

Market Intelligence

# Alumni Perspectives Survey Report 2017

Graduate  
Management  
Admission  
Council®





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# Executive Summary

We live in a world of rapid and constant change—the political, economic, and social landscape in country after country often shifts right before our eyes. Business structures, the workplace, and career paths are being transformed by automation, AI, information technology, and globalization. The pace of change can add an air of uncertainty about our shared economic future, but it also holds promise for those with the flexibility, preparation, and skills to seize upon new opportunities that lie ahead.

The findings in the *2017 Alumni Perspectives Survey Report* highlight the successful outcomes of nearly 15,000 business school alumni who decided to meet the economic challenges of a changing world by undertaking a graduate management education and leveraging the skills and preparation it provides to redirect the course of their careers. In their own words, they attest to the value of their educational experience and the crucial role their business programs played in connecting them to new opportunities.

**Graduate management education expands alumni career horizons.** More than half the alumni in the survey sample are currently employed in an industry or job function they did not have prior to entering business school. In fact, 2 in 5 (39%) alumni currently work in an industry they never considered prior to starting business school. Rather, they found the opportunity after graduation and 88 percent are satisfied with their job and employer.

**Business school provides graduates with access to a variety of career outcomes.** Alumni tend to start their postgraduate careers in a mid-level position. Three in 5 alumni (60%) hold supervisory positions and 2 in 5 (43%) are budget owners. Alumni globally are employed

The Alumni Perspectives Survey was conducted online between September 28 and November 21, 2016

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122

countries or regions represent work locations of survey respondents

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14,651

alumni represented in the sample

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>1,100

graduate business programs represented in survey sample

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>300

universities represented in sample

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in a broad array of industries and job functions, but these differ by degree type. MBA alumni are more likely to work in the technology, nonprofit, manufacturing, health care, energy, and utilities sectors. Graduates of non-MBA business master's programs are more likely to work in finance, accounting, and consulting. By job function, MBA alumni are more likely to hold marketing, sales, operations, logistics, and general management positions. Non-MBA business master's alumni are more likely to work in finance, accounting, and human resource functions.

**Business schools support the pursuit of entrepreneurial opportunities.** More than 1,500 entrepreneurs responded to this year's alumni survey, which represents 11 percent of the survey sample. Most alumni entrepreneurs (65%) began their business after working for a company following graduation. They typically own businesses in the consulting and products and services industries and employ fewer than 25 people. Some alumni (12%) sought venture capital for their business and 72 percent of them received funding. About 1 in 8 (12%) of these alumni partnered with a classmate to start a business. Many had access to a variety of school resources to support their initiatives.

**Business school boosts graduates' earnings potential.** Business school alumni earn 76 percent of their total compensation in base salary, on average. As they move up the career ladder, a greater proportion of their compensation comes from non-salary sources, such as bonuses. On average, the total compensation package for graduate business school alumni can range from a median of US\$75,513 for an entry-level position upward to a median of US\$440,122 in total compensation for a c-suite executive.

**Graduate management education is a high-value proposition for alumni across class years.** The 14,651 individuals who responded to the Alumni Perspectives Survey span three generations of graduates who report personal, professional, and financial rewards gained because of their business education. Alumni say they are prepared for leadership positions, have advanced more quickly in their careers, and increased their earnings since graduating from business school. More than 9 in 10 alumni would pursue a graduate business degree all over again knowing what they know now, and most would recommend a graduate management education to a friend or colleague.

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The *Alumni Perspectives Survey Report 2017* is a product of the Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC), a nonprofit organization of 220 leading graduate business schools from around the world actively committed to advancing the art and science of admissions. The Council provides the solutions necessary for business schools and candidates to discover and evaluate one another to ensure that talent never goes undiscovered. GMAC owns and administers the Graduate Management Admission Test® (GMAT®) exam, used by more than 6,500 graduate programs worldwide, as well as the NMAT by GMAC™ exam, used for entrance into graduate management programs in India. The Council is based in Reston, Virginia with offices in London, New Delhi, and Hong Kong.





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# Introduction

The findings in the *Alumni Perspectives Survey Report* detail the educational and career outcomes of nearly 15,000 graduate business alumni located around the globe who chose to embark upon a graduate management education as a path to new career opportunities.

Typically, the degree they earn, whether from an MBA or non-MBA business master's program, was sought for one of three reasons: to switch career paths, to advance their current career to a higher level, or to start their own business enterprise.

Based on their responses and individual commentary, these individuals received quantifiable benefits from their education, including high employment rates, post-degree salary growth, advancement in their careers, and the personal satisfaction of acquiring new skills and experience.

The Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC) conducted the Alumni Perspectives Survey from September 28 to November 21, 2016 with the participation of 14,651 alumni who represent more than 1,100 graduate business programs at more than 300 universities located in 46 countries worldwide.<sup>1</sup> In addition to alumni contacts supplied by business schools, the survey sample was supplemented with business school alumni who had participated in past GMAC® surveys.

Survey respondents currently work in 122 countries or regions around the globe and represent three generations of graduate business alumni, including Millennials (38%), Gen Xers (43%), and Baby Boomers (19%).

<sup>1</sup>See the "Methodology" for country/regional locations of participating universities.

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# Key Findings

## **Business school alumni give a graduate management education high marks for value.**

- Nearly all (95%) alumni rate their graduate management education a *good* to *outstanding* value. One in three (33%) alumni rate the value of their graduate management education as *outstanding*, 45 percent say it is *excellent*, and 17 percent say it is a *good* value.
- The value proposition of a graduate business degree is high regardless of graduation year or program type, whether an MBA or non-MBA business master's program.
- Overall, 93 percent of alumni say their degree is personally rewarding, 91 percent say it is professionally rewarding, and 76 percent say it is financially rewarding, regardless of the program type from which they graduated.
- More than 4 in 5 alumni agree their education prepared them for leadership positions (86% strongly agree/ agree), prepared them for their chosen career (85%), and increased their earnings power (82%).

## **Likelihood to recommend their programs to others yields high Net Promoter—"customer loyalty"—scores for business school.**

- Most alumni are very likely to recommend their graduate business program to colleagues and friends.
- The overall Net Promoter Score that business schools receive from their alumni is 47, which is greater than scores received in many sectors of the economy.
- Net Promoter Scores are positive for all graduate business programs, although differences by program type range from 22 for Master in Management programs to 62 for full-time two-year MBA programs.

- If offered the choice, more than 9 in 10 (92%) alumni would still have pursued their graduate management education knowing what they know now.

## **Majority of alumni say business school expanded their career horizons, opened new opportunities.**

- More than half of alumni (52%) are currently employed in an industry or job function they did not have prior to entering business school.
- Two in 5 alumni (39%) now work in an industry they had never considered prior to starting business school. They found new opportunities after graduation and most (88%) are satisfied with their job and their employer.

## **Alumni work across the spectrum of industries, but their degree type often differentiates career paths.**

- Globally, the products and services (27%), technology (14%), and finance and accounting (11%) sectors employ the greatest proportion of alumni represented in this survey.
- MBA alumni, however, are more likely to work in technology, nonprofit and government, manufacturing, health care, energy, and utilities, compared with alumni holding non-MBA master's degrees. Business master's alumni are more likely to be found employed in finance and accounting and consulting industries.
- MBA alumni are more likely to hold positions in marketing, sales, operations, logistics, and general management. Alumni of non-MBA business master's are more likely to work in finance, accounting, and human resource positions.





#### **Business school boosts graduates' earnings potential.**

- Business school alumni earn 76 percent of their total compensation in base salary, on average. As they advance up the career ladder, a greater proportion of their compensation comes from non-salary sources, such as bonuses.
- Globally, the total compensation package for graduate business school alumni can range from a median of US\$75,513 for an entry-level position upward to a median of US\$440,122 in total compensation for a c-suite executive.

#### **More than 1 in 10 alumni run their own businesses and are satisfied with their entrepreneurial experience.**

- Most alumni delay their entrepreneurial activities until after graduation. In fact, 2 in 3 alumni entrepreneurs began their business after graduation following employment at another company.
- One in 8 alumni entrepreneurs sought venture capital and 72 percent of these individuals received such funding.

- Half of the alumni entrepreneurs say their university provided faculty guidance, experts from the community, and mentors to guide their entrepreneurial activities.

#### **Alumni rank interpersonal skills as most important in the workplace, regardless of job level or function.**

- Among the top five skills important to their job, the ones related to “people” skills or emotional intelligence are among the most important, with interpersonal skills (e.g., active listening, persuasion and negotiation, time management) topping the list.
- Other skills predominate the higher one goes up the corporate ladder. Alumni in higher-level positions are more likely to indicate the following areas as more important to their current job compared with alumni in lower-level positions—managing human capital, managing strategy and innovation, managing the decision-making process, and strategic and system skills.

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# The Value of a Graduate Management Education

Globally, the value proposition of a graduate management education remains strong, according to the 14,651 graduate business alumni across the globe who participated in this survey. Nearly all (95%) of these alumni rate their graduate management education a good to outstanding value. One in three (33%) alumni rate the value of their graduate management education as outstanding, 45 percent say it is

excellent, and 17 percent say it is a good value. Only three percent say it is a fair value and one percent a poor value.

The value proposition of a graduate business degree is high, regardless of graduation year and program type, whether an MBA or non-MBA business master's (**Figure 1**).



## Three Dimensions of Value

Alumni don't value their graduate management education in the abstract. Overall, 93 percent of alumni spanning all graduation years say earning their degree brought personal rewards, 91 percent say it was professionally rewarding, and 76 percent say it was financially rewarding.

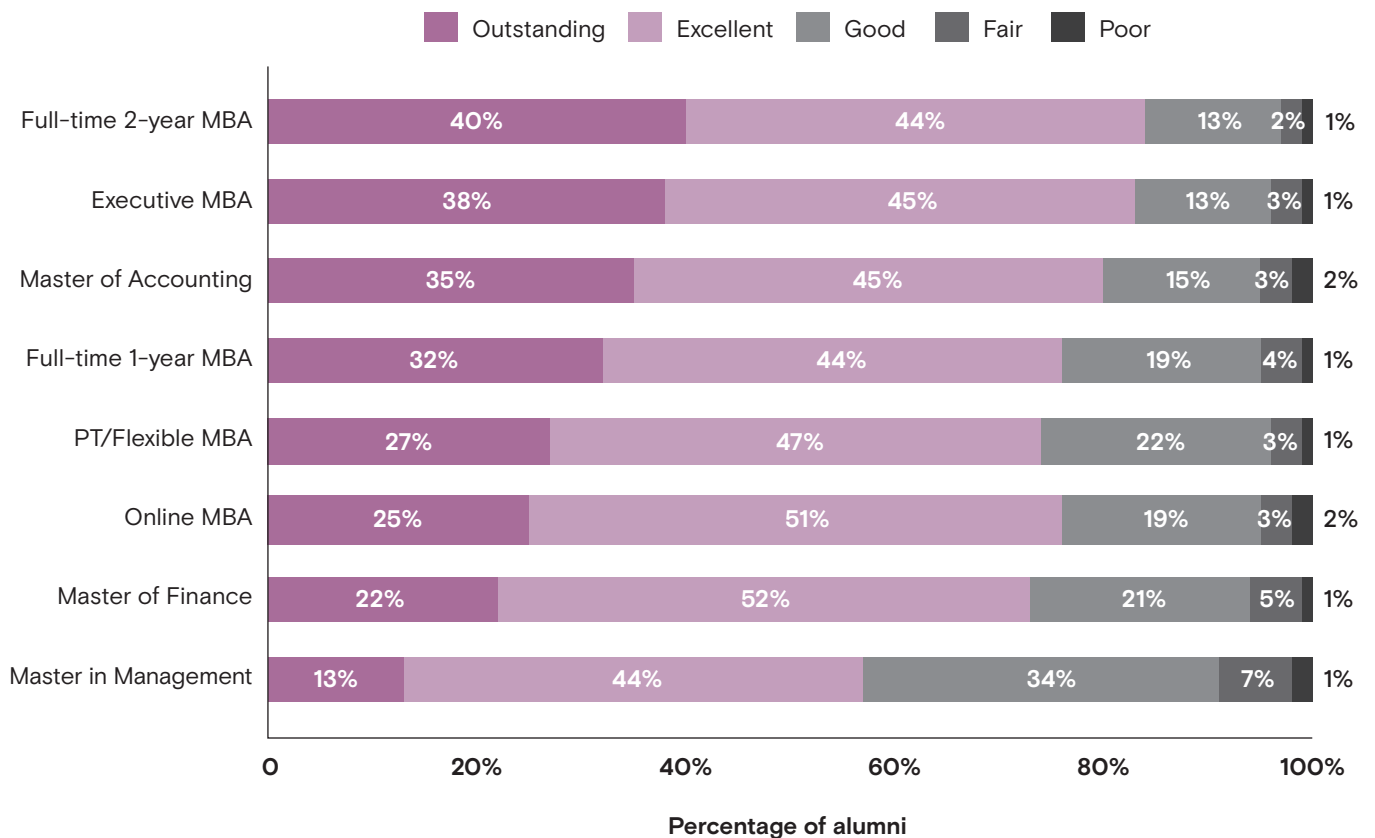
Across program types, most alumni consider their degree personally rewarding (ranging from 87% to 96%), professionally rewarding (ranging from 86% to 93%), and financially rewarding (ranging from 61% to 83%; **Figure 2**).

A 10-year comparison displayed in **Figure 3** shows that for most alumni who graduated since 2007, the personal and professional rewards are attained early upon graduation

and remain high over time. Financial rewards of a graduate business degree accrue gradually, especially for the most recent graduates. Nevertheless, recent alumni report satisfaction with the personal and professional rewards they are reaping because of their graduate management education.

In terms of the specific outcomes they achieved from earning their degrees, alumni respondents report that their graduate management education: prepared them for leadership positions (86% agree/strongly agree), prepared them for their chosen career (85%), increased their earnings power (82%), provided opportunities for quicker career advancement (75%), developed their professional network (72%), improved their job satisfaction (67%), and prepared them for work/life balance (55%).

**Figure 1. Value of Graduate Management Education, Rated Strong Across Program Type, All Graduation Years**



Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.  
Source: GMAC Alumni Perspectives Survey, 2017.

**Figure 2. Value Rating of Graduate Management Education, by Program Type, All Graduation Years**

Program Type	% Personally Rewarding	% Professionally Rewarding	% Financially Rewarding
Full-Time 2-Year MBA	94%	92%	83%
Full-Time 1-Year MBA	94%	90%	78%
Part-Time/Flexible MBA	94%	89%	71%
Executive MBA	96%	90%	72%
Online MBA	94%	89%	67%
Master in Management	87%	86%	61%
Master of Accounting	88%	93%	72%
Master of Finance	91%	90%	72%

Source: GMAC Alumni Perspectives Survey, 2017.

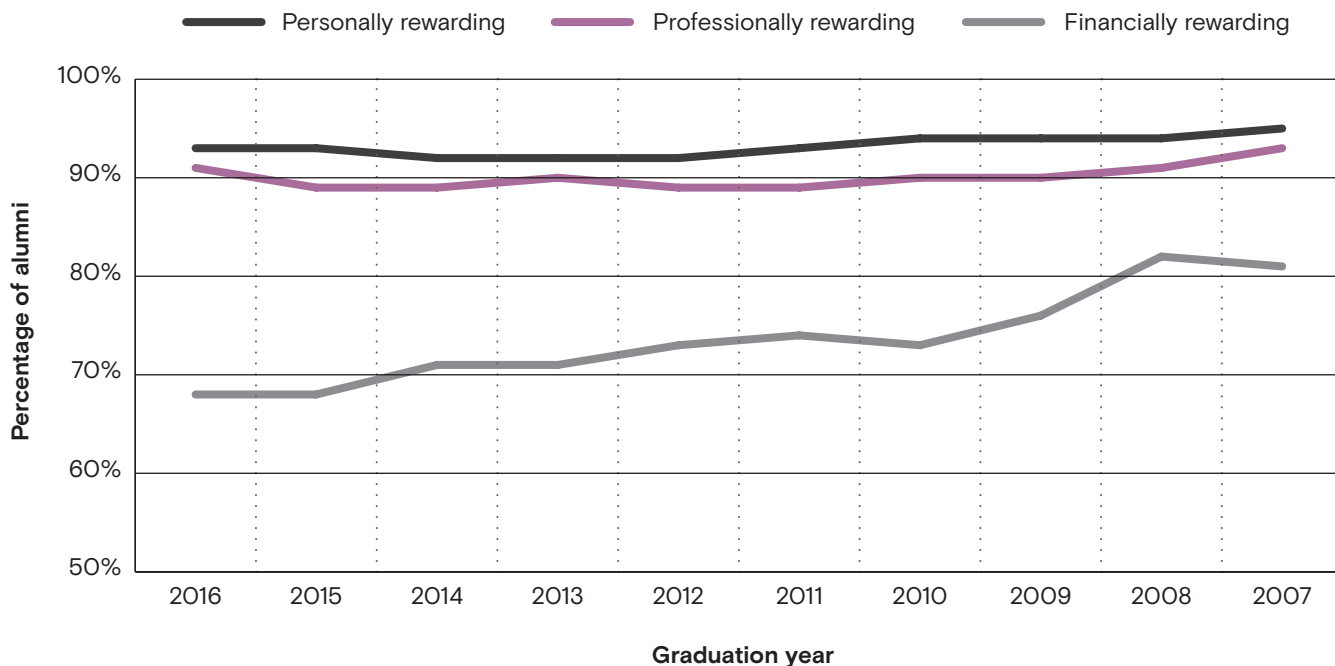
## Alumni in their own words:

*On why they would pursue the degree knowing what they know...*

“An MBA truly added to my professional capabilities, as I have highly technical undergraduate degrees in engineering and physics, along with experience in those fields. It has provided numerous career and general networking opportunities, such as the career change I made a year after receiving my MBA. My return on investment for this degree was only two years, and my earning potential for the rest of my life is thus substantially larger with greater upside potential.”

—MALE, PART-TIME MBA, CLASS OF 2011

**Figure 3. The Value of a Graduate Management Education in Three Dimensions, Graduation Years 2007–2016**



Source: GMAC Alumni Perspectives Survey, 2017.

“Eleven years out I can see clearly how much the perspective I gained from an MBA prepared me to be a leader. It had become more visibly valuable over time.”

—FEMALE, FULL-TIME TWO-YEAR MBA, CLASS OF 2005

“As an arts entrepreneur, I had lots of arts know-how, but not a lot of insight about how to successfully run, grow, and sustain a business. The MBA prepared me for that and allowed me to look at business from a variety of perspectives. It also gave me access to corporate environments and how they run, as well as an outstanding, supportive alumni network.”

—FEMALE, FULL-TIME TWO-YEAR MBA, CLASS OF 2014



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## High Loyalty Rankings for Alma Maters

Another measure of value for a graduate management education is the Net Promoter Score (NPS)—a widely used industry metric for gauging consumer brand or customer loyalty—used by alumni to rank their likelihood to recommend their graduate business program or school to others. The overall Net Promoter Score among business school alumni is 47, which is greater than scores achieved in most sectors of the economy.<sup>2</sup> Among all 67 universities participating in the Alumni Perspectives study, the Net Promoter Scores are positive, indicating more alumni would actively promote their alma maters rather than detract from their school's brand. At the university level, the Net Promoter Score ranges from 3 to 83. Overall, more alumni are promoters of their education rather than detractors and this holds true across the spectrum of program types included in this survey, with Net Promoter Scores ranging from a low of 22 for Master in Management alumni to a high of 61 for Executive MBA alumni (**Figure 4**).

Not only do business school alumni highly value their degrees, they have reaped multiple benefits from completing their programs and are highly likely to recommend their school to others. If offered the choice, nearly all (92%) alumni would still have pursued their graduate management education knowing what they know now.



Not only do business school alumni highly value their degrees, they have reaped multiple benefits from completing their programs.

<sup>2</sup>Satmetrix (2016) Net Promoter Benchmarks at a Glance. Retrieved December 20, 2016 from <https://www.netpromoter.com/wp-content/uploads/downloads/landing-pages/2016-nps-b2c-benchmark-infographic.pdf>

## Alumni in their own words:

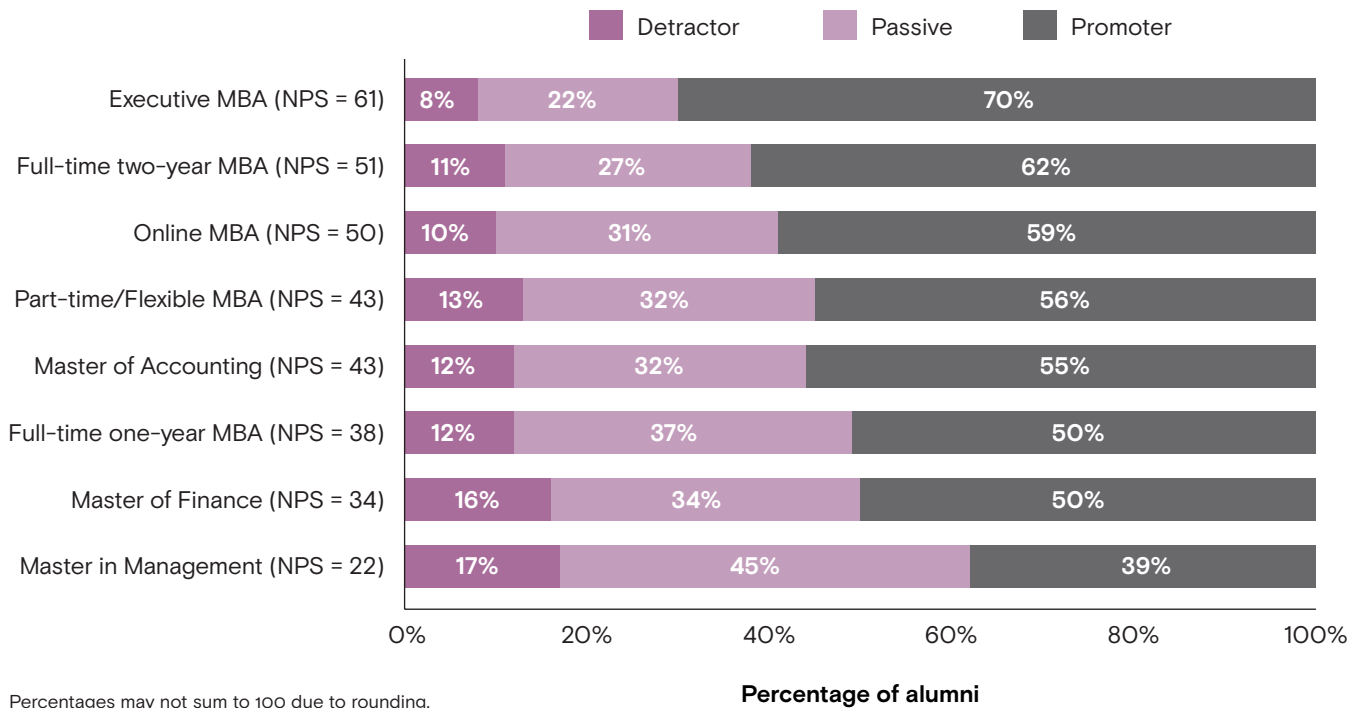
*On why they would not pursue the degree knowing what they know now...*

“I decided to go into a more technical field, which was something that an MBA doesn’t prepare students for. Had I gone this route when I started business school, I think I would be further in this chosen career...What I will say is that it has set me up for leadership positions, which is hard to come by amongst data scientists.”

—MALE, FULL-TIME TWO-YEAR MBA, CLASS OF 2011



**Figure 4. Net Promoter Score (NPS) Ranking, by Program Type and Percentage of Alumni, All Graduation Years**



**Net Promoter Score**

Alumni were asked one question: “How likely is it that you would recommend your graduate business school to a friend or colleague?” on a scale of 0 (Not at all likely) to 10 (Extremely likely). Those who respond with 0 to 6 are considered “detractors,” 7 to 8 “passives,” and 9 to 10 “promoters.” Net Promoter score = % of Promoters - % of Detractors. NPS can be as low as -100 (everyone is a detractor) or as high as +100 (everyone is a promoter). Any NPS that is positive (higher than zero) is thought to be good; and NPS of +50 is excellent.

“I would only pursue it if I had a clear vision of what I wanted to do with it after I graduated or knew how it would directly impact my career. I went in with a general notion of ‘well it can’t hurt to have one,’ which is still true, but for the cost I don’t think it was the best financial decision to make.”  
—MALE, PART-TIME MBA, CLASS OF 2010

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# Employment Profile

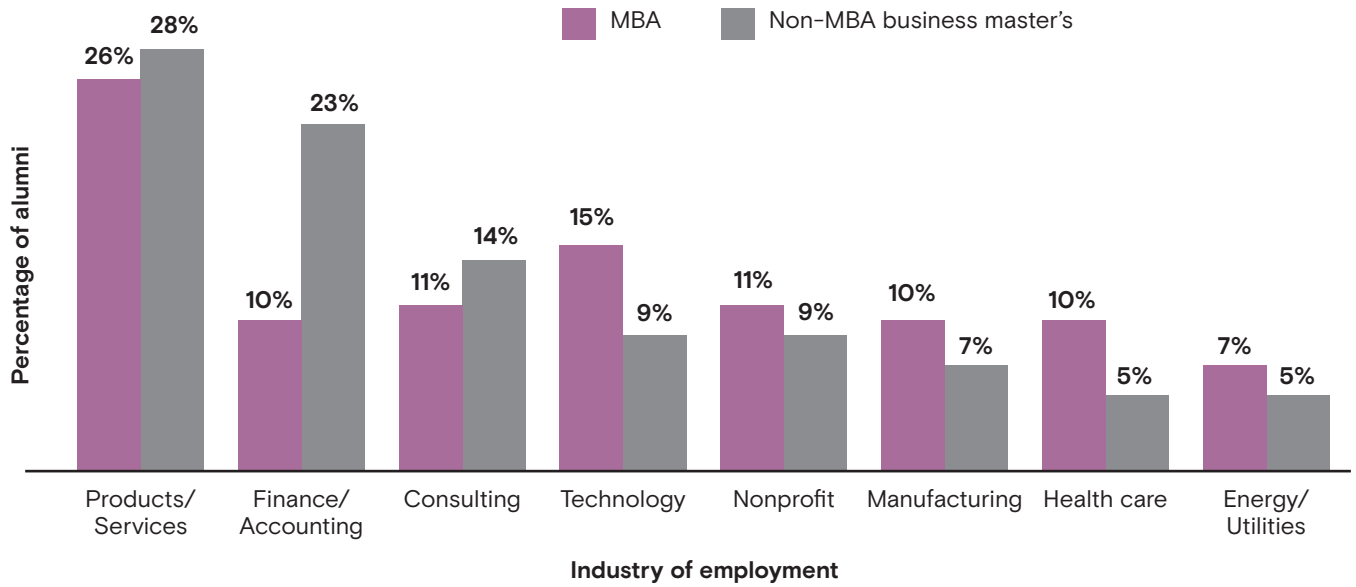
Employment figures for generations of business school alumni demonstrate again the value of a graduate management degree—those who earn a graduate business credential are high-value recruitment prospects for companies the world over.

Among the nearly 15,000 alumni whom GMAC surveyed in 2016, 92 percent are currently employed—8 in 10 overall (81%) worldwide are employed with a company and 11 percent are self-employed entrepreneurs. Three percent are not working but seeking employment, and five percent are not working and not seeking employment. (Of those not seeking employment, three percent are retired.)

Among the nearly 15,000 alumni whom GMAC surveyed in 2016, 92% are currently employed.



**Figure 5a. Industry of Employment, Alumni Working for an Organization, by Overall Degree Type, All Class Years**



Source: GMAC Alumni Perspectives Survey, 2017.

**Figure 5b. Industry of Employment, by Specific Program Type, Alumni Working for an Organization, All Graduation Years**

Industry	MBA Alumni (%)				Non-MBA Alumni (%)			
	FT 2-YR MBA	FT 1-YR MBA	Part-Time MBA	Executive MBA	Online MBA	MAcct	MFin	MiM
Products/Services	28%	33%	25%	23%	23%	21%	28%	31%
Technology	16%	15%	14%	14%	10%	5%	4%	12%
Consulting	12%	14%	9%	9%	8%	8%	13%	19%
Finance/Accounting	11%	10%	8%	7%	3%	45%	38%	12%
Nonprofit	10%	9%	12%	10%	18%	10%	4%	6%
Health Care	9%	7%	12%	11%	18%	5%	3%	6%
Manufacturing	8%	7%	13%	11%	14%	4%	5%	8%
Energy/Utilities	6%	5%	8%	15%	6%	2%	5%	4%

MAcct = Master of Accounting; MFin = Master of Finance; MiM = Master in Management.  
 Source: GMAC Alumni Perspectives Survey, 2017.

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## The Organization

Alumni currently are employed across a broad spectrum of industries. Globally, the products and services (27%), technology (14%), and finance and accounting (11%) sectors employ the greatest proportion of alumni represented in this survey. There are differences in industry distribution, however, based on the type of degree earned, e.g., MBA or a non-MBA business master's (Figure 5a). MBA alumni are more likely to work in technology, nonprofits, manufacturing, health care, energy, and utilities, compared with alumni holding non-MBA master's degrees. Business master's alumni are more likely to be found employed in finance and accounting, and consulting. Figure 5b shows the industry distribution by specific program types.

### Industry Scope and Size

Overall, the majority of alumni (62%) work for an organization with an international focus, 18 percent work for a company with a national focus, 12 percent for an organization with a regional focus, and 8 percent for organizations that are local in scope.

Globally, the greatest share of graduate business school alumni (32%) work for large corporations that employ more than 25,000 or more people. Fourteen percent work

for companies with 100 or fewer employees. Among the remaining survey respondents, 19 percent work for companies that employ between 101 and 1,000 people, 15 percent work for companies employing between 1,001 and 5,000 workers, and another 19 percent work for companies that employ anywhere from 5,000 to 25,000 individuals. One third (32%) work for a company with more than 25,000 employees.

### Business School Opens New Opportunities for Many Alumni

Part of the value proposition for business school alumni is that their graduate management education served as a portal to new opportunities in the marketplace and to a new career path. Survey findings show that, overall, 52 percent of alumni are working in an industry that differs from their pre-degree employment. In fact, 2 in 5 (39%) alumni currently work in an industry they never considered prior to starting business school (Figure 6). Rather, they found an opportunity in another industry after graduation and 88 percent are satisfied with their job and employer. Interestingly, 51 percent of alumni who are working for a nonprofit organization and 45 percent of those in manufacturing did not initially consider these sectors for postgraduate employment.

## Alumni in their own words:

### *On finding a job in an industry not previously considered...*

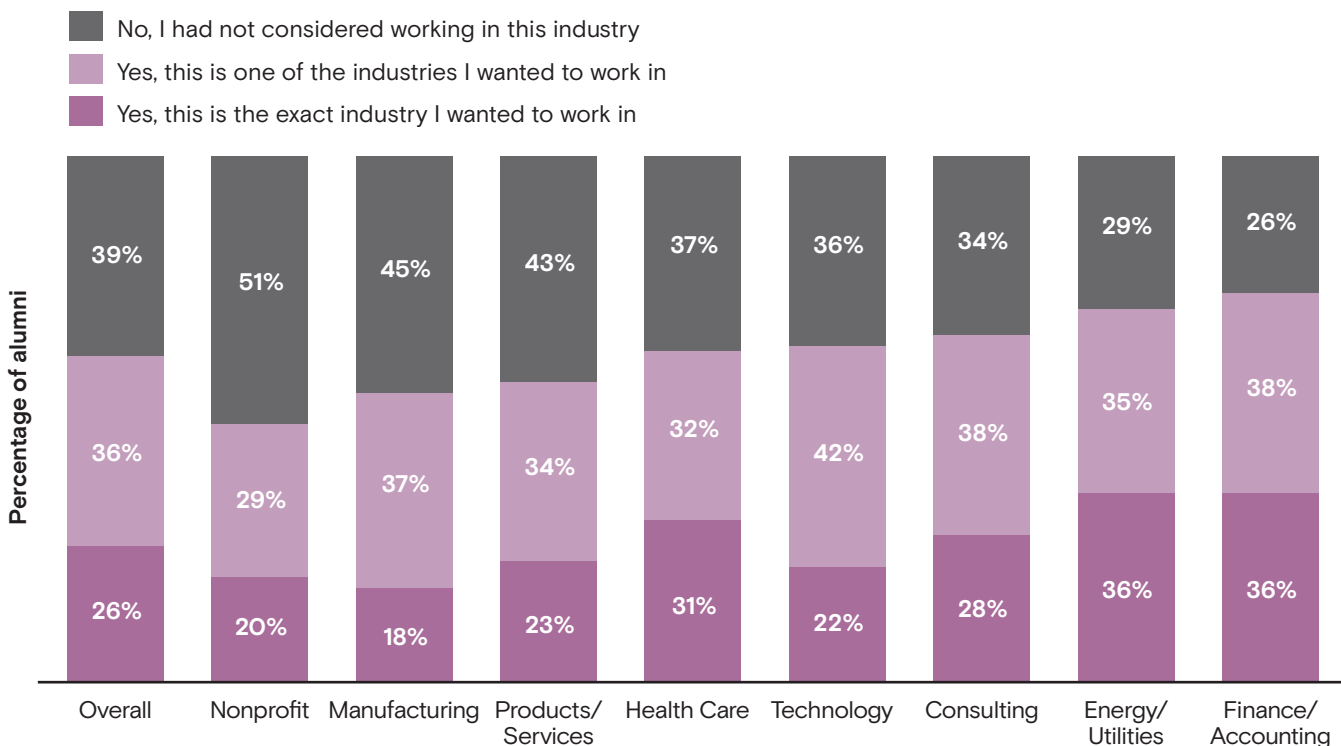
“I was let go during an industry downturn in oil and gas and decided to use my expertise to move into a consulting role.”

—MALE, EXECUTIVE MBA, CLASS OF 2001

“[I] chose the company more than the industry. Company had a high-quality leadership development program in my discipline, the culture fit me, and there were opportunities for international assignments, which I was excited about.”

—MALE, FULL-TIME TWO-YEAR MBA, CLASS OF 2015

**Figure 6. Alumni Working in Postgraduate Industry Not Considered Prior to Business School**



Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.  
 Source: GMAC Alumni Perspectives Survey, 2017.

“I met several recruiters during an event on campus and I really felt like I fit in to the culture. I ended up doing my internship with this company after my first year, accepted the full-time offer, and am still with them today. I wasn’t really interested in the industry when I first started, but now I find it fascinating.”

—FEMALE, FULL-TIME TWO-YEAR MBA, CLASS OF 1999

“Recruitment opportunity came up in a solar start-up, was always interested in energy but did not have much exposure to it.”

—MALE, PART-TIME MBA, CLASS OF 2004

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## The Job

Alumni work in a variety of job functions. The majority, overall, fill positions in three areas: finance and accounting (24%), marketing and sales (21%), and general management (15%). MBA alumni are more likely to work in marketing and sales, operations and logistics, and general management functions, whereas non-MBA business master's alumni are more likely to work in areas of finance and accounting and human resources (**Figure 7a**). Finance and accounting positions typically are filled by individuals who have earned specialized credentials in these areas such as the Master of Accounting and Master in Finance degrees. Alumni who earn MBA degrees tend to fill a wider variety of job functions, given the generalist nature of the degree (**Figure 7b**).

More than half (52%) of alumni are working in a different job function than the one they held prior to entering business school. Only a quarter of these alumni (26%), however, had not considered the job function before entering business school, compared with those who

entered industries they did not consider prior to business school (39%).

Overall, a third of alumni are working in different industries and functions than they did prior to entering business school, 29 percent are working in the same function and industry, and the remainder have either changed industries (19%) or job functions (19%).

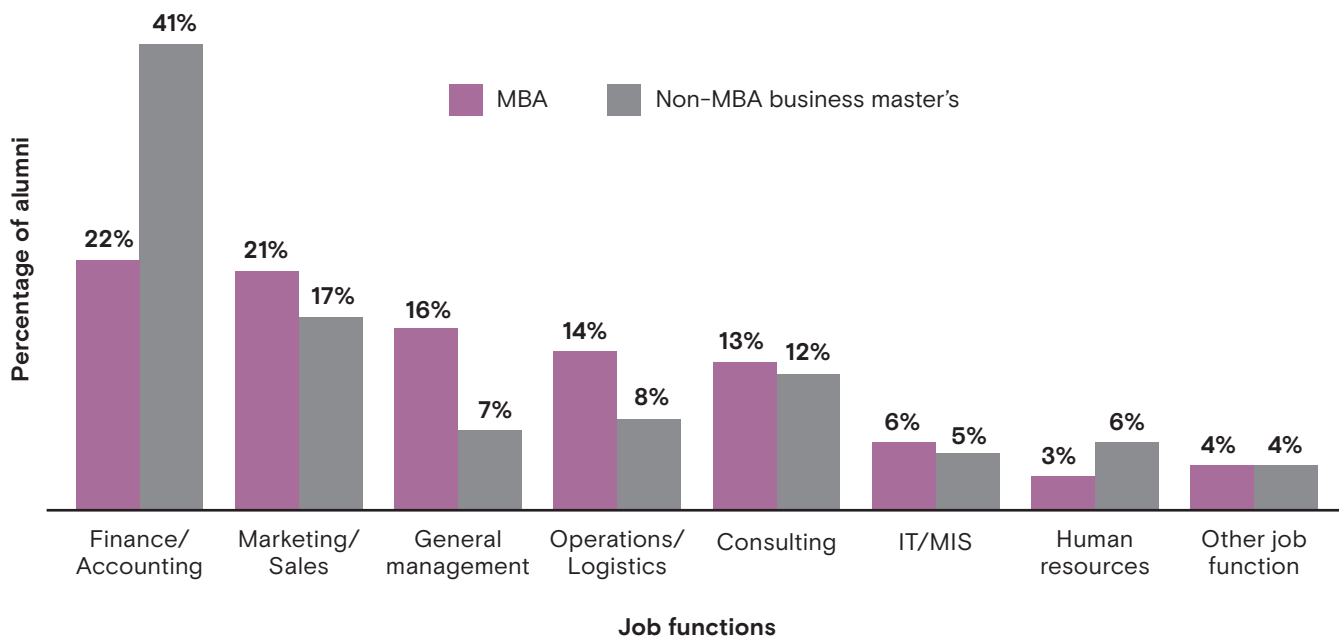
### Job Levels

Job level findings in the alumni survey demonstrate the capacity of business school alumni to advance quickly up the ranks in their organizations. As noted previously, 3 in 4 (75%) say their degree yielded faster career advancement and prepared them for leadership positions (86%). Overall, alumni across all class years and degree types tend to start their career in a mid-level position after graduation. As seen in **Figure 8a**, half of alumni from recent class years (47% in 2012 to 51% in 2016) hold mid-level positions. In contrast, 70 percent of alumni who graduated 10 years ago (2007), for example, currently hold senior, executive, or c-suite positions. **Figure 8b** shows





Figure 7a. Alumni Job Functions, by Program Type, All Graduation Years



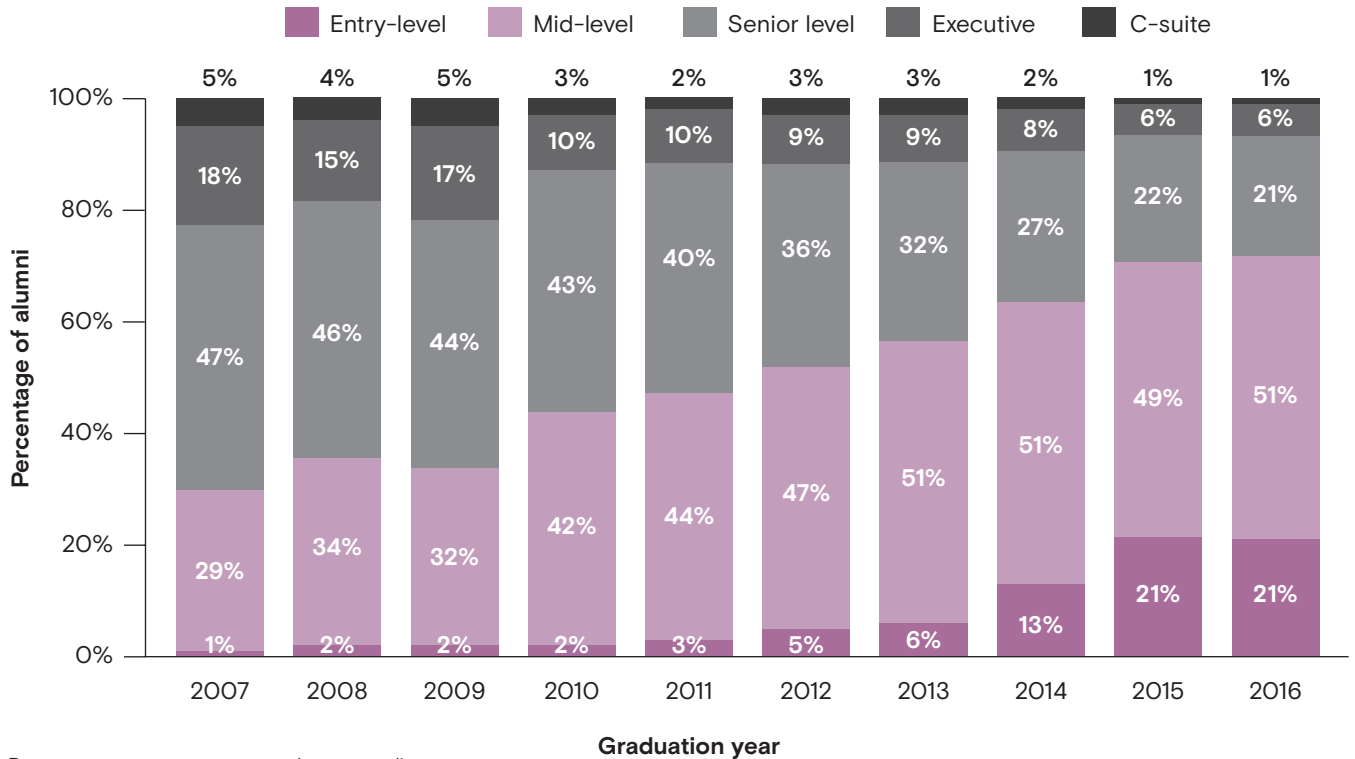
Source: GMAC Alumni Perspectives Survey, 2017.

Figure 7b. Alumni Job Function, by Specific Program Type, All Graduation Years

Job Function	MBA Alumni (%)					Non-MBA Alumni (%)		
	FT 2-YR MBA	FT 1-YR MBA	Part-Time MBA	Executive MBA	Online MBA	MAcct	MFin	MiM
Finance/Accounting	26%	20%	20%	14%	14%	84%	64%	22%
Marketing/Sales	22%	25%	21%	20%	19%	2%	7%	32%
General management	14%	15%	15%	26%	15%	2%	6%	8%
Operations/Logistics	11%	10%	19%	17%	27%	1%	5%	11%
Consulting	15%	17%	11%	7%	5%	6%	12%	15%
IT/MIS	5%	5%	8%	9%	7%	1%	4%	4%
Human resources	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	1%	0%	4%
Other job function	4%	5%	4%	4%	10%	4%	2%	4%

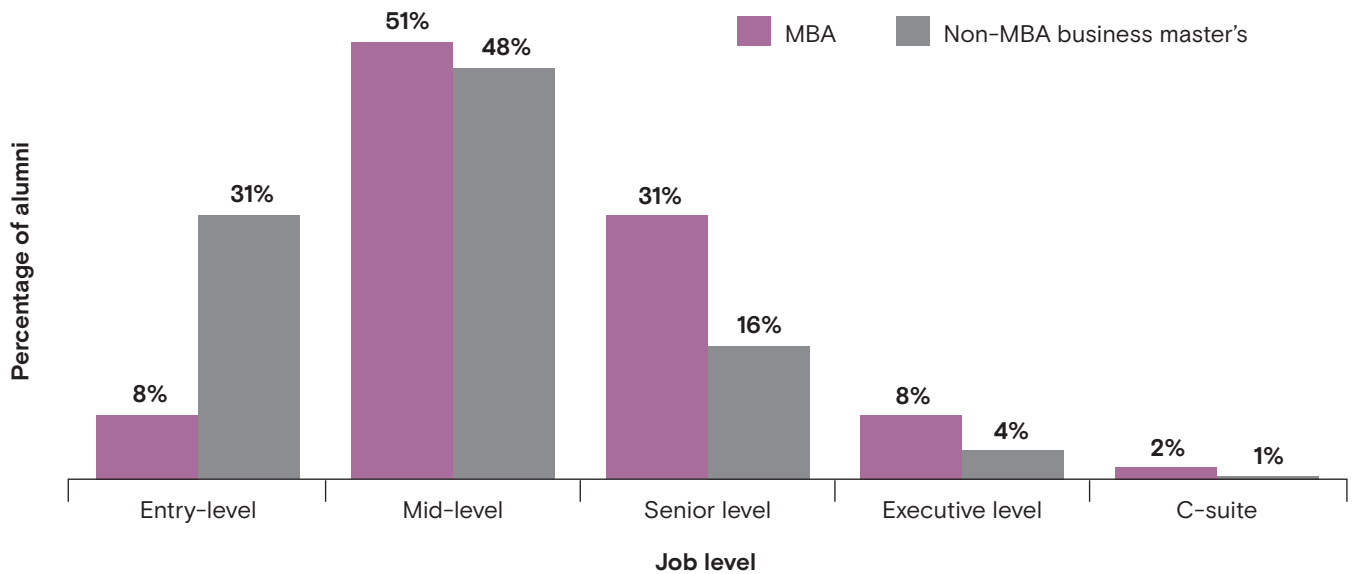
MAcct = Master of Accounting; MFin = Master of Finance; MiM = Master in Management.  
Source: GMAC Alumni Perspectives Survey, 2017.

**Figure 8a. Current Job Level, Overall, by Graduation Year**



Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.  
Source: GMAC Alumni Perspectives Survey, 2017.

**Figure 8b. Current Job Level, by Alumni Program Type, Graduation Years 2012–2016 (Combined)**



Source: GMAC Alumni Perspectives Survey, 2017.

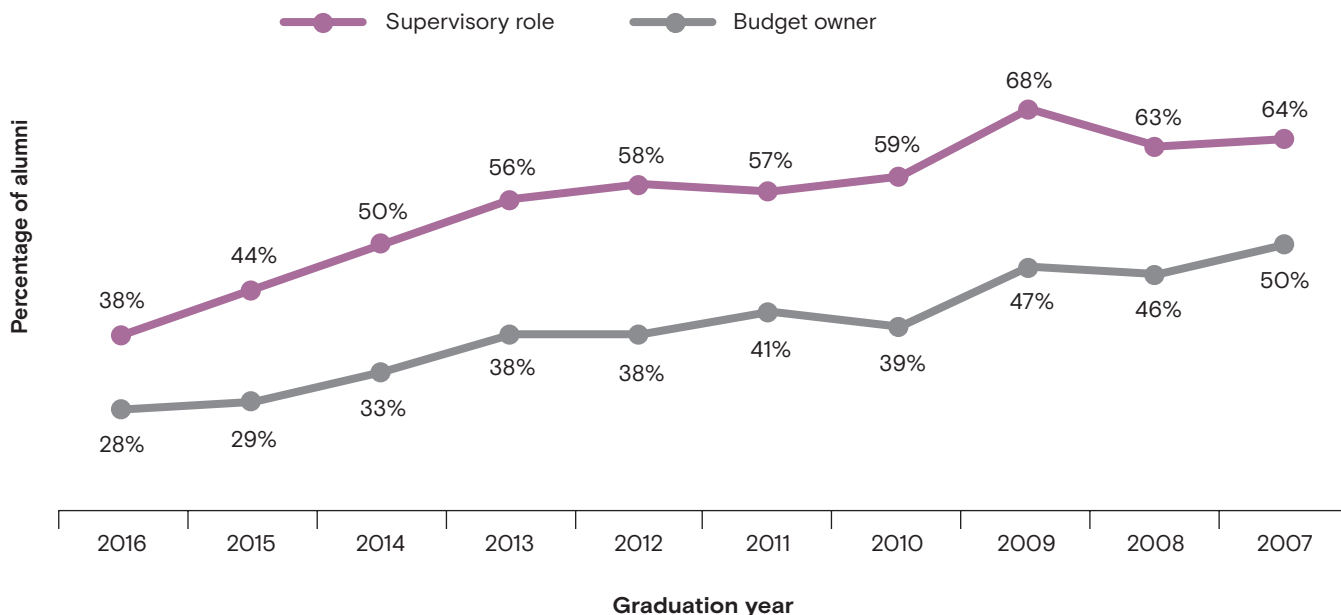
differences by program type for alumni from the five most recent class years (2012–2016). Recent MBA alumni in those classes are more likely to hold senior- and executive-level positions (39%) than their counterparts who completed a non-MBA business degree (20%). Non-MBA business graduates are more likely to hold entry-level positions (31% vs. 8% for MBA alumni). This is not surprising considering that half (50%) of non-MBA business graduates had no work experience prior to entering business school compared with only eight percent of MBA graduates.

Three in five alumni (60%) overall hold supervisory positions, 2 in 5 (43%) are budget owners, 37 percent are both budget owners and supervisors. Alumni tend to assume these managerial and line responsibilities after graduation (Figure 9). Alumni who are 10 years out of school are nearly twice as likely to have supervisory and

budgetary responsibilities compared with the recent class of 2016. In addition, MBA alumni (61%) are more likely than non-MBA business master’s alumni (50%) to hold supervisory positions. Similarly, MBA alumni (46%) are more likely than non-MBA alumni (28%) to have roles with budgetary authority.

Alumni work a median of 45 hours per week. This varies little by program type, whether MBA or non-MBA master’s, industry, or job function. There are slight differences by job level, however, ranging from a median of 43 hours for alumni in entry-level jobs up to an average of 50 hours per week for those in executive and c-suite positions. Similarly, alumni with more managerial responsibilities, such as supervisory and budgetary, tend to work longer hours than those without these responsibilities.

**Figure 9. Supervisory and Budgetary Responsibilities, by Graduation Year**



Source: GMAC Alumni Perspectives Survey, 2017.

# Regional Employment

The following section provides general employment statistics about alumni who work for an organization, by regional work location and 13 specific countries within regions that had sufficient response rates for analysis. **Figures 10, 11, and 12** show the regional distribution of alumni respondents by industry of employment, job

function, job level, and total compensation by the following work locations: China, India, Singapore, Thailand, Nigeria, France, Germany, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Mexico, Venezuela, Canada and the United States. Findings include all program types and graduation years.

**Figure 10. Current Alumni Industry of Employment, by Work Location, All Program Types and Graduation Years**

	Consulting	Energy/ Utilities	Finance/ Accounting	Health Care	Techology	Manufac- turing	Nonprofit	Products/ Services
<b>Asia-Pacific</b>								
China	13%	4%	24%	4%	11%	10%	8%	26%
India	20%	5%	13%	6%	27%	6%	3%	21%
Singapore	8%	10%	18%	6%	17%	4%	7%	29%
Thailand	12%	6%	6%	1%	10%	17%	6%	40%
<b>EMEA*</b>								
Nigeria	7%	20%	18%	2%	17%	5%	8%	22%
France	23%	3%	9%	4%	14%	10%	4%	31%
Germany	20%	6%	18%	6%	14%	8%	5%	24%
Switzerland	17%	3%	16%	14%	11%	2%	4%	34%
United Kingdom	11%	4%	24%	4%	19%	3%	7%	28%
<b>Americas</b>								
Mexico	13%	3%	14%	5%	10%	10%	8%	37%
Venezuela	12%	6%	12%	3%	14%	5%	8%	41%
Canada	14%	9%	11%	6%	12%	4%	10%	34%
United States	10%	7%	11%	10%	14%	10%	11%	26%

\*EMEA includes Europe, Middle East, and Africa.  
Source: GMAC Alumni Perspectives Survey, 2017.

**Figure 11. Current Alumni Job Function, by Regional Work Location, All Program Types and Graduation Years**

	Marketing/ Sales	Operations/ Logistics	Consulting	General Management	Finance/ Accounting	Human Resources	IT/MIS	Other
<b>Asia-Pacific</b>								
China	24%	13%	10%	10%	31%	4%	6%	2%
India	23%	12%	22%	21%	15%	2%	3%	3%
Singapore	26%	11%	17%	14%	25%	1%	3%	3%
Thailand	17%	10%	10%	29%	19%	6%	4%	4%
<b>EMEA*</b>								
Nigeria	24%	16%	11%	12%	20%	5%	10%	2%
France	36%	9%	16%	7%	21%	3%	6%	2%
Germany	20%	10%	21%	16%	25%	1%	5%	3%
Switzerland	27%	13%	16%	23%	16%	1%	3%	1%
United Kingdom	30%	7%	19%	14%	25%	2%	2%	2%
<b>Americas</b>								
Mexico	15%	11%	18%	17%	25%	5%	4%	3%
Venezuela	22%	11%	6%	17%	31%	3%	7%	4%
Canada	18%	14%	20%	16%	21%	2%	6%	3%
United States	20%	14%	12%	14%	25%	4%	7%	5%

\*EMEA includes Europe, Middle East, and Africa.  
Source: GMAC Alumni Perspectives Survey, 2017.

**Figure 12. Current Alumni Job Level, by Regional Work Location, All Program Types and Graduation Years**

Regional Work Location	Job Level				
	Entry Level	Mid-level	Senior Level	Executive Level	C-Suite
<b>Asia-Pacific</b>					
China (N =121)	28%	30%	27%	15%	0%
India (N = 102)	3%	27%	44%	22%	4%
Singapore (N =68)	1%	40%	40%	13%	6%
Thailand (N = 65)	0%	20%	41%	30%	9%
<b>EMEA*</b>					
Nigeria N = 79)	5%	46%	36%	10%	4%
France (N = 266)	22%	43%	25%	9%	1%
Germany (N = 127)	13%	37%	31%	15%	4%
Switzerland (N = 115)	4%	16%	41%	29%	10%
United Kingdom (N = 120)	8%	33%	40%	12%	7%
<b>Americas</b>					
Mexico (N = 112)	1%	18%	37%	31%	13%
Venezuela (N = 96)	1%	26%	31%	36%	6%
Canada (N =187)	4%	37%	43%	12%	4%
United States (N =9,118)	6%	39%	36%	13%	5%

\*EMEA includes Europe, Middle East, and Africa.  
Source: GMAC Alumni Perspectives Survey, 2017.



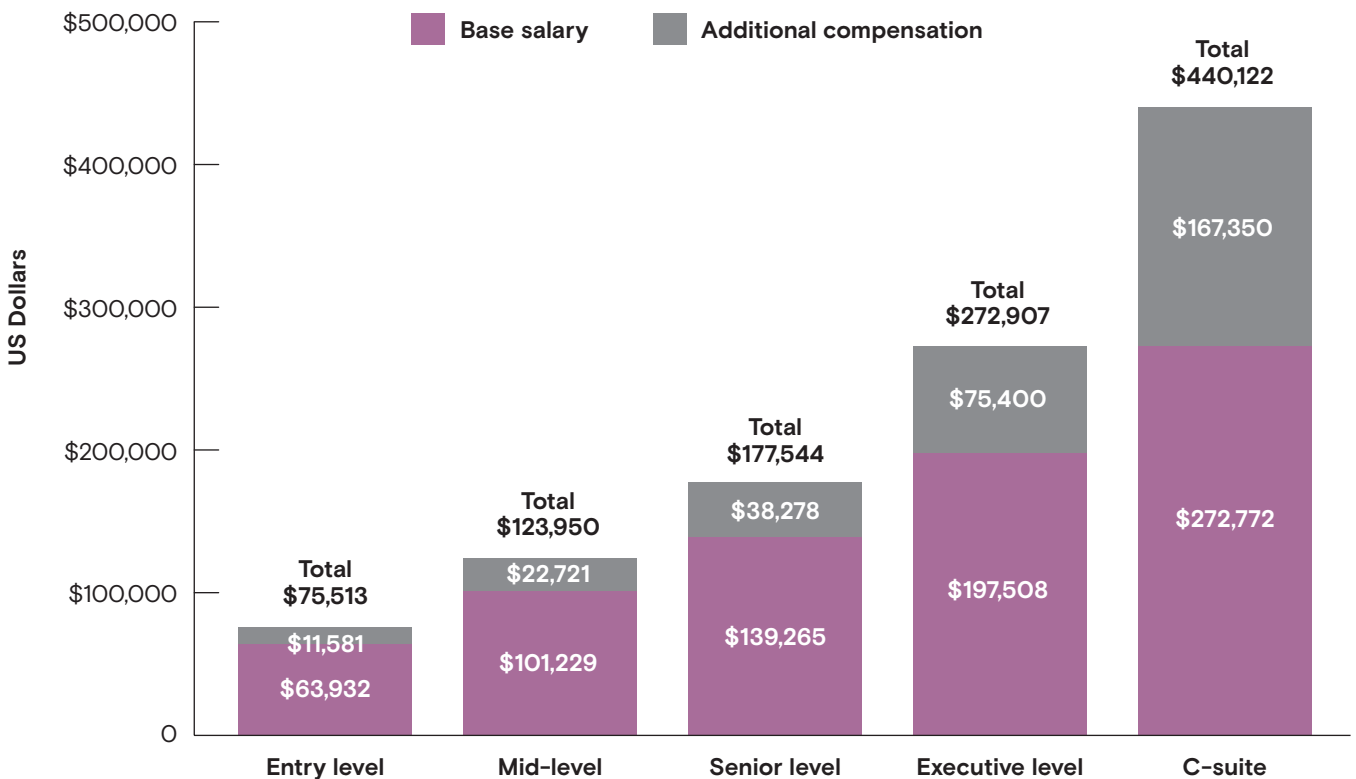


# Compensation

Business school alumni earn 76 percent of their total compensation in base salary, on average. As alumni move up the career ladder, a greater proportion of their compensation comes from non-salary sources such as bonuses. For alumni in the c-suite only 62 percent of

their total annual compensation comes from base salary compared with alumni in lower level positions—entry-level alumni (85% of total compensation earned in base salary), mid-level (82%), senior level (78%), and executive level (72%).

**Figure 13. Alumni Annual Total Compensation,<sup>[3]</sup> by Job Level, All Program Types and Graduation Years**



Source: GMAC Alumni Perspectives Survey, 2017.

<sup>3</sup>Salary and additional compensation data was collected from alumni categorically using \$10,000 intervals. For instance, an alumnus who earns \$106,000 per year would select the category, \$100,000 to \$109,999. The center point of the category is assigned to each alumnus. Finally, the mathematical mean of the assigned value is used to provide an estimate of compensation for alumni.

Alumni with supervisory responsibilities earn 58 percent more than those without supervisory responsibilities, on average. Similarly, alumni with budgetary responsibilities earn 64 percent more than those without budgetary responsibilities, on average. **Figures 13, 14, and 15** provide detailed data about annual compensation<sup>3</sup> for alumni by job level, industry, and program type.

**Figure 14. Current Alumni Annual Compensation<sup>(3)</sup> by Job Level and Industry, All Program Types and Graduation Years, in US Dollars**

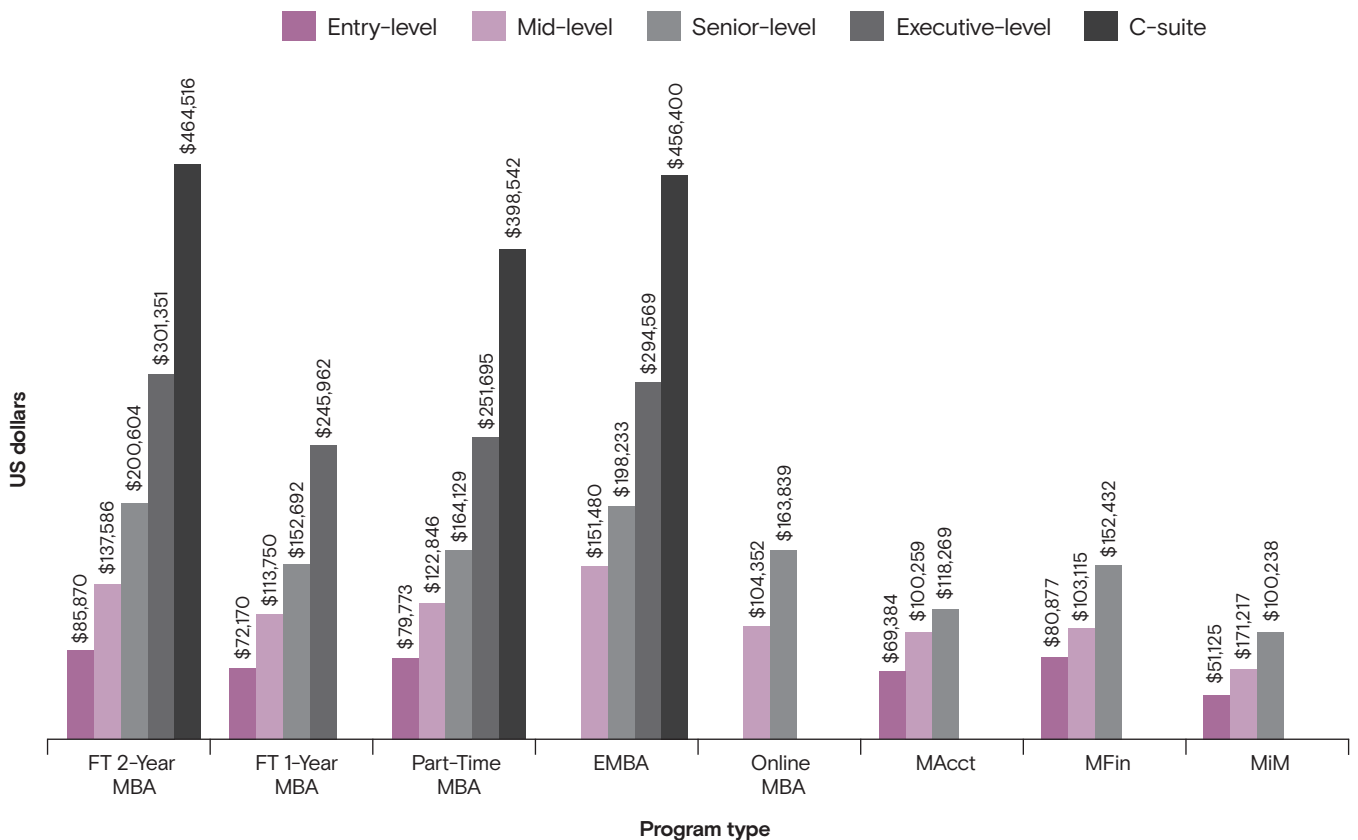
	Entry Level		Mid-Level		Senior Level	
Industry	Base Salary	Added Compensation	Base Salary	Added Compensation	Base Salary	Added Compensation
Energy/Utilities	\$90,106	\$12,447	\$129,076	\$32,596	\$158,540	\$58,625
Consulting	\$63,876	\$12,303	\$103,725	\$18,244	\$141,715	\$28,745
Manufacturing	\$65,169	\$10,339	\$101,891	\$21,723	\$128,167	\$27,232
Health Care	\$69,000	\$7,000	\$103,090	\$20,112	\$148,862	\$36,637
Finance/Accounting	\$60,772	\$11,074	\$101,687	\$29,474	\$164,932	\$56,727
Technology	\$72,800	\$11,300	\$108,977	\$29,783	\$142,601	\$45,663
Products/Services	\$58,172	\$12,715	\$96,155	\$20,525	\$135,796	\$39,617
Nonprofit/Government	\$60,306	\$11,684	\$78,460	\$10,995	\$102,946	\$14,233
	Executive Level			C-Suite		
Industry	Base Salary	Added Compensation	Base Salary	Added Compensation		
Energy/Utilities	\$212,383	\$127,150	\$321,579	\$276,184		
Consulting	\$243,601	\$60,648	\$315,000	\$133,103		
Manufacturing	\$197,722	\$71,333	\$314,643	\$191,339		
Health Care	\$200,398	\$70,085	\$292,778	\$115,625		
Finance/Accounting	\$231,788	\$126,898	\$281,842	\$248,684		
Technology	\$194,534	\$92,953	\$274,189	\$297,905		
Products/Services	\$189,456	\$70,952	\$262,598	\$142,067		
Nonprofit/Government	\$127,994	\$17,325	\$175,789	\$39,605		

Note: All salary and compensation figures show in US dollars.  
 Source: GMAC Alumni Perspectives Survey, 2017.



As alumni move up the career ladder, a greater proportion of their compensation comes from non-salary sources such as bonuses.

Figure 15. Alumni Current Total Compensation<sup>[3]</sup> by Job Level and Program Type, All Graduation Years



MAcct = Master of Accounting; MFin = Master of Finance; MiM = Master in Management.  
 Source: GMAC Alumni Perspectives Survey, 2017.

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# Spotlight on Entrepreneurs

More than 1,500 entrepreneurs responded to the Alumni Perspectives Survey, representing 11 percent of the total survey sample. Most entrepreneurs have businesses in the consulting and products and services industries. Their scope of operations range from local to international yet they tend to be small businesses with fewer than 25 employees (**Figure 16**). Nearly to a person, they are satisfied with their entrepreneurial experience—36 percent are extremely satisfied, 42 percent are very satisfied, and 18 percent are somewhat satisfied. Only four percent are unsatisfied with the entrepreneurial experience.

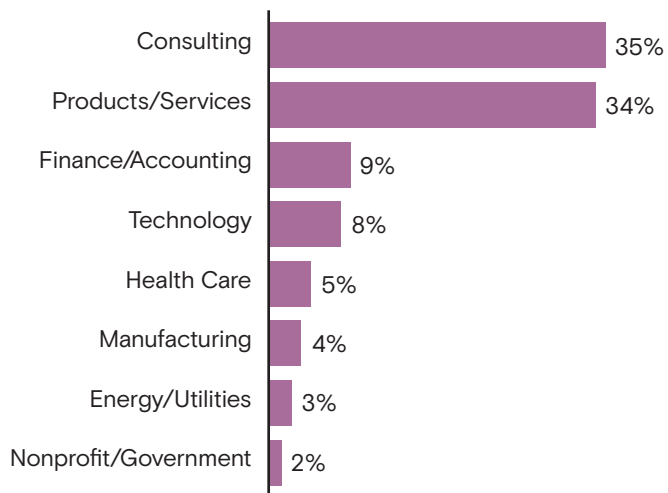
Most alumni entrepreneurs (65%) began their business after working for a company following graduation. About 1 in 10 (9%) started their business before entering business school, 5 percent started their business while enrolled in their graduate business program, and 11 percent began after graduation. **Figure 17** shows the percentage of alumni business owners by graduation year, which confirms that entrepreneurial ventures often begin several years or more after alumni have graduated.

One in 8 entrepreneurs (12%) sought venture capital for their business. Among those who sought venture capital, 72 percent received funding. In addition, three in four

(73%) alumni entrepreneurs had access to resources at their university to support their entrepreneurial endeavors. Half of the alumni who started their business during or immediately following their graduation relied on faculty guidance and experts/mentors in the community (**Figure 18**). Two in 5 (40%) alumni also had access to specific courses beyond the regular curriculum. Fewer alumni had access to specialists in other fields, a dedicated work space, or funding assistance. And about 1 in 8 (12%) of alumni partnered with a classmate to start a business.

Among those who sought venture capital, 72 percent received funding.

**Figure 16. Entrepreneurs' Employment: Industries, Company Size, Geographic Scope**



**Percentage of alumni business owners**

Business Size by Number of Employees*	
Fewer than 25 employees	82%
25 to 100 employees	11%
More than 100 employees	7%
Geographic Scope of Business*	
International	24%
National	22%
Regional	21%
Local	34%

\*Percentage of respondents

Source: GMAC Alumni Perspectives Survey, 2017



**Figure 17. Percentage of Alumni Involved in Entrepreneurial Ventures, by Graduation Year**



Source: GMAC Alumni Perspectives Survey, 2017.

## Alumni in their own words:

### *Entrepreneurs on why they pursued their graduate management education...*

“I started my first business when I was very young and not very knowledgeable. As that business grew, I decided that receiving some formal education in the area would allow me to better foster the maturation of my ventures.”

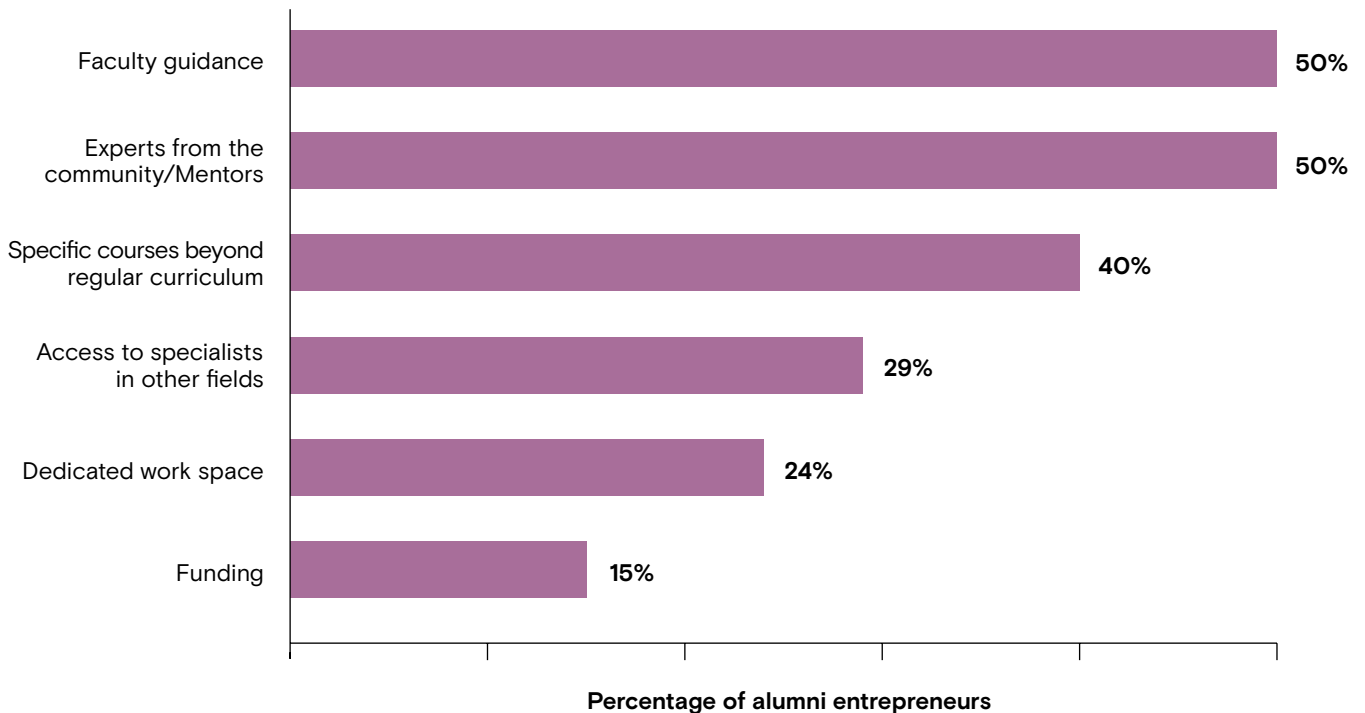
—MALE, PART-TIME MBA, CLASS OF 2012

“To run a better business in my medical practice and be able to collaborate effectively with biomedical corporations and startups to be the link between the medical side and the industry side.”

—MALE, FULL-TIME TWO-YEAR MBA, CLASS OF 2011



**Figure 18. Percentage of Alumni Entrepreneurs With Access to Resources Within Their School**



Source: GMAC Alumni Perspectives Survey, 2017.

“To learn the essential skills for running the operations of a growing business, managing people, and innovating products and business models.”

—MALE, FULL-TIME TWO-YEAR MBA, CLASS OF 2013

“To gain analytical skills and global business knowledge in order to compete with other global management consulting firms and/or consultants working in those firms.”

—MALE, FULL-TIME ONE-YEAR MBA, CLASS OF 2012

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# Workplace Skills Today

Successful performance in the workplace requires the use of a variety of skill sets that vary by the job and in their level of importance. Overall, alumni agree their graduate management education did a good to outstanding job in preparing them for or developing their knowledge of general business functions (96%), decision-making processes (93%), foundation skills (93%), learning, motivation, and leadership (91%), strategic and system skills (91%), managing strategy and innovation (91%), and generative thinking skills (91%).

The skills they use every day vary by job function (**Figure 19**). Of the top five skills important to their job, the ones related to “people” skills or emotional intelligence are among the most important, with interpersonal skills (e.g., active listening, persuasion and negotiation, time management) topping the list. Others, like interpersonal orientation (e.g., cooperation, concern for others, self-control), learning, motivation, and leadership (e.g., achievement, persistence, initiative, adaptability), and conscientiousness (e.g., dependability, attention to detail, and integrity) also rate highly regardless of job function.

Similarly, interpersonal skills are ranked highest in importance regardless of job level (**Figure 20**). As alumni move up in the organization, however, other skills predominate. Alumni in higher-level positions are more likely to indicate the following areas as more important to their current job compared with alumni in lower level position—managing human capital, managing strategy and innovation, managing the decision-making process, strategic and system skills, knowledge of general business functions, learning, motivation, and leadership, and knowledge of human behavior and society.



Of the top five skills important to their job, the ones related to “people” skills or emotional intelligence are among the most important.

**Figure 19. Top Five Skill Sets or Attributes Important to Current Job, by Job Function**

Rank	Marketing/ Sales	Operations/ Logistics	Consulting	General Management	Finance/ Accounting	Human Resources	IT/MIS
1	Interpersonal skills	Interpersonal skills	Interpersonal skills	Interpersonal skills	Interpersonal skills	Interpersonal skills	Interpersonal skills
2	Managing decision-making processes	Managing decision-making processes	Managing decision-making processes	Managing decision-making processes	Managing decision-making processes	Learning, motivation, and leadership	Managing tools and technology
3	Interpersonal orientation	Learning, motivation, and leadership	Learning, motivation, and leadership	Learning, motivation, and leadership	Knowledge of general business functions	Interpersonal orientation	Knowledge of technology, product design, and production
4	Learning, motivation, and leadership	Operations skills	Strategic and systems skills	Interpersonal orientation	Managing the task environment	Conscientiousness	Strategic and systems skills
5	Conscientiousness	Managing the task environment	Interpersonal orientation	Managing human capital	Interpersonal orientation	Knowledge of human behavior and society	Managing decision-making processes

Source: GMAC Alumni Perspectives Survey, 2017.

**Figure 20. Top Five Skills/Attributes Important to Current Job, by Job Level, All Graduation Years**

Rank	Entry-Level	Mid-Level	Senior Level	Executive Level	C-Suite
1	Interpersonal skills	Interpersonal skills	Interpersonal skills	Interpersonal skills	Interpersonal skills
2	Conscientiousness	Managing decision-making processes	Managing decision-making processes	Managing decision-making processes	Managing decision-making processes
3	Managing the task environment	Interpersonal orientation	Learning, motivation, & leadership	Learning, motivation, & leadership	Learning, motivation, & leadership
4	Interpersonal orientation	Managing the task environment	Interpersonal orientation	Managing human capital	Managing strategy and innovation
5	Learning, motivation, & leadership	Learning, motivation, & leadership	Managing the task environment	Interpersonal orientation	Managing human capital

Source: GMAC Alumni Perspectives Survey, 2017.

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# Conclusion

Graduate business schools provide an education that is versatile and reliable in a rapidly changing world. Alumni are exploring and finding career opportunities across the spectrum of industries and job functions and many are entrepreneurs. Alumni agree their graduate management education yields personal, professional and financial value, and most say they would do it again. Not only would these alumni go back to school, knowing what they know now, but they would recommend their program to a colleague and friend. These findings from nearly 15,000 business school alumni show that a graduate management education is a worthwhile investment that yields rewards and opportunities often unimagined.

## Methodology

Findings in this report are based on an analysis of data from 14,651 alumni representing 67 universities worldwide that partnered with GMAC in this research study<sup>4</sup> and a sample of alumni who participated in past GMAC research. All GMAC member schools and several other schools representing a cross section of global graduate management education received email invitations to participate in the study. Schools participated either by providing GMAC with the names and email addresses for their alumni or by forwarding the survey invitation directly to their alumni.

The survey was in the field between September 28, 2016 and November 21, 2016. More than 1,100 graduate business



A graduate management education is a worthwhile investment that yields rewards and opportunities often unimagined.

<sup>4</sup>Participating universities are located in the following 15 countries: Canada, Ecuador, France, Germany, Hungary, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Switzerland, Thailand, Ukraine, United States, Venezuela, and Vietnam.

programs are reflected in the data, including those at participating universities and those represented by a supplemental alumni sample. One hundred twenty-two countries around the globe represent work locations of alumni respondents.

Frequency distributions were examined for both topical and classification questions. Response categories for some questions were collapsed to make final analysis more robust. The results of this survey do not necessarily reflect

a statistically representative sample of alumni. Because of this limitation, the results of this research study should not be used to generalize about the alumni population, but they can be used as a reflection of the sample frame under consideration. Several clear trends emerge from the data, nevertheless.

**Figure 21** shows the overall survey response rate and respondent distribution by graduation year, program type, citizenship, work location, gender, and age.

**Figure 21. Respondent Profile: Alumni Perspectives Survey (Conducted September–November 2016)**

N = 14,651			
<b>Graduation Year</b>		<b>Citizenship</b>	
2010–2016	7,274	Asia-Pacific	838
2000–2009	4,481	Canada	250
1990–1999	1,509	Europe	1,013
1980–1989	880	Latin America	626
Before 1980	502	Middle East/Africa	299
<b>Program Type</b>		United States	11,039
Full-time two-year MBA	5,935	<b>Work Location</b>	
Full-time one-year MBA	933	Asia-Pacific	790
Part-time/Flexible MBA	3,611	Canada	218
Executive MBA	1,596	Europe	985
Online MBA	175	Latin America	606
Postgraduate program	89	Middle East/Africa	292
Master in Management	567	United States	10,504
Master of Accounting	352	<b>Current Age</b>	
Master of Finance	372	32 and younger	3,472
Other master's programs	1,021	33 to 37	2,967
<b>Gender</b>		38 to 44	2,975
Men	10,251	45 to 54	2,541
Women	3,793	55 and older	2,110

Source: GMAC Alumni Perspectives Survey, 2017.

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# Contact Information

For questions or comments regarding the study findings, methodology, or data, please contact the GMAC Research Department at [research@gmac.com](mailto:research@gmac.com).

## Contributors

The following individuals from the Research Department at GMAC made significant contributions to the publication of this report: **Gregg Schoenfeld**, Director, Management Education Research, questionnaire design, data analysis, drafting of manuscript for intellectual content, and lead author; **Rebecca Estrada Worthington**, Survey Research Manager, questionnaire design, survey management, and manuscript review; **Paula Bruggeman**, Research Publications Manager, manuscript revisions, editorial review, and publication management; **Devina Caruthers**, Research Associate Manager, survey operational assistance; **Matt Hazenbush**, Research Communications, Senior Manager, manuscript review; **Tacoma Williams**, Research Senior Coordinator, quality assurance; and **Tania Hernandez-Andersen**, Director, Brand and Internal Agency, manuscript review.

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