



HARVARD UNIVERSITY

*Graduate School of Business Administration*

*Boston, Massachusetts 02163*

April 6, 1981

Roger McConnell  
P.O. Box 820  
Nashville, TN 37202

Dear Roger:

Everything here is going great. It was good to see you a couple of weeks back in Nashville and be around the people in your organization. They are an exciting group.

I imagine you're pretty busy this time of the year. It's hard to believe that within two months summer will be here again and I will be halfway through my MBA studies.

Reflecting back on my book selling experience, I really do appreciate the opportunity for a couple of reasons. First of all, it enabled me to get into school here. Second of all, it helped me develop in a leadership capacity some skills that I believe will be critical to my success no matter what I go into. Third, it has given me a skill that is highly marketable.

A lot of people apply to school here at Harvard. Last year there were 10,000 applicants and they accepted about 800 into the first year program. My grades at Dennison, as you know, were pretty good. But my board scores were below average for the people accepted here. About the only thing I had that was different was the fact that I had sold books during the summers while going to college.

It is so unusual for a college student to be willing to leave home for the summer and do a job that they have never done before in a place that they have never lived before. I have met several students who are here currently studying, who have sold books, and I know several people who have graduated from the business school after spending many summers on the book field.

As far as leadership experience goes, Harvard selects students based on their demonstrative leadership potential. Many of the students in my sections were active in college in fraternities and sororities and different organizations. In our organizational behavior class, we discussed managing people. I was amazed how little most people know about the basics of motivation, training, and recruiting people. Most people simply lack the experience in the trial



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fire that comes from managing people on the job.

I believe that after having three 10-man teams and working as a Sales Manager for two years, that each 10-man team was worth at least five years of management experience. The average manager in the United States is 45 years old and manages only six people. The opportunity to manage other people at such a young age is great experience. This will be my sixth summer coming up. The thing I'm most excited about is that I know many of my weaknesses in working with people and I have a chance to polish those up before I enter the job market on a full-time basis. I consider this knowledge to be one of my most valuable assets.

Even here at Harvard, it's amazing to see classmates worry about career jobs. People think that a degree from Harvard School is a ticket to a top job in any industry that an individual chooses. This is just not true. It does open a few doors, but not all of them. One thing that I am thankful for is that I have a skill in an area of sales and sales management which I know I enjoy, but that I can always find work using those skills that I learned selling books. Hope your recruiting season is going well and that you and your group have another great summer. Give Larry my best.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tom Mallon".

Tom Mallon