in research with those who did not. Asian Americans were less likely to participate or “opt in” and African Americans were more likely to. U.S. citizens were less likely to opt in and non-U.S. were more likely to. Those with one to three years of work experience were less likely to opt in.

MBA.COM REGISTRANT SURVEY GENERAL REPORT

Background Variables	Agreed		Refused	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Gender				
Male	23,370	63%	112,872	61%
Female	13,741	37%	71,164	39%
Total	37,111	100%	184,036	100%
Ethnicity				
African American*	1,722	15%	4,722	11%
Alaskan Native/Pacific Islander American	49	0%	264	1%
American Indian/Native American	74	1%	203	0%
Asian American*	911	8%	5,465	12%
Mexican American	337	3%	1,119	3%
Puerto Rican	122	1%	494	1%
Other Hispanic American	406	4%	1,474	3%
White (Non-Hispanic)	6,856	62%	28,498	64%
Multiracial	150	1%	543	1%
Multiethnic	200	2%	576	1%
Other	285	3%	1,166	3%
Total	11,112	100%	44,524	100%
Citizenship Region				
United States*	12,058	48%	53,876	63%
Non-U.S.*	12,818	52%	31,584	37%
Total	24,876	100%	85,460	100%
Work Experience				
None	2,999	12%	10,472	13%
1 to 3 years*	7,891	33%	29,997	37%
4 to 9 years	8,392	35%	28,406	35%
10 to 14 years	2,506	10%	6,494	8%
15 or more years	2,254	9%	4,817	6%
Total	24,042	100%	80,186	100%
*p = < .05				

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 of survey progress and eliminated 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. This eliminated the typical problems associated with item non-response. Third, skip patterns allowed respondents to move quickly and appropriately through the questionnaire, because they never saw questions that they should not be asked (e.g., race/ethnicity for non-US citizens).

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Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, version 11.5). 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), citizenship, intended program, and age. Chi-square analysis was used to evaluate the statistical significance in cross-classification tables ($p < .05$). That is, 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 may not always add exactly to 100% due to rounding.

Regression Analysis

The table below shows the stage in the application process of respondents to the mba.com survey.

TABLE 1. STAGE IN APPLICATION PROCESS

		Count	Col %
Applied to any graduate business schools?	Yes	3771	38%
	No, not yet, but I plan to	4988	50%
	No, not yet, and I am not sure if I will	1084	11%
	No, I have decided not to apply to graduate business school	186	2%
Total		10029	100%

Stepwise regression analysis was used with predictors listed in the Appendix to attempt to predict stage in the process. Five different stepwise regression models were tested, based on contrasts between different stages (or combinations of stages). The best model is the one that predicts “yes” ($n=3,771$) contrasted with the combination of “no, not yet, and I am not sure if I will” with “no, I have decided not to” ($n=1,270$). This model has an adjusted R square of 20% for all respondents and 20% for women. The r-square value indicates how much of the variance in the effect (application stage) is explained by the predictors.

The adjusted R square of 20% is lower than those obtained in other regression analyses we have conducted: 64% and 51% in predictions of overall annual conference rating in 2003 and 2002; 45% in the prediction of MBA satisfaction in the 2001 Global MBA[®] survey; 36% in the prediction of school recommendations (full-time programs) in the 2002 Global MBA[®] survey; and 36% in the typical validity study through the Validity Study Service[®]. There are a number of possible reasons for this. First, the separation of predictors from effects contributes to the difficulty of getting a good model. It has been easier to predict one attitude from other attitudes (e.g., annual conference rating or MBA satisfaction) than it has been to predict actual behavior (student performance in the Validity Study Service[®] or application decisions in the model reported here). This is generally the case in social science research.

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Second, the effect in this analysis is bivariate (0-1), whereas the effects in the other analyses are along extended scales. Finally, the behavior being predicted (the application decision) is complex; as is well-known, it does not yield easily to understanding and prediction.

The following table shows the result for all respondents and women. Of all the predictors listed in the Appendix, these are the ones that have predictive value (after all intercorrelations among variables are taken into account). A variable listed in the Appendix *may be* correlated with stage in the application process, but it does not enter the model because it is correlated with some other predictor that got there first (because of a higher correlation with the outcome). Predictors are listed in the order of their weight in the model—how much of an impact they have on moving a person in the direction of “yes,” compared with “no, not sure/no, decided not to.” The sign of the weight indicates the direction of the effect.

Most predictors are in the expected direction. That is, the greater the perceived lack of admission difficulty, the more likely a “yes, applied” outcome. The truer the statement, “be too expensive in the short term to be worthwhile,” the less likely a “yes, applied” outcome. The truer the statement, “require more time than I am willing to invest,” the less likely a “yes, applied” outcome. Two predictors are somewhat counter-intuitive: (1) Be intimidating and (2) Severely limit the time I have for people who are important to me. Saying these statements are true propels the person toward a “yes.”

REGRESSION MODELS

Predictor	All Respondents	Women
	Weight	Weight
Perceived lack of admission difficulty at school of choice	0.259	0.241
Be too expensive in the short term to be worthwhile	-0.155	-0.181
Require more time than I am willing to invest	-0.129	NA
Undergraduate business major	0.125	0.106
Be intimidating	0.118	NA
Provide the specific skills I need to do my job and get ahead	0.117	0.118
Require me to take on large financial debts	-0.100	-0.094
Wealth	0.097	0.080
Provide the professional credentials I need for advancement	0.092	0.125
Undergraduate engineering major	0.088	NA
Severely limit the time I have for people who are important to me	0.062	NA
More than 3 years work experience	0.058	NA

The relative importance of a predictor can be determined by comparing the weights. For example, (among all respondents) the importance of “Be too expensive in the short term to be worthwhile” is 1.6 times that of wealth as a value the respondent has $(-.155/.097)$. And the importance of “Perceived lack of admission difficulty” is 4.5 times the importance of having more than three years of work experience $(.259/.058)$. In the model for women, NA means that the variable did not enter the model. Note that none of the demographics entered either model, nor did the attitude of a glass ceiling in business or in all professions combined. Also, note that all of the items in the model for women are also in the model for all respondents.

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APPENDIX: POTENTIAL PREDICTORS

Importance of Aspects of Life (Importance Scale)

Politics and public life
Religion
Wealth
Career and work
Free time and relaxation
Friends and acquaintances
Relatives
Financial security
One's own family (spouse and/or children)

Reasons for Deciding to Enter Graduate Management Program (True-False Scale)

Increase my short-term earning power
Prepare me to get a good job in the business world
Develop my management knowledge and technical skills
Prepare me to start or manage my own business
Allow me to build on my non-business undergraduate degree
Allow me to change from my current occupational area to a specific new one
Prepare me to seek international employment
Allow me to remain marketable (competitive)
Provide the specific skills I need to do my job and get ahead
Improve my long term income and financial stability
Provide the professional credentials I need for advancement
Provide the right connections for getting a good job in the short- or long-term
Give me a chance to gain valuable experience before re-entering the job market
Give me a sense of personal satisfaction and achievement
Be looked upon favorably by people who are important to me
Be an exciting challenge
Allow me to switch industries

Reservations about Entering Graduate Management Program (True-False Scale)

Be too expensive in the short term to be worthwhile
Require more energy than I am willing to invest
Require me to delay accepting attractive job opportunities
Require more time than I am willing to invest
Be intimidating
Require me to take on large financial debts
Be too stressful
Require me to postpone marriage, having a child or other personal plans
Require more work experience than I have now
Severely limit the time I have for people who are important to me
Be too competitive

Undergraduate Major

Business/Management/Economics
Fine Arts
Engineering/Computer Science
Humanities
Science/Mathematics
Social Sciences/Law

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Demographics

Age

Income

Household size

Work experience

Undergraduate GPA

Other

Perceived lack of admission difficulty (to graduate school of choice)

Perception of glass ceiling in business

Perception of glass ceiling in all professions

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Exhibit 1

From: Graduate Management Admission Council
Subject: Insights Needed about Graduate Education Decisions

Dear **First Name**,

Each year about a quarter of a million people register to take the Graduate Management Admission Test® (GMAT®), but only about 100,000 people earn graduate degrees in business and management education. Because very little is known about the decisions that lead some people to seek graduate management education and others to choose alternative educational and career paths, the Graduate Management Admission Council® is conducting a worldwide study of our Web site's (www.mba.com) registrants.

You have been selected for participation in this survey by scientific sampling procedures. The success of this research depends on your participation—there is no substitute for your unique contributions. The more completely you answer this survey, the better we will understand the issues important to you and people like you. All your responses to this survey will be kept completely confidential and used only for research purposes.

As a token of our appreciation for taking the time to complete the survey, you will be placed in a drawing for four U.S. \$500 prizes. The survey will take no longer than 15 minutes to complete. Please click on the link below to begin.

[URL Link](#)

Password: XXXX

If you would enjoy comparing your opinions with those of other respondents, we would be happy to send you the results of the survey. Please indicate this preference in the designated space on the questionnaire.

If you have any questions about the authenticity of this survey, or if you have any problems accessing or completing the survey, please e-mail Rachel Edgington at edgington@gmac.com for assistance.

The Graduate Management Admission Council is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting access to graduate and professional management education around the world.

You had expressed willingness to participate in GMAC-sponsored surveys when you registered at mbac.com. If you no longer wish to be involved in GMAC research, simply reply to this e-mail and type "Remove" in the subject line.

**MBA.COM REGISTRANT SURVEY
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Exhibit 2

From: Graduate Management Admission Council
Subject: Graduate Education Survey

Dear **First Name**,

We are still waiting to hear from you. The Graduate Management Admission Council® is conducting a worldwide study to understand the decisions that lead some people to seek graduate management education and other to choose alternative educational and career paths. The success of this research depends on your participation—there is no substitute for your unique contributions.

As a token of our appreciation for taking the time to complete the survey, you will be placed in a drawing for four U.S. \$500 prizes. The survey will take no longer than 15 minutes to complete. Please click on the link below to begin.

[URL Link](#)

If you would enjoy comparing your opinions with those of other respondents, we would be happy to send you the results of the survey. Please indicate this preference in the designated space on the questionnaire.

All your responses to this survey will be kept completely confidential and used only for research purposes.

If you have any questions about the authenticity of this survey, or if you have any problems accessing or completing the survey, please e-mail Rachel Edgington at edgington@gmac.com for assistance.

The Graduate Management Admission Council is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting access to graduate and professional management education around the world.

You had expressed willingness to participate in GMAC-sponsored surveys when you registered at mba.com. If you no longer wish to be involved in GMAC research, simply reply to this e-mail and type "Remove" in the subject line.

**MBA.COM REGISTRANT SURVEY
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Exhibit 3

From: Graduate Management Admission Council
Subject: Partially Complete - Graduate Education Survey

Dear **First Name**,

Maybe you were busy or didn't think it was relevant when first logging-in to the survey, but we need input from those with a wide range of backgrounds and experience to get a complete picture of the decisions that lead some people to seek graduate management education and other to choose alternative educational and career paths. The success of this research depends on your participation—there is no substitute for your unique contributions.

As a token of our appreciation for taking the time to complete the survey, you will be placed in a drawing for four U.S. \$500 prizes. The survey will take no longer than 15 minutes to complete. Your answers so far have been saved. Once you log in, you will be taken to the page you exited from...

[URL Link](#)

If you would enjoy comparing your opinions with those of other respondents, we would be happy to send you the results of the survey. Please indicate this preference in the designated space on the questionnaire.

All your responses to this survey will be kept completely confidential and used only for research purposes.

If you have any questions about the authenticity of this survey, or if you have any problems accessing or completing the survey, please e-mail Rachel Edgington at edgington@gmac.com for assistance.

The Graduate Management Admission Council is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting access to graduate and professional management education around the world.

You had expressed willingness to participate in GMAC-sponsored surveys when you registered at mba.com. If you no longer wish to be involved in GMAC research, simply reply to this e-mail and type "Remove" in the subject line.