



# Brent Edwards

Dartmouth '00



Brent Edwards realized that government, with a concentration in international relations, had been a fascinating field of study. But as graduation loomed, he knew it wasn't going to be his career. "I didn't want to be a paper-pusher, and I didn't want to work in a bureaucracy," he explains.

That left open a world of other possibilities — so he cast a wide net, interviewing at consulting firms, consumer product companies, and marketing firms. Like most of his classmates, he even considered a few high-tech outfits. The bottom line, he says, was that "I was basically looking for something that interested me in an environment where I'd be working with great people."

MBI captured his attention on campus. He checked the company out and learned that it seeks employees who are energetic, flexible and results-oriented, believing that brains are more important than directly related experience. MBI's recruiting strategy, he was told, ensured that the company's ranks were filled with a diverse group of bright, interesting managers — the kind of people he was seeking.

He spent a day at MBI headquarters talking with people at various management levels, and came away impressed, he recalls. "I saw that I would get the opportunity to shoulder a lot of responsibility right away. It sounded as though I'd be really challenged and I'd have the opportunity to impact the business."

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Edwards recalls an incident that happened that day. "On the way to lunch with an MBI manager, he handed me a brain teaser consisting of three intertwined rings. 'Here, he said jokingly, this is your first test. Separate these rings.'" By the time they pulled into

the restaurant parking lot, Edwards thought he had the puzzle solved. But he discovered to his surprise that he had actually broken it. "That's okay," his host winked graciously. "It worked — you got the rings apart and succeeded in your task." The trivial episode was of course quickly forgotten, but it occurs to Edwards now that it is metaphorical of the way MBI nurtures those with a take-charge attitude and a willingness to apply themselves, developing them into accomplished managers.

"At this company, you learn by doing, not by watching others," Edwards asserts. "You have the ability to try new things, and mistakes will be tolerated, as long as you learn from them." He remembers that, at first, being given responsibility for his own products seemed overwhelming. It was "a little like being tossed into the

middle of a fire,” he recounts. “You’re given all the resources you need to get out, but you have to find your own way.” He calls MBI a “great training ground.”

Edwards feels that being in a position to manage a piece of the company’s business is tremendously rewarding. He works for MBI’s Danbury Mint division, and was instrumental in helping the company launch its first collector sports dolls. “I helped the company grow its business with a new line of products. It was exciting,” he remarks.

Moreover, he feels fortunate to be working in a place where he can truly develop and apply his abilities and talents to the maximum. “MBI really dominates the collectibles business,” he says knowingly. With that, he bids a kind farewell. He’s off to join the other members of his product group, he says, as they grapple their way to a creative solution for the crisis of the day.

Edwards has continued to broaden the scope of his experience and responsibility, and is now a product manager with MBI’s U.K. division in London.