

# How to Apply for an MBA

ESSAYS

ADMISSIONS INTERVIEWS

SCHOOL SELECTION

RESUME **MBA**

RECOMMENDATION LETTERS



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# How to Apply for an MBA

MBA Prep School's Guide to Building an Outstanding MBA Application

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# Introduction

The “aha” moment that led us to write this book and to launch MBAPrepSchool.com was that the majority of MBA candidates are investing countless hours preparing for the GMAT, but they are not prepared for the rest of the MBA application, namely the essays, resume, recommendation letters, application form, and interviews.

This book shares the proven principles and practices we developed at MBA Prep School to help our clients earn acceptance letters to the world’s most selective business schools. In the past, you would have had to hire an admission consultant and pay thousands of dollars for access to the methods and tools they have developed for creating exceptional applications. In this book, you’ll be introduced to their secrets.

Other books have been written about applying to business school. Moreover, on the web, you will find helpful tips and well-meaning pointers about how to get into a good school. But, until now, no one has provided a start-to-finish guide for generating a breakthrough application. The MBA Prep Steps™ program contained in this book was developed by a team of experienced MBA admissions consultants from elite MBA programs, like the Harvard Business School. Our powerful, easy-to-follow approach for building an outstanding application in just 12-weeks combines all of the activities of applying for an MBA with the insights we use to help our clients create applications that lead to acceptance letters.

We have divided the Prep Steps into 12-weeks of weekly assignments. Follow the MBA Prep Steps™ project work plan to keep pace with all of your application activities. The sections of the book and the chapters in each section correspond to the MBA Prep Steps™ themselves. We recommend that you complete the exercises in each section before moving on to the next section. If you follow this plan diligently, you won’t just have learned how to create an outstanding application, you will have created one!

Every one of the experts who contributed ideas to this book would tell you the same thing: the applicants who succeed in the admissions process are the ones who devoted themselves completely to creating their absolute best applications. They weren’t simply handed an acceptance letter, they prepared to achieve their goal, they worked tirelessly, and they earned one. Creating a competitive application for a top-tier MBA program isn’t easy, but with this book as your guide, you will have the knowledge and tools you need to succeed.

Good luck and Prepare to Be Accepted™!



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# 1

SECTION 1

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## Prepare to Apply

## 1. Prepare to Apply

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If you are more than twelve weeks from applying, you may be wondering what you can do to begin building the foundation for your future applications. In this section of the book, we provide some of the conceptual underpinnings of this book and tell you about substantive steps you can take now to ensure that your absolute best application emerges once you start the 12-week MBA Prep Steps™ program.

We begin with a brief history of the MBA degree, and help you to understand the MBA application process as a whole. Then, we introduce you to the heart and soul of this book, our 12-week MBA Prep Steps™ Program.

The process of building an outstanding application begins with objectively evaluating your candidacy and taking the steps we recommend in Chapter 1.4 to make your candidacy that much stronger.

## 1.2 The MBA Prep Steps™ Program

The MBA Prep Steps™ program was developed by MBA Prep School's faculty of experienced MBA admissions consultants to provide our clients with a powerful, step-by-step approach for building an outstanding application.

In this chapter, we introduce the ten steps in the MBA Prep Steps™ program and provide you with a 12-week project calendar so you will know what you need to concentrate on each week.

As the weekly schedule on the next page will make clear, the MBA Prep Steps™ are designed to be completed in order because the steps that come later draw on the insights and content you generate in the preceding Prep Steps.

If you want to complete three outstanding applications in just twelve weeks, stay on pace with the weekly schedule provided. If you have less than twelve weeks to work with, we recommend that you double-up on your workload in the early steps until you are on pace with the weekly program. This may require taking some vacation time from work and/or sacrificing nights and weekends until you are on schedule.

In the forthcoming sections of the book, we will explore each MBA Prep Step™ in some detail and describe the activities and exercises you need to complete at each stage. This chapter will serve as an introduction and overview of the steps in the work plan.

### OVERVIEW OF THE MBA PREP STEPS™

The MBA Prep Steps™	Weeks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Prepare to Apply	Pre												
2. Discover Your Strengths	1	■											
3. Define Your Career Goals	2 - 3		■	■									
4. Select Your Schools	2 - 4		■	■	■								
5. Identify Each School's Fit Qualities	4 - 6				■	■	■						
6. Create Your Application Resume	4 - 6				■	■	■						
7. Write Your Essays	6 - 12						■	■	■	■	■	■	■
8. Select and Support Your References	6 - 12						■	■	■	■	■	■	■
9. Complete the Application Forms	6 - 12						■	■	■	■	■	■	■
10. Prepare for Interviews	12+												

### MBA Prep Step 1: Prepare to Apply

**1** For the early birds who have more than twelve weeks before it's time to apply, this section of the book discusses the things you can do to make your candidacy that much stronger.

First, you will learn to think like an admissions officer in order to identify the strengths



and weaknesses in your candidacy. After showing you how to diagnose opportunities for improvement in your applicant profile, we prescribe a series of steps that you can take to strengthen your candidacy before you apply.

### **MBA Prep Step 2: Discover Your Strengths**

2 An outstanding application will clearly communicate your key strengths to the admissions committee; therefore, you need to begin the application process with a crystal clear picture of what your strengths are. In this first week of the formal, 12-week MBA Prep Steps™ program, you will complete a thorough accounting of your key differentiators, character strengths, career history, and leadership capabilities. The things you discover about yourself will serve as the building blocks for a powerful application.

### **MBA Prep Step 3: Define Your Career Goals**

3 The clarity of the career vision you write about in your essays and talk about in your admissions interview can serve as an elegant proof of your future potential. In this MBA Prep Step, you'll investigate the intersection between your strengths, passion, and sense of purpose in order to define your career goals. The career goals you develop using the exercises in this section of the book will set you apart from other candidates competing for a spot in a top school.

### **MBA Prep Step 4: Select Your Schools**

4 In this MBA Prep Step, you'll learn how to look beyond the magazine rankings, the school's marketing messages, and the opinions of others. We will guide you through a research program and a list of due diligence steps that you can take to select the schools that are the best fit for you.

### **MBA Prep Step 5: Identify Each School's Fit Qualities**

5 To prove you are a better fit than your competition, you need to know what qualities the school values most and use that knowledge to shape and to customize every element of your application – especially your essays. In this MBA Prep Step, we will show you how to identify the school's *Fit Qualities* -- the highest common denominators among students who are accepted.

### **MBA Prep Step 6: Create Your Application Resume**

6 Most schools will require you to submit a 1-2 page resume. Other books and articles about creating a resume are generally written from the standpoint of creating a resume for a job search. In this book, you'll learn exactly what admissions officers are looking for in an MBA application resume and how to build a resume that will “wow” the admissions committee.

## MBA Prep Step 7: Write Your Essays

**7** The essays you write for your MBA applications are the best way to differentiate yourself from other candidates, and this MBA Prep Step will provide you with the guidance you need to create impressive essays.

There are no shortcuts to creating great essays. To help you stay on track with your essay writing efforts, we break the writing process down into a weekly program that will take you from first draft to final draft for three separate sets of application essays. Armed with the insights provided in this section of the book, you will embark on your writing process with greater confidence and a clearer idea of your writing objectives.

## MBA Prep Step 8: Select and Support Your References

**8** Selecting your references and supporting them along the way are critical aspects of a successful application. In this MBA Prep Step, we provide you with the important “Do’s and Don’ts” of reference selection.

After you have selected your references, guiding them through the recommendation letter process is the best way to ensure that great letters result. We will offer you a series of Reference Letter Best Practices so that you can maximize the quality of the reference letters that accompany your application.

## MBA Prep Step 9: Complete the Application Forms

**9** The application forms provide another opportunity to strengthen your candidacy. In this MBA Prep Step, we will provide you with tips on all the major sections of the forms and share a series of best practices so that your application forms will further your bid for admission.

## MBA Prep Step 10: Prepare for Interviews

**10** The admissions interview is the “final exam” in the application process. In this MBA Prep Step, you will learn what you are going to be “tested on” and how to score top marks with your interview answers. We also offer a series of Admissions Interview Best Practices that will make a noticeable difference in your performance on interview day.

## SECTION 2

# Discover Your Strengths

## 2. Discover Your Strengths

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Discovering your strengths is the first and, arguably, the most important MBA Prep Step™. Effective self-assessment is one of the keys to developing an outstanding application. In this section of the book, we will help you to acquire a thorough understanding of who you are, what your strengths are, and what you have to offer the schools you're applying to.

When our admissions consultants are working one-on-one with MBA Prep School students, we go through the same self-assessment process described in this book. Over the years, we have found that even those who think that they already have a firm grasp on what their strengths are end up admitting that this was time well spent.

Creating a business school application is a little like building a mosaic. Each tile adds something new to the mosaic until a complete picture of you emerges for the admissions committee. Based on this complete picture of you, they will make their admissions decision. Of course, an application isn't built from tiles; it is constructed from your transcript, test scores, resume, essays, reference letters, application form, and interview answers. Those, in turn, are built piece-by-piece from the contents of your academic, personal, and professional history. So we will refer to the "tiles" of your application mosaic as *Content Building Blocks*.

The mosaic analogy is instructive because it offers you three prescriptions for creating an outstanding application:

1. You want each building block to be of the highest quality;
2. You want to give admissions officers exactly the right number of building blocks – not too few and not too many; and
3. You want to ensure that the building blocks come together to form a clear picture of you.

If all of these conditions are met, then your application will present a vivid image of the best of who you are.

The *Discover Your Strengths* exercises in this book will help you to fulfill prescriptions 1 and 2 above. You will use these exercises to discover the *Content Building Blocks* from which your mosaic will be built. Looking ahead for a moment, in the other MBA Prep Steps™, you will satisfy prescription 3 and find the right spot for each building block in your resume, essays, recommendation letters, application form, and interview answers. You will assemble your building blocks into a clear picture of you. Unlike your competition, you won't have to rely on an over-worked admissions officer to put the building blocks together properly; you will have performed the heavy lifting for them.

One's strengths may be hard to see from the inside looking out because they are so interwoven into the fabric of one's life. In this MBA Prep Step™, you'll learn step-by-step exercises that will help you to *Discover Your Strengths*.

In Chapter 2.1 you will *Discover Your Points of Difference*. *Points of Difference* is a term of art in the marketing world that refers to the positive ways in which a company's product differs from its competitors. In our *Points of Difference* exercise, you'll identify the positive ways that you are different from your competition—other applicants.

You will *Discover Your Character Strengths* in Chapter 2.2 *Character Strengths* are the combined elements of your character that make you an individual distinct from others; your *Character Strengths* include character attributes like creativity, honesty, and generosity; they are the qualities that society and, it follows, business schools hold in high regard. We'll introduce you to a profiling tool developed by psychologists that will offer you a number of valuable, initial insights on which of your *Character Strengths* you might want to emphasize in your application.

In Chapter 2.3, you will *Discover Your Career Story*. We use the verb “discover” here deliberately because although many candidates have created a resume before, few have written a *Career Story*. A resume is a record of jobs and achievements – a *Career Story* provides the connections and interrelationships between those jobs and brings your resume to life. By creating a holistic summary of the skills and knowledge you've acquired and what you've achieved professionally, you will be better prepared to differentiate your career achievements from your competition.

We will show you how to *Discover Your Leadership Capabilities* in Chapter 2.4. If you were applying to art school, you would be expected to present a portfolio of your artistic work so far. Business schools, on the other hand, are interested in your *Leadership Portfolio* – the collection of leadership accomplishments that are indicative of your leadership strengths and leadership potential. Our *Leadership Story Analysis* exercise will help you to discover your leadership capabilities and assemble the key leadership stories that make up your *Leadership Portfolio*.

Discovering your strengths is not easy – which is exactly why completing the exercises in this chapter will provide you with a competitive advantage in the application process. You will be able to identify and assemble the *Content Building Blocks* for an outstanding application.

## 2.1 Discover Your Points of Difference

One of the secrets to creating an outstanding MBA application is to start with a thorough understanding of how you are different from other applicants. As you know, there are more qualified candidates applying than there are seats in the class; therefore, the admissions committee wants to know what you can bring to the table. Directly and indirectly, admissions committees will be asking: “What is unique about you?”

*Points of Difference* (“PODs”) is a marketing term that refers to the positive ways in which a company’s product differs from its competitors.” In the exercise in this chapter, you’ll identify your *Points of Difference* -- the positive ways that you are different from other applicants. Taken together, a product’s *PODs* define the brand. Similarly, your *PODs* will serve to brand you in the eyes of the admissions committee.

Differentiation is key to earning an acceptance letter, and our *PODs* Discovery exercise will help you to discover the ways you are different from the thousands of candidates who apply each year to the top business schools.

Identifying your top five *PODs* will provide an excellent set of *Content Building Blocks* that can be used for your essays, recommendation letters, and interview answers.

### EXERCISE: DISCOVER YOUR POINTS OF DIFFERENCE

#### Step 1: Brainstorm Your Points of Difference

Many applicants struggle when confronted with the question “How are you different?” To help you answer that question, we have created eleven separate POD categories that will help guide your brainstorming efforts:

- Important Life Experiences
- Significant Personal Achievements
- Cross-Cultural Experiences
- Talents
- Expertise
- Things You’ve Started
- Things You Have Created
- Passions and Interests
- Honors and Awards
- Causes/Communities You Care About
- Friends in High Places

This category list is not meant to be exhaustive. If compelling *PODs* come to mind that don't fit neatly into one of these categories, write them down!

Before you get started, read the definition of each category and the examples that emerged when previous MBA Prep School students used these *POD* categories in their brainstorming efforts. The descriptions and examples are intended to spur your own discovery process.

### *Important Life Experiences*

Definition: Experiences and situations that are literally “life changing.”

Example: One of our students had served as a special forces soldier in the military. The collection of experiences he had during this period of his life forever changed his outlook, goals, beliefs, and dreams. That was obvious on the surface but by digging deeper into some of those experiences, we came up with some amazing subject matter for his essay including the contributions that he and his combat unit had made to providing security for Iraq's first free election.

### *Significant Personal Achievements*

Definition: Significant individual achievements that you are extremely proud of

Example: One of our students remembered the harrowing time he and his wife had gone through when their first baby was born two months premature. His child had to spend the first six weeks of his life in the neonatal intensive care unit. Overcoming the stress and sleepless nights that he and his wife endured leading up to the day when they could bring their son home from the hospital was his proudest personal achievement.

### *Cross-Cultural Experiences*

Definition: Those times you've ventured outside your comfort zone or been in an unfamiliar cultural situation and relied on your adaptability, empathy, and communication skills to navigate the experience effectively.

Example: One candidate spent 18 months early in her career living in Indonesia as an exchange student and English language tutor. This experience was a major influence on her career aspirations, and she ultimately founded a non-profit organization focused on helping ensure improved access to high quality public education in Southeast and Central Asia.

### *Talents*

Definition: Consistent, near-perfect performance in an activity that you truly enjoy. Talents are a fertile area to explore. Be sure to expand your search beyond only those talents that you think are business-oriented or work-related to include all areas of your life and experiences.

Example: One of our students spent a year between college and the start of her management consulting career as a professional dancer on Broadway. In her time outside of the office, she founded a non-profit organization that taught ballet and dance to young children in the inner-city schools of New York.



### *Expertise*

Definition: Expansive knowledge and recognized skills in a particular field.

Example: Similar to talents, areas of deep expertise don't have to be professionally focused. One MBA Prep School student had a long-held fascination with archaeology and ancient history culminating in his participation in an archaeological dig in Egypt. Ultimately, he wrote an exciting essay about this passion for archaeology and how the things he'd learned as an archaeologist would make him a more effective business leader.

### *Things You've Started*

Definition: The category "Things You've Started" could include anything from an entrepreneurial experience in high school to launching a book club in your spare time after graduation because you were alarmed that most of your friends hadn't opened a book since college. The key element here is that you had an idea and turned that idea into something real.

Example: During a period in her life when her brother was battling a drug addiction, one of my clients started an addiction recovery support group for families in her community who had a family member with a substance abuse problem. This leadership experience was on a small scale, but it had a huge impact on the families that took part in the group she created.

### *Things You Have Created*

Definition: A time when you were innovative and imaginative and drew on your talents to produce something you're proud of.

Example: Things you've created might be anything from a product you patented to a book you self-published. One candidate wrote a symphony that her hometown orchestra performed on tour.

### *Passions and Interests*

Definition: The things you do for enjoyment and relaxation in your free time.

Example: One of our candidates had a passion for cinematography and video editing. At first blush, she wasn't sure why business schools might want to know about this. She ultimately positioned this POD as being valuable to her class because she could be the class videographer, capturing the "key moments" of their time together.

### *Honors and Awards*

Definition: Special recognition you have received personally and/or professionally.

Example: Honors and awards will be listed in your application forms, but they are also a good trigger for *PODs* because they will remind you of ways that you've excelled at various points in your life. One candidate wrote an award winning economics thesis on U.S. investment in China – talking about the project reminded her about how much she enjoyed research and of her talent for identifying and communicating important investment trends.

### *Causes/Communities You Care About*

Definition: Causes you feel strongly about and communities that you care deeply about helping. Think about the communities you are a part of and how you have made those communities stronger.

Example: Causes and/or communities that you care about are of interest to the admissions committee because they are looking for the kinds of leaders who devote time and energy to the communities that matter to them. One MBA Prep School student cared deeply about the shift to clean energy and worked with an organization that helped homeowners install solar energy panels in their homes.

### *Friends in High Places*

Definition: This isn't about showing off your elite Rolodex. Rather, think about which of your relationships might be valuable to your future classmates.

Example: One of our candidates was from a prominent political family in China and would be able to take his interested classmates on an "insider" tour of China.

## **Step 2: Choose Your Top 5 Points of Difference**

Just as a marketing strategist must decide which product benefits to focus on in their marketing campaigns, you need to choose five *PODs* to focus on in your application campaign. Your goal is to select the unique things about you that you believe will most appeal to admissions officers and your future classmates.

The *PODs* you have discovered make you unique; the question to ask yourself is:

"How could these different, interesting, and unusual things about me benefit the program and my future classmates?"

Your *PODs* signify your potential to make a unique contribution to an MBA class. You need to take those differences and translate them into specific benefits to the program and your classmates.

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## **CASE STUDY: RICHARD'S POINTS OF DIFFERENCE**

One of our MBA Prep School students was an army brat who had moved to a new city every three years growing up. Now that's somewhat unique by itself, but he needed to figure out how that difference might be a benefit to his future classmates.

After some thinking, he realized that his army brat upbringing had taught him how to build new friendships quickly where ever he went; he was quite adept at breaking the ice and making friends. He realized he could help his new classmates connect with one another – a role he had played well in other communities that he'd been part of in the past.

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When you try to translate *PODs* into benefits, you will find that some of the unique things about you don't easily translate into benefits to your classmates. The one's you want to identify and underline are those that will.

After translating *PODs* into benefits, you will probably have a much shorter list. If you still have more than five *PODs* vying for attention, then ask yourself: "If I could only tell the Admissions Committee five things about me, which would they be?"

If your top five still don't emerge, you can seek out the advice of others who know you well and ask them to help you pick the *PODs* that would best represent an appealing, well-rounded picture of you.

## CHAPTER REVIEW: DISCOVER YOUR POINTS OF DIFFERENCE

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- *Points of Difference* ("*PODs*") are the positive ways that you are different from other applicants.
- To help you identify your strongest *PODs*, we provided eleven separate categories and example *PODs* to spur your brainstorming efforts.
- Like a marketing strategist, you need to choose five *PODs* to focus on in your application campaign.
- Choose the 5 *PODs* that will be relevant and beneficial to your future classmates.

The *PODs* you feature in your application need to capture the essence of who you are, what you've experienced, what you stand for, and how you can contribute to and enrich an MBA community. They should be the things that are so core to who you are that without them the admissions committee won't have a complete picture of you. Ultimately, your *PODs* will serve as powerful *Content Building Blocks* for your application essays, recommendation letters, resume, and interview answers.

# 3

SECTION 3

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## Define Your Career Goals

## 3. Define Your Career Goals

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Just about every MBA application includes a career goals essay question. The wording may differ slightly from application to application but the essay prompt sounds something like this:

What are your short-term and long-term career goals and how will our program prepare you to achieve those goals?

Many applicants feel that career goals essay questions are a little unfair. Isn't business school a chance to figure out what you want to be when you grow up? They argue that the future is so uncertain. What's the point of making career plans when everyone knows those plans are going to change?

Those arguments aren't completely without merit, and admissions committees have heard them all before, so why do they still insist on asking candidates to write about their career goals?

They continue to ask career goals essay questions for three very good reasons. First, they believe that candidates who know where they want to go in the future will be able to make the most of their time in an MBA program. Second, they believe that candidates who have a career action plan have a better chance of fulfilling their career aspirations. Third, and most importantly, admissions officers aren't just trying to fill seats in a classroom; as we explained in the *Understanding the MBA Application Process* chapter, they see themselves as recruiters of future business leaders. To fulfill this role, they must determine whether or not you are qualified for the career you intend to pursue.

To truly appreciate the importance of the career goals question, you need to understand that there are actually multiple questions embedded in that one question. When admissions officers ask, “What are your career goals?” they are really trying to learn much more; they are asking:

- Are you passionately interested in the field you plan to work in?
- Will your career make a positive impact on the world?
- Is your career plan sound?

It goes without saying that the answer to every single one of those questions needs to be a resounding yes. The exercises we will share with you in this chapter are designed to help you make sure they are.

Before we get started, let’s take a quick look at how many of your competitors will answer the career goals essay question. In the first column of the table, you will see what they write. In the second column, we translate what admissions officers actually hear:

#### LOST IN TRANSLATION – APPLICANTS VS. ADMISSIONS OFFICERS

WHAT APPLICANTS WRITE	WHAT ADMISSIONS OFFICERS HEAR
After three years as a (consultant, banker, engineer), I am ready to start the next exciting chapter in my career. I am fascinated by the world of business and the potential to make a difference	I haven’t formulated any career goals
In your MBA program, I will gain a fundamental understanding of business and grow as a leader, preparing for greater possibilities	Since I don’t know where I want to go in my career, I don’t know what capabilities I will need to get there or why I need an MBA
Who knows what the future holds? While I am in school, I will explore abiding passions and new interests	I have no idea what the future holds or what I am passionate about
I am convinced that an MBA from your school will offer a flexible, general management skills set and the leadership abilities I need to achieve my career aims	I’ll probably end up back in consulting/ banking and then, hopefully, I will figure it out from there

Of course, we have exaggerated to make a point – the point that admissions officers are looking for talent, passion, and a sense of purpose in their applicants. If any of those elements are missing from your application then you may be passed over for the candidates who possess them all. An effective career goals essay serves as an elegant proof that you understand where your strengths lie, you have a passion for making a positive difference in the world, and your talents and passions are directed by a sense of purpose and a coherent plan for achieving your aspirations.

Even if you have accomplished a great deal thus far in life, an acceptance letter for a top-tier MBA program is not a blue ribbon for past achievement. Your application must

convince the admissions committee that you're just getting started and that you plan to achieve even greater things in the future. Your career goals essay must communicate your plan for doing so.

If you define your career goals in the way we recommend in this MBA Prep Step™, you will have all of the *Content Building Blocks* for a powerful career goals answer. You will be prepared to convince admissions officers that you have the capabilities, passion, and purpose to achieve something significant in the future.

We will show you how to:

1. *Discover Your Career Purpose*

Your *Career Purpose* is what you hope to achieve in the world in a larger sense. Admissions committees are looking for candidates who know what matters to them and who have a sense of where they want to go in their careers.

2. *Identify Your Dream Job*

Your *Dream Job* is a long-term career goal and describes the job, title, and industry that will best position you to achieve your *Career Purpose*.

3. *Inventory Your Career Capabilities*

You want to identify the skills, knowledge, and capabilities required to be successful in achieving your long-term career goals.

4. *Develop Your Career Action Plan*

Given the capabilities you possess and those you need, you must develop a credible career action plan that summarizes the steps from where you are today to your ultimate *Dream Job*.

## STEPS TO DEFINING YOUR CAREER GOALS



### 3.1 Discover Your Career Purpose

Defining career goals that will meet the expectations of an admissions officer at one of the top-tier business schools begins with having a clear sense of *Career Purpose*. In our experience, discovering one's *Career Purpose* is the step most applicants struggle with most; we've created a step-by-step exercise to help you with this stage of the career goal definition process.

#### DISCOVER YOUR CAREER PURPOSE



Your *Career Purpose* is what you hope to achieve in the world in a larger sense. MBA Programs were founded on the belief that business leaders can play a powerful role in contributing to the prosperity of society. The schools are looking for future leaders who are excited about fulfilling this role.

Your *Career Purpose* has nothing to do with climbing the corporate ladder or making loads of money – it has to do with service to others. So your *Statement of Career Purpose* must answer three important questions about your future career:

- Who will you help?
- How will you help?
- Where will you help?

For some lucky few, their *Career Purpose* became clear to them early in life. There are others who never quite figure it out; they move from job to job never stopping long enough to ask themselves what they were truly born to do.

The haphazard approach to building a career may work just fine for some, but you're applying to a top-tier business school, and the business school admissions committees at those schools are looking for candidates who do know what matters to them and who do have a sense of where they want to go in their career. Consequently, you will be required to articulate those things in a convincing story about what you believe you were born to



do. If your *Career Purpose* has yet to reveal itself to you – it’s time to go looking for it.

We’ve found that the discovery process for most people begins in one of three places:

- An industry or field that fascinates them;
- A group of people they want to help; or
- A cause that matters to them.

Before we introduce the *Career Purpose Discovery Exercise*, let’s take a look at examples of how three MBA Prep School students developed their *Statement of Career Purpose*.

For many of our students, the discovery process begins with the field they are currently working in or simply one that they have always wanted to work in.

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### CASE STUDY : LUCY’S CAREER PURPOSE

Lucy was a gifted researcher, strategic thinker, and writer. Although she had been working in investment banking as an analyst, she was also a film and TV junkie. Though she’d never worked in the field, she was really passionate about the entertainment industry.

To discover her *Career Purpose*, Lucy’s next step was to look for an opportunity to play a leadership role in the entertainment field. She spoke to a number of people and, true to her gifts as a researcher, did tons of research on the industry. She discovered that the transition to digital technology was an area ripe with confusion and opportunity. She concluded that her gifts seemed well suited to being one of the gurus who helped entertainment companies navigate that transformation.

*Lucy’s Career Purpose:* To help shape the future of digital entertainment.

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### CASE STUDY: ADAM’S CAREER PURPOSE

For Adam, his *Career Purpose* was based on a group of people he had an affinity with and wanted to help.

He was born in the Ukraine but his family moved to the United States when he was eight years old. On a recent visit to a family member in Kiev, he was moved by the hardship and suffering he witnessed as he traveled around the region.

Adam was working in a Private Equity shop and knew he wanted to return to private equity post-MBA. After his visit to Kiev, he was inspired to do whatever he could to spur economic development in the former Soviet Union and to give people in his native country a chance for a better life.

He would later decide that the best way to do so was to raise a private equity fund that would invest in the region. His sense of purpose based on a desire to help others helped differentiate Adam from other candidates with private equity career aspirations.

*Adam’s Career Purpose:* To spur economic development in the former Soviet Union.

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## CASE STUDY: DOUG'S CAREER PURPOSE

Doug's *Career Purpose* statement sprang from a cause he cared deeply about. Doug was a military combat veteran with multiple tours of duty in Iraq and believed that the best way to prevent future conflict with the Gulf region was to end America's addiction to foreign oil. It was important to him that his career would contribute to breaking this addiction, giving nations one less reason to go to war.

Doug had helped start one of the first bio-diesel plants in the Northeast region of the United States and had learned how hard it was for promising clean-tech ventures to raise capital. His *Career Purpose* became to reduce his country's addiction to foreign oil by ensuring that clean-tech ventures received the capital they needed to grow and prosper.

*Doug's Career Purpose:* To combat the United State's addiction to foreign oil through clean-tech.

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## EXERCISE: DISCOVER YOUR CAREER PURPOSE

What you should notice about all three case studies is how different they are from each other. Each candidate started from a different place but they followed a similar process to discover their *Career Purpose*. This is the process you'll be using to discover your own *Career Purpose*.

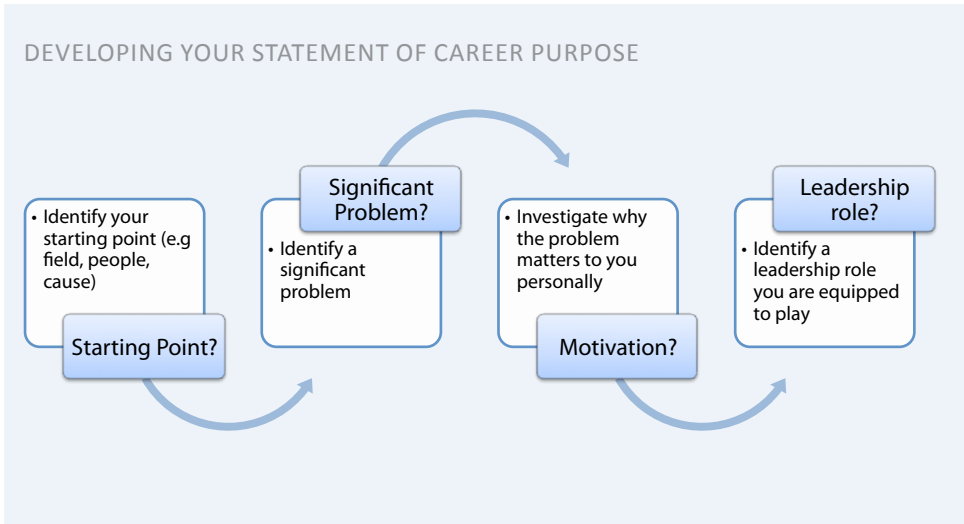
When it comes to discovering your *Career Purpose* there are a number of paths to the same destination. In the case studies, we showed you three paths MBA Prep School students have found most helpful:

1. Starting with a field or industry that fascinates you - like Lucy;
2. Starting with a group of people with whom you feel a kinship or some kind of affinity and want to help - like Adam; or
3. Starting with a cause that matters to you – like Doug.

Your first step in the *Career Purpose Discovery exercise* is to choose a starting point that makes sense to you. How do you decide?

If you don't have an industry you're fascinated by, a group of people you want to help, or a cause that matters to you, then you have some thinking to do. There are libraries filled with books on the kind of soul-searching you need to do to find your ideal starting point. The examples that follow might help spur your imagination.

Once you've chosen your starting point you will answer a series of questions to develop a *Statement of Career Purpose* as shown in the graphic below.



This work will require a period of thinking and self-reflection on your part – you might end up working through one, two, or even all three of these starting points before settling on your final one.

To show you how it's done we'll work through three examples, each with a different starting point.

### Industry/Field as a Starting Point

In our experience, the most common starting point for beginning a search for a *Career Purpose* is an industry or field that fascinates you – so let's start there first.

With industry as the starting point, answer the following questions:

1. What industry/field are you passionate about working in?
2. If you were a leader in that field, what is a significant problem that you would want to tackle?
3. What motivates you? Why does this problem matter to you personally?
4. What leadership role can you play given your unique set of capabilities, skills, and knowledge?

From the answers to these questions you can then craft the answer to the ultimate question: What is your *Career Purpose*?

Let's work through an example.

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## CASE STUDY: ALLISON – INDUSTRY/FIELD AS A STARTING POINT

A Chinese-American applicant named Allison had been fascinated by the retail and consumer packaged goods (CPG) industries for as long as she could remember. When she asked herself the question about what significant problem she wanted to tackle, another element of her background ended up leading her to a *Statement of Career Purpose* within the CPG industry.

Growing up in California, she became actively involved in the environmental movement during her early twenties. In college, she had written a paper drawing attention to the damage caused by western consumers' preferences for "throw away" items such as disposable diapers.

Allison realized that this "throw away" culture would create an environmental catastrophe if it were adopted in her home country of China. By combining her interest in CPG with her passion for environmental issues and her desire to work in China in the future, she identified a significant problem she could address as a leader: she could ensure that the culture of the Chinese CPG company she eventually led had conservation as one of its highest priorities.

Notice how Lucy's resulting *Career Purpose* Statement ties all these elements together:

*"To preserve the environment by leading a Chinese CPG company that has conservation as a core value."*

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## People You Want to Help as a Starting Point

Starting with people in need, the questions for discovering a *Career Purpose* are quite similar to starting with an industry that fascinates you:

1. Which group of people are you passionate about helping?
2. What is a significant problem faced by these people that you would want to tackle?
3. What motivates you? Why does this problem matter to you personally?
4. What leadership role can you play given your unique set of capabilities, skills, and knowledge?

Let's walk through a "People You Want to Help" example.

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## CASE STUDY: JASON – PEOPLE YOU WANT TO HELP AS A STARTING POINT

Jason is an Australian who moved to the United States about five years ago because he wanted to work in a high tech startup and there weren't enough job opportunities in Sydney. He knew many other talented Australians who had done the same and was troubled by the "brain drain" from Australia.

He decided that he should do something to help Australia address this issue, creating economic opportunities and reversing this long-standing "brain drain" trend.

Jason envisioned becoming one of the founders of a “Silicon Beach” that would rival Silicon Valley!

In terms of the leadership role he could play post-MBA, he decided that the best way to achieve his purpose would be creating partnerships between business leadership and the Australian federal and regional government to create a viable venture capital eco-system in Australia.

*Jason’s Statement of Career Purpose:*

*“To help Australian entrepreneurs by being one of the catalysts in the development of an Australian venture capital eco-system in Sydney, Australia.”*

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### Cause as a Starting Point

If your starting point for discovering your *Career Purpose* is a cause you care about you’ll need to answer four questions:

1. Which cause are you passionate about fighting for?
2. What is a significant problem or issues addressed by this cause that you would want to tackle?
3. What motivates you? Why does this problem matter to you personally?
4. What leadership role can you play given your unique set of capabilities, skills, and knowledge?

Let’s take a look at our final example.

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### CASE STUDY: LEA – CAUSE AS A STARTING POINT

Lea was an MBA Prep School student who had studied and actively volunteered in arts education throughout her life. Most recently, she has been lobbying local and state governments to stop slashing arts education budgets.

As she considered her *Career Purpose*, she reflected on how life changing her public school arts program had been for her. She wanted to ensure that other children would enjoy the same experiences and have similar cultural opportunities.

*Lea’s Career Purpose Statement:*

*“To champion arts education and ensure that public school children have arts education programs across the United States.”*

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## CHAPTER REVIEW: DISCOVER YOUR CAREER PURPOSE

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- Your *Career Purpose* is what you hope to achieve in the world in a larger sense.
- Business school admissions committees at the top-tier programs are looking for candidates who do know what matters to them and where they want to go in their career.
- For most applicants, the discovery process begins with an industry or field that fascinates them, a group of people they want to help, or a cause that matters to them.

Now, it's your turn! Choose your starting point and discover your *Career Purpose Statement*. Next you'll learn how to translate your *Career Purpose* into a "*Dream Job*."

# 4

SECTION 4

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## Select Your Schools

## 4. Select Your Schools

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Where you go to school for your MBA will have important implications to your future career and your future in general. An MBA is one of the biggest investments of time, energy, and money you'll ever make. Not to mention the fact that the school you attend will be on your resume and part of your "personal brand" for the rest of your life. Too many applicants make the mistake of beginning and ending their school research with the magazine rankings. While you don't want to disregard the rankings, we will show you how to look beyond them so that you can rank schools based on factors that truly matter to you. In this MBA Prep Step™ and the chapters it contains, you'll learn how to look beyond the magazine rankings, the schools' marketing messages, and the opinions of others.

Just about every school is going to ask why you're applying to their program. If you follow the step-by-step approach we are going to teach you, you'll be able to choose the schools that are the best fit for you and you will have a convincing answer to the "Why Our School" essay question.

We've divided the selection process into five steps:

1. Select a Program Type
2. Select Schools That Fit Your Career Goals
3. Select the Best Academic Environment for You
4. Select the Best Culture for You
5. Apply to Schools that Match Your Qualifications

As you proceed through these steps, you will continue to narrow the field until you have a target list of schools that match what you are looking for. We'll start with big picture questions about the program design and location. Once you've answered those questions, we'll pose a series of questions that will help you figure out which programs are the best match for your career goals, academic goals, and cultural expectations. Last, we will touch on some final considerations that will help you to prioritize the schools that make your short list, including how well your qualifications match what the schools are looking for. Your answers to the questions we pose in this chapter will help guide you to the schools that are the best fit with your qualifications and aspirations.



## 4.1 Select a Program Type

**W**hen it comes to choosing an MBA program, there is a dizzying array of choices. According to the Graduate Management Admissions Council there are over 4,650 programs that offer post-graduate degrees in business and management. The field continues to expand; in recent years, you also have a range of options for earning an MBA online or via a hybrid of on-campus and online learning.

To narrow the field, your first consideration is the program type. There are many options, but programs tend to fall into one of four categories, namely 2-year programs, accelerated programs, part-time MBA programs, and executive MBAs. Some schools offer a menu of program types, allowing you to apply to the one that is best for you.

When it comes to choosing a program type, there are two primary factors to consider: 1) the stage you've reached in your career and 2) your immediate career aims. Where you stand on these two dimensions will give you some guidance to help you with selecting a program type.

### 2-Year Programs

The traditional MBA degree is a full-time, two-year program with a summer internship between the first and second year. The 2-year programs are generally best suited to individuals who have work experience but are still relatively early in their careers. Also, if you're going to school with the goal of changing careers then two years of school with an internship in between is probably your best option. You should also know that in certain fields, such as management consulting and investment banking, the full-time degree is practically a right of passage.

### Accelerated MBA Programs

Accelerated MBA programs allow you to complete your degree requirements in 12 to 18 months. Accelerated programs typically start in January and don't break in the summer for an internship. These programs may be better for a candidate who has already entered the ranks of junior management and intends to return to the same firm or at least the same field after graduation. If you fall into that category, you may already have a good grounding in business skills and knowledge so the foundations courses offered in the first year of a 2-year program may not be needed; furthermore, a summer internship is going to be less valuable to you.

### Part-Time MBA Programs

According to Forbes magazine, over 50% of all MBA students opt for a Part-Time MBA Program. Part-time programs allow you to avoid the financial burden of spending one or two years away from the workforce. These programs tend to appeal to applicants who

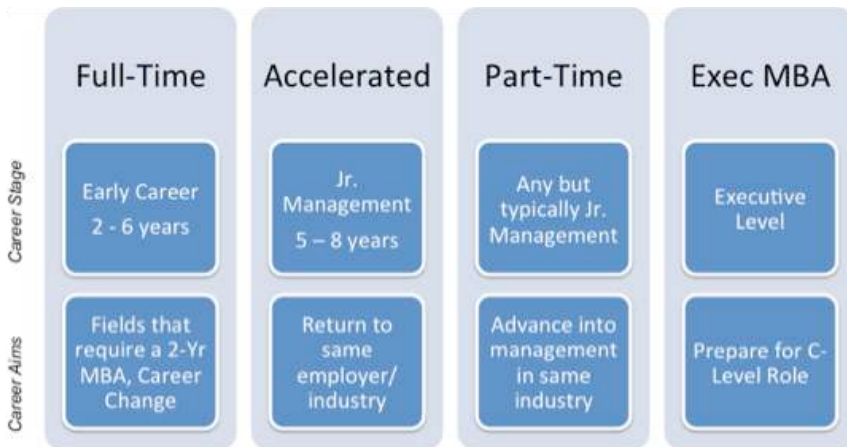
plan to stay in their current jobs, at least in the short-term, but need the skills and credentials an MBA provides. Because the biggest financial impact on MBA students is typically lost wages, the least costly option is to attend a Part-Time MBA program.

### Executive MBA Programs

As the name suggests, Executive MBA programs are designed for individuals who have climbed the corporate ranks and want to complement what they've learned on the job with more formal business and management training. Executive MBA students typically attend classes on weekends or during intensive periods throughout the year. Many, if not most, of the members of an Executive MBA class are being groomed for C-level leadership by the companies that sponsor their degree.

The figure below summarizes the factors to consider when selecting the type of program that is the best fit for your career stage and career aims.

#### FACTORS WHEN SELECTING TYPE OF PROGRAM



To determine which program type is the best one for you, you should consider what stage you are in your career and the career goals you developed in the previous chapter and select a program type that best matches your timeline and career objectives.

### CHAPTER REVIEW: SELECT A PROGRAM TYPE

- The MBA program universe is 4,650 programs and growing.
- MBA programs are typically one of four types: 2-year programs, accelerated programs, part-time MBA programs, and executive MBAs.
- Your career stage and career aims may point you toward a particular program type.



SECTION 7

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# Write Your Essays

## 7. Write Your Essays

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The essays you write for your MBA applications are the most powerful way to differentiate yourself from your fellow candidates. In this MBA Prep Step™, we will show you how to excel in the rigorous MBA essay writing challenges ahead of you.

First, we will review the eight most frequently asked MBA essay questions and will offer tips on how to score top marks with your answers. Second, we will discuss the nine qualities that MBA programs value in general – qualities you need to demonstrate through your essays. Third, we will teach you how to choose topics and stories for your essays. Fourth, we will share a valuable story outlining technique that will help you choose your best stories and tell them succinctly. In the fifth chapter, we will provide you with an essay writing project calendar that has worked well for previous MBA Prep School students.

- Eight Most Frequently Asked MBA Essay Questions
- Nine Qualities You Should Feature in Your Essays
- How to Choose Your Topics and Stories
- How to Outline Your Stories
- Follow a Writing Calendar

## 7.1 The Eight Most Frequently Asked MBA Essays Questions

Every school you apply to will ask you a series of essay questions. Although the questions differ from application to application, we studied the essay questions from prior years and identified eight question types that appear again and again.

After introducing eight different categories of MBA essay questions, we will go through each of these question types and provide a few examples of how the questions might be worded – drawn from successful MBA applications. Then, we'll go through each question and give you some tips for scoring top marks with your answers.

The *Eight Most Frequently Asked MBA Essay Questions* can be classified into the following categories:

- Leadership
- Career Story
- Career Goals
- “Why Our School?”
- “What Will You Contribute?”
- Self-Evaluation
- Past Decisions
- Negative Experiences

### Leadership

We have talked about the importance of demonstrating your leadership strengths and potential throughout this book. Leadership essays are your absolute best opportunity to communicate the central elements of the *Leadership Portfolio* that you assembled in the *Discover Your Leadership Capabilities* chapter.

Admissions officers are going to be very interested in your leadership achievements both inside and outside of work. You won't be asked directly “Are you a leader?” Instead, you'll be asked to share stories about your leadership achievements. Typical questions include:

- Discuss a defining experience in your leadership development.
- Tell us about a time when you made a lasting impact on your organization.
- What impact do you hope to have as a leader of consequence in the future?

To score top marks with your answer to these leadership questions, you'll be expected

to show the admissions committee plenty of evidence that you have an ability to rally other people and motivate them to work together to achieve an important shared vision or goal.

## Career Story

The first category of essay question is the *Career Story* essay – this essay type is a chance to tell the admissions committee about your career progress and what you have accomplished thus far as a professional.

Essay questions include:

- Briefly summarize your career progress.
- Tell us about your career-to-date.
- What is your most significant professional achievement?

We introduced you to the *Career Story* concept in the *Discover Your Strengths* MBA Prep Step™. To briefly review, your *Career Story* is an executive summary of your career thus far. When answering *Career Story* essays, bullet points aren't sufficient – that's what your resume is for.

So what is the admissions committee looking for in a great *Career Story* Essay?

Business school admissions committees want to admit the high-achievers. To score top marks, you'll need to provide evidence of distinguished academic and career performance in the top 10% of your peer group and demonstrate your potential for future advancement.

## Career Goals

Admissions officers are interested in your career history but they are even more interested in your plans for the future. An acceptance letter to a top school isn't a blue ribbon for past achievements. Rather admissions officers are interested in what you have achieved thus far to help them assess your potential for making an even bigger impact in the future.

As pointed out in the *Define Your Career Goals* section, just about every application will ask you to write a career goals essay, although each school will not ask the question in the same way. Some variations include:

- What are your professional objectives?
- What is your career vision?
- Where do you want to be 10 years from now?

When it comes to answering this question, top marks are earned by demonstrating that you have passion for the career you describe and that your career goals are fueled by a larger sense of purpose, not just the desire for a larger paycheck.

Of course, admissions officers will also be looking for a credible career action plan that connects the dots between your current skills and experiences and your future aspirations.

If you completed the exercises in our *Define Your Career Goals* MBA Prep Step™, then you have the *Content Building Blocks* for a powerful Career Goals essay.

### “Why Our School?”

The “Why Our School” essay question might be asked in a few different forms including:

- Why do you need an MBA from our program?
- Why is now the best time for you go back to school?
- How do you think that our school can prepare you for your career goals?

The best answers to these types of questions are both personal and specific. They are personal because they cover the unique challenges that you need to prepare for in the future. They are specific because they draw distinct connections between your motivations for an MBA and the specific resources that particular school has to offer.

Answering the “Why Our School” question correctly begins with the extensive research you completed in the *Select Your Schools* MBA Prep Step™. You built a convincing case for applying to each school in that step; now it is time to present your case to admissions officers in essay form in order to persuade them that their school is the perfect match with your academic needs, career goals, and cultural expectations.

### “What Will You Contribute?”

There are always more qualified candidates than there are seats in the class; so the admissions committee will want to know what you can contribute.

The next essay question we’ll talk about can take a few different forms:

- What can you contribute to our program?
- How can you enrich next year’s class?
- How will your past experiences, values, and academic background be of value to your future classmates?

The important thing to understand when preparing to answer these kinds of questions is that concrete answers about what you can contribute to the program are very important. The schools are looking for candidates who can put in just as much as they take out.

Our *Discover Your Points of Difference* MBA Prep Step™ provided the *Content Building Blocks* for this essay. The secret to scoring top marks in the essay is to be both concrete and specific. Too many candidates answer in vague generalities: “I’ll be a student leader” or “I can offer a diverse perspective.” When you selected your Top 5 *PODs*, you did so by prioritizing the unique things about you that would benefit your classmates. Don’t leave it up to the admissions officers to figure that out. Write about the ways that you can enrich the class given your own unique background, talents, and life experiences.

## Self-Evaluation

Reference letter questions invite outsiders to discuss your strengths and weaknesses; self-evaluative questions invite you to discuss them yourself.

Examples include:

- Give a candid description of yourself.
- What are your strengths?
- What are your weaknesses?

Self-evaluative questions are an opportunity to demonstrate your self-awareness. It is critical that you back up any claims you make with concrete evidence and examples. Whenever possible, use the self-evaluative questions to emphasize the *Fit Qualities* you possess – the attributes that the school values most.

Remember that when you are asked about your strengths, the only way to convince admissions officers that you actually possess those strengths is by providing evidence and specific examples.

Concentrate on your three or four most important strengths – the ones you identified in the *Discover Your Strengths* MBA Prep Step™. Also recognize that these questions are an open invitation to present elements of your *Leadership Portfolio*. Share your key leadership stories with admissions officers to prove that you have ample leadership potential.

Also, a brief word of advice about weakness essay questions: don’t try to get away with a strength disguised as a weakness. Candidates who write things like “I just can’t say no to projects. I’m always taking on too much work” have fallen into this trap. Admissions officers can see through those answers. Instead, focus on real weaknesses that earning an MBA might help you to address.



## Past Decisions

Self-awareness is important to MBA programs and that includes an ability to evaluate your past decisions and explain why you made them.

Admissions officers are keenly interested in the reasoning behind important decisions and your decision-making abilities. As such, many schools ask you questions about important past decision, such as:

- Reflect on a time when you turned down an opportunity.
- Tell us about a difficult decision you had to make.
- What decisions have you made that led to your current role?

Questions of this type ask you to recount what went on inside of your head when you were making an important decision. You will score top marks if you clearly discuss the choices that were presented to you, concisely describe the pros and cons of each, and share the reasons for your ultimate choice. Remember that the admissions committee wants evidence that you can think analytically and attack complex decisions systematically and efficiently.

You might discuss active steps you took such as reaching out for advice. These essay questions are also a good opportunity to share the values and principles that you draw upon when faced with an important decision.

## Negative Experiences

Another strength that MBA Programs are interested in is the ability to recover when things don't go your way. Negative experience essay questions include:

- What have you learned from a mistake?
- Discuss a time when you navigated a challenging experience in either a personal or professional relationship.
- Describe a failure that you have experienced.

Top marks will be scored if you provide evidence that you handled the negative experiences with emotional intelligence and treated adversaries and naysayers with empathy and understanding. You might use the essay to highlight the ability to compromise and diffuse conflict if the negative experience you write about is related to a relationship with another person.

When reading your essay, admissions officers will be interested to see if you can accept responsibility for missteps and avoid making excuses or pointing fingers. Ultimately, they will want to see that you not only recognized failure or admitted a mistake but that you did something about it and learned a great deal from the experience.

## CHAPTER REVIEW: THE EIGHT MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED MBA ESSAYS QUESTIONS

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- *Leadership*: these essays are your absolute best opportunity to communicate the central elements of your *Leadership Portfolio*.
- *Career Story*: a great *Career Story* essay provides the connections and interrelationships between your jobs and brings your resume to life.
- *Career Goals*: this is your opportunity to tell admissions officers about your *Dream Job* and the *Career Purpose*, career goals, and career action plan you developed in the *Define Your Career Goals* MBA Prep Step™.
- “*Why Our School?*”: the best answers to these types of questions are both personal and specific. Build a convincing case in the essay that summarizes the central reasons you feel it is the best school for you.
- “*What Will You Contribute?*”: share the *Points of Difference* that will be of greatest benefit to your classmates.
- *Self-Evaluation*: emphasize your *Fit Qualities* and always back up the strengths you claim with specific examples and evidence.
- *Past Decisions*: discuss the choices that were presented to you, concisely describe the pros and cons of each, and share the reasons for your ultimate choice.
- *Negative Experiences*: admissions officers want to see that you recognized failure or admitted a mistake and learned a great deal from the experience.

## A3. About the Authors

### Tyler Craft Cormney

**T** Tyler began his admissions consulting career in 2006 and has established himself as an innovator in the field of MBA admissions consulting. He is the co-founder and chief executive of MBA Prep School. In addition to creating the MBA Prep Steps™ program, he is the author of five guides on MBA essay strategies and an admissions consulting “how-to” manual used extensively by top admissions coaches.

Tyler also has more than a decade of experience as a strategy consultant for clients ranging from high-tech startups to Fortune 500 companies. He was a manager in Strategic Planning and Business Development at PeopleSoft and started his career as a consultant in Arthur Andersen’s Business Consulting Services group, working in the United States, Europe, Asia, Australia, and the Middle East.

Tyler holds an MBA from Harvard Business School, an MA in Professional Writing from the University of Southern California, and a BBA from the Honors Business Program at the University of Texas at Austin.

He grew up in the United States and Europe and now lives in the Hollywood Hills of Los Angeles, where he enjoys hosting backyard BBQs, watching indie films and remodeling mid-century houses.



## A3. About the Authors

### Chris Aitken

Chris is the co-founder and President of MBA Prep School. He is also the Chief Executive of MBA Prep School's parent company, Prep School Media, LLC.

He has over 15 years of top-tier management consulting experience as a partner at Andersen and KPMG Consulting, managing director at Bearing-Point, executive vice president at LECG, and partner at Muzeview Research. Recently, he has focused his energies on funding and growing promising, early-stage online learning and media publishing companies.

Chris holds a Bachelor of Commerce honors degree in Finance and Information Systems from the University of New South Wales where he graduated with First Class Honors and was awarded the University Medal.

A native of Australia, Chris now lives in California's San Francisco Bay Area. He enjoys hiking with his wife, son and Labrador and drinking a good glass of Australian red wine.



## A4. About MBA Prep School

**M**BA Prep School (<http://mbaprepschool.com>) delivers a step-by-step approach to earning an acceptance letter to the world's best business schools. Our innovative online learning platform offers books, video courses, interactive applications, and consulting services designed to give aspiring MBAs a distinctive edge in applying to business school.

Developed by top admissions consultant and Harvard MBA Tyler Cormney and veteran management consultant Christopher Aitken, the company's proven MBA Prep Steps™ program guides applicants through the techniques and insider secrets that experienced MBA admissions consultants use to help their clients earn acceptance letters to top-tier MBA schools ... all for a fraction of the cost of hiring a private admissions consultant.

An acceptance letter to a top-ranked MBA school can be life changing, but being qualified is no longer enough. MBA Prep School's How to Apply for an MBA book and video series, and interactive MBA Prep School App provide a start-to-finish program for generating a breakthrough application and earning an acceptance letter.

Founded in 2009, MBA Prep School is headquartered in Los Angeles and is part of the Prep School Media, LLC learning network.

### Contact Us

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