



The Association of MBAs – fabulous at forty

A Ruby Anniversary of forty years represents what was seen back in 1967 as the normal length of a working career, usually with the same employer who would provide a pension that rewarded employment with so many fortieths for each year of service. In 2007 with the celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the Association of MBAs we can therefore say that we have truly come of age.

In 1967 the world was very different from now. The segregationist Lester Maddox was sworn in as Governor of Georgia, Kossygin was running Russia, the Greeks had a military coup, China invaded Tibet, Israel had its Six Day War, and Che Guevara was executed. The UK applied to join the European Community, nationalised the steel industry and broadcasted its first colour television programmes. Less than one in eight of UK 18 year olds went to university and graduate business education was a novel idea.

On the 28 June 1967, there was a historic meeting of eight newly minted MBAs from US business schools plus two current students from the first intake at the London Business School. They decided that it was worth setting up an organisation to advance the cause of full-time business education in Britain at the post-graduate level. It was further agreed in an early meeting that membership would include all graduates of reputable business schools.

There were eight initial subscribers to the Memorandum of Association of what was originally called the Business Graduates Association including four from Wharton, two from Stanford and one from Columbia. On the 24 November 1967 they all signed a document to form the first Committee of the Association with fourteen US MBA graduates as its trustees.

The objectives were fivefold: to improve the quality and number of those applying to business schools, to help the development of the existing business schools, to encourage employers to assimilate the new business graduates, to advocate the importance of professional business education and to help in the development of new graduate business schools. These were lofty ambitions on a small budget.

However the Association recruited some heavy hitters from business so that it could punch above its weight. John Bolton became Chairman of the Advisory Council and John Hayle the Chairman of the Trustees. They were succeeded by Peter Parker and Miles Broadbent respectively. The new Association also needed staff. The first employee was Sczerina Hichens (wife of Anthony Hichens from Wharton) who was part-time and paid 28 pence per hour. In

1969, Vice Admiral David Clutterbuck was appointed as Director General and it was he who cajoled the young officers who were his trustees into doing what was needed.

The Association did of course need money to operate. Each founding committee member lent £5. Individual membership was set at £1 per year. Fortunately the Clement Wilson Foundation made a donation of £3,000 and other individuals also gave significant sums (remembering the RPI Index is now about 11 times greater than it was in 1967).

By 1972 the Association produced its first Address Book of members. In 1973 it described an annual increase in membership of 30% and by 1976 over 1,900 names were included. The Foreword to the 1976 Address Book records that The membership is growing steadily despite the economic problems which have resulted in a decrease in the number of British people attending American Business Schools .

In its first ten years the Association had therefore taken root and had advanced hugely from that first 1967 meeting as graduate business education became a mainstream subject around the world. It already had the form which would allow it to expand and become even more relevant during its second decade when the ideas of accreditation and international expansion would become prominent.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul Judge". The signature is written in a cursive style. Below the signature is a horizontal line.

Sir Paul Judge
President of the Association of MBAs