



ADMISSIONADO

# 50 MBA ESSAYS THAT WORKED

Volume 2

# CONTENT

<b>Welcome.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Part 1: Goals .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<i>Featuring Essays from: CBS, LBS, INSEAD, HBS, Anderson, Haas</i>	
<b>Part 2: Personal.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<i>Featuring Essays from: CBS, Stanford, Wharton, Duke, Ross, INSEAD</i>	
<b>Part 3: Program .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<i>Featuring Essays From: CBS, Duke, Wharton, LBS, Booth, Lauder, Goizueta</i>	
<b>Part 4: Accomplishments.....</b>	<b>58</b>
<i>Featuring Essays From: Booth, INSEAD, Anderson, Wharton, MIT</i>	
<b>Part 5: Failure .....</b>	<b>73</b>
<i>Featuring Essays From: HBS, Ross, INSEAD, Booth, Tuck</i>	
<b>Part 6: Leadership .....</b>	<b>84</b>
<i>Featuring Essays From: MIT, Booth, LBS, Haas, Tuck, INSEAD</i>	
<b>Part 7: Optional &amp; Reapplicant.....</b>	<b>96</b>
<i>Featuring Essays From: Booth, CBS, Duke, Ross</i>	
<b>Afterword .....</b>	<b>102</b>

# 1

## PART 1: GOALS

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### *The big picture, the crystal ball*

Just about every b-school is gonna ask: “If we give you an MBA, what are you gonna do with it?”

Unfortunately, the answer isn’t always easy. As much as applicants want to say that their decision to get an MBA at Stanford is all part of an ironclad 20-year plan full of salary graphs, promotion charts, and the home phone numbers of all their intended future bosses... yeah. Most of the time, it’s not.

There’s no shame in not having it all figured out. But ultimately, the admissions committee is gonna remember the candidate who wants to do “corporate finance management for a media conglomerate like Time Warner” more than they’re gonna remember the candidate who wants to do “something rewarding.”

The good news is that most people go into the application process with some kind of plan. (If you literally have no idea why you want to go to business school, you might want to take a step back and reflect. It’s kind of expensive.) Maybe you’re thinking, “I want to transition into Finance.” Or “I want to be at my boss’s boss’s level in five years.” Or even “I’d like to start my own company, selling... stuff.”

The big key is that an applicant be passionate about SOMETHING (something other than pineapple-jalapeno pizza or Ryan Gosling movies), even if they don’t know what to do with that passion yet. The applicants included here know that the goals essay is just the first draft of a Life Plan. It’s not a contract -- no Goals Essay Review Board is going to revoke an MBA if the graduate isn’t in the job they said they’d be in after graduation. But nor is it an exploration session, where candidates wander aimlessly through a field of possibilities for 500 words. Pick one potential plan, based on your passions and vague intentions, and tell that story.

What do all the essays below have in common? They lay out ambitious end goals, show us their VISIONS for the future, and take us through how they’ll get there.

Let’s take a look.

1

What are your short-term and long-term career goals, and how will an MBA from UCLA Anderson specifically help you achieve these goals? (700 words maximum)

Living in Orange County has allowed me to experience the amazing variety of habitats California has to offer. Pristine beaches lie a short drive away from awe-inspiring mountains, and right in between stands one of the largest cityscapes in the world. Collectively they make one huge ecosystem, and I want to spend my life helping that ecosystem thrive economically and environmentally. Clean energy technologies such as wind, solar, and biofuels promise to both advance environmental restoration and generate sustainable profits, but the key to unlocking wholesale environmental change will be to make renewable energy cost-competitive. My professional experience in the banking/lending industry as a Secondary Market Analyst at MFD, combined with an Anderson MBA with a Finance track, will help me achieve my vision of providing cheap long-term finance options to promising sustainable energy projects.

My long-term goal is to open a state-level, public-private Clean Energy Finance Bank (CEFB), or “green bank,” in California. The renewable energy industry is currently too reliant on public capital. However, a recent study from the Jameson Institution suggests green banks can “combine scarce public resources with private sector funds and then leverage those funds to invest in attractive clean energy.” Currently, there is one green bank in the US, Clean Energy Production and Investigation Regulatory Group in Massachusetts. While the movement is young, successful precedents for energy and infrastructure banks exist: LENS and S-V Lester Bank in the US and JgT in Germany. I want to be at the forefront of this clean energy financing industry.

In the short-term, in order to build up the skills and experience needed to transition into the clean energy finance industry, I plan to work as a Research Analyst at a well-known think tank like the Jameson Institution. Exposing myself to the high-level policy research done in programs like the Municipal Policy Program and learning to work with state government on renewable energy projects already in place will be instrumental in developing a sensible and educated plan for starting a CEFB.

Working as a Secondary Market Analyst at a mortgage bank has allowed me to experience firsthand how to run a successful lending and banking

operation. MFD's motto is "closing loans the right way" and that commitment to avoiding the lure of fast profits in favor of closing safe, quality loans is something I plan to instill at a future green bank. At MFD my ability to rapidly master information under pressure has enabled me to take a lead role in projects such as the implementation of hedging, a new way for MFD to price and sell mortgage loans. My responsibilities include analyzing secondary market conditions, making value-added selling recommendations, and decoding complex investor guidelines. With my expertise and guidance, MFD currently profits .85% more per loan sold, with \$900 million in hedged loans in 2011. These skills and my drive to achieve position me to be successful as the leader of a green bank after obtaining my Anderson MBA.

An MBA from Anderson will enable me to develop the general management and financial analysis skills necessary to lead a bank addressing financial challenges in the energy industry. Completing the Leaders in Sustainability specialization offered at Anderson will allow me to interact with students and faculty from a variety of unique backgrounds, and learning to combine the languages of business and clean energy will be vital for my future career. I'm excited to complete the Applied Management Research project in my second year, which will give me firsthand experience consulting with a client in the sustainability industry and introduce me to the daily challenges they face. I intend to take Business and the Environment with Professor Corbett and would love to get involved with his research on examining links between good business practices and environmental protection, which will help me make smart recommendations in future policy and green bank endeavors. Outside of academics, I plan to become a VP of sports for the C4C club and will join the C4C basketball team to help Anderson compete for the coveted golden briefcase. Overall, an MBA from Anderson will be truly instrumental in helping me start a green bank in California and bring new life into the clean energy finance industry.

## 2

a) Discuss your short and long term career goals. (300 words maximum) and b) How will studying at INSEAD help you achieve your vision? (250 words maximum)

Nowadays security becomes one of the biggest issues in China that threaten our lives. 400 fire disasters happen every day, but 90% of the

buildings are lacking exit devices, ubiquitous in the West for emergency exits. In 2009, approximately 30 children were killed in schools but we failed to identify the murderers immediately because there was no camera in campus. I was shocked by my research result that almost no university in Beijing paralleled those in the USA in security. Gradually, I formed my career goal. I want to become an entrepreneur in security industry providing solutions to safeguard people.

I will start my own business in China, where the market size is about 130 Billion RMB with 22% growth rate. I want to create the attachment between these technical products and the users. I will input the intellect, aesthetics and innovation into these technical products. You could open the door for your children who forget keys via cell phone. You could also monitor your room to see how your puppy is from the laptop even if you are laying on a beach far away. In addition, I'm driven to establish a company positioned as solutions expert rather than product supplier. I want to provide customized solutions by deeply understanding how customers think, work and react.

In the short term, to accumulate professional experience and deepen my industry insights, I plan to seek a senior product manager position for security products in leading companies such as DMT, Sully and Shultz. Product Management, where I can blend the creativity and initiative required for product development and where I lead cross-functional teams to achieve a shared goal, mirrors the experience of starting a company and serves as an excellent training ground for me to develop the skills necessary for launching my own business.

To achieve my career goal, I still need to improve in several areas and INSEAD is the best fit for me.

First, I want to utilize the intensive 1-year program to complement my gap in certain business functions like operation and finance. I will return to my previous industry and functions, more capable and mature. In this sense, INSEAD fits me because I could return in less time. I appreciate efficiency and fast-pace and will definitely adapt to INSEAD's fast-learning-fast-living environment.

In addition, security industry is related to almost every industry because safety is a common need. To develop total solutions, I need to have a deep understanding of different industries. INSEAD's big alumni base can help me build up networks in various industries to understand more.

The limit of your languages is the limit of your world. In the past few years, I strongly feel the importance of global perspective in doing business today. And global perspective is something related to social and cultural elements. INSEAD has students coming from 80 countries. I want to leverage the diversity of INSEAD to understand the world outside and thus develop my global perspective.

### 3

## Showcase: First to Final

### *Building Structure for LBS*

What are your immediate and ultimate career objectives? How will the Sloan MSc in Leadership and Strategy and London Business School help you to meet your objectives? (500 words max)

#### *First Version*

As the youngest finance controller in East-Asia region, I started my job in Seoul with a demoralized team and skeptical sales/marketing colleagues. Yet I succeeded to rebuild a strong team in one year by understanding the concerns of my team members, reallocating job functions and building a detailed career development plan for every member. The result was credibility won by leading operation procedure formalization with colleagues representing 7 countries. After 14 month, I was promoted again based upon my proven performance in 2011.

My experience in the past seven years has given me a more mature understanding about the responsibility of leadership as well as more confidence in my ability to become a future global business leader. I attribute these successes to my passion for pushing the boundaries beyond my own safety zone. Moreover, as a professional woman, my nature to be considerate and solve conflicts in a humanistic way has been an asset in various challenges throughout my career.

Beyond daily responsibilities, I also push my frontiers to think the best of business solutions. Some of the questions that keep me up at night include: How can we maintain sustainable growth in today's ever-changing and highly competitive market? Professor John Mullins's "A Business Plan? Or a Journey to Plan B?" was enlightening to my puzzles. By breaking



down the business into five key elements quantitatively and identifying analogs and antilogs in the industry as illustrated in the article, I proposed to Managing Director that we develop more eye-catching duty free exclusive gift packing for Blúsh, a sparkling wine brand that confronted growth limitation due to strong monopoly by competitive brands. My suggestion was adopted by management and the monthly sales have achieved two-digit growth after the new packaging launch. It is this approach of “theory to practice” that motivates me to pursue an MBA degree at LBS where I can take a class with a renowned thinker such as Professor Mullins and temper my strategy vision and leadership qualification to move into a C-level executive. Moreover, my visit of the class of Essentials of Leadership delivered by Professor Jay Conger further strengthened my interests in LBS.

From public accountant to compliance manager, and now as a finance controller, my ultimate goal is to move into the role of Chief Financial Officer straddling both the traditional areas of financial stewardship and the more progressive areas of strategic and business leadership with direct responsibility and oversight of operations in modern business world. With access to LBS’s renowned academic resources and the 12 months rigorous management training, I will return as a brand new finance controller in Luxury industry with more credential and competence and utilize what I learn in LBS to amplify my impact on the organization. I firmly believe that the legacy of LBS in me will be a stepping stone to my goal as well as a life-long treasure.

### *The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly:*

We’ve got the elements here for a really successful essay: 1) solid success stories, 2) realistic career goals, and 3) specific reasons for “why LBS.” However, it’s just not working yet. Why? Mainly because this essay doesn’t focus on answering the question (the writer doesn’t even hint at her “objectives” until the very end!). Moreover, there’s no connection between the successes described in the beginning and the goals at the end. Success is great, but why is she talking about these particular results? What do they have to do with her ability to rock as a CFO? Lastly, when our girl talks about her success, she does more telling than SHOWING. Overall, she needs to improve the structure, get a single narrative going, and be more direct about answering the essay prompt.

### *Final Version*

The late 1800s Dynasty: my ancestor, the businessman Minsoo Kim, actively promoted Western technology to save Korea from destitution.

His legacy of innovation and change lives through me. Today, I am a finance controller at Dom Perignon (DP), pushing changes and creating value. With broad industry knowledge gained from my experience at BCG, I defined the KPI's of DP's logistics service provider in contract negotiations, resulting in annual cost-savings of USD100K+. My passion for the wine industry stemmed from my first auditing project at Redfoot Wines and the more I explored this business, the better I understood that wines represent their home cultures, inspiring communication among people. My ancestor's legacy and my passion for brands have shaped my ambition to become a Chief Financial Officer (CFO) in the wine industry and contribute to the popularization of Korean brands.

Rising to my current position in only 7 years, I began my ascent in Seoul with a disheartened finance team suffering from a heavy workload and skeptical veterans in sales/marketing who doubted this inexperienced young woman's ability to handle tough situations. By reallocating job functions and building a detailed career plan for each team member, I boosted morale and we succeeded in supporting our business' expansion with an average annual profit growth rate of 40%+ from 2010 to 2012. I also won credibility by tweaking existing operation procedures, in collaboration with colleagues representing 7 countries, resulting in operational improvements reducing monthly staff over-time by 200 hours, earning a top performance rating based upon my proven performance for 2011 after only 14 months.

These projects have provided leadership experience and the confidence to become a business leader. From public accountant to compliance manager, to Finance Manager and now as finance controller, I now intend to step into the position of Finance Director of a leading Asian beverage company like Tsingtao. To succeed, I need to develop my knowledge of advanced corporate finance, marketing and management, along with my strategic vision, presentation skills and network.

LBS Sloan is my best choice to gain these skills in a short timeframe. The specific tools and knowledge imparted by Advanced Corporate Finance, World Economy Problems and Prospects, and Corporate Strategy, will strengthen my expertise in corporate finance and provide an understanding of macroeconomic environments and strategy development, which I currently lack. The International Assignment Project's experiential learning provides opportunities to test new ideas to bring the most effective ones to fruition. Furthermore, LBS' strong and diverse international ties are critical to my aspiration to propel the globalization of Korean and Chinese spirits. Finally, the lively student-

professor interaction I observed in Professor Conger's Essentials of Leadership class and the engaging conversation I shared with students have fueled my enthusiasm and desire to join their ranks.

120 years ago, Minsoo Kim introduced western technology into classical Korea, initiating industrialization. His long-lasting influence shows me that business' impact can mean more than just money. With my passion for the spirits industry, I am eager to create my own legacy with the help of LBS.

### *Admissionado Says:*

Whew! What an improvement! This thing went from a haphazard recounting of successes with a brief mention of goals to a tightly organized, single narrative that paints a clear arc of the applicant's career. It demonstrates why the past (the success stories) is a great precursor to the future (career goals) and how LBS Sloan uniquely fits in to help bridge the gap between them. Furthermore, instead of general statements ("I succeeded to rebuild a strong team in one year by XYZ..."), we have stories that SHOW us the challenges the applicant faced, and the skill she had to use to overcome them.

## 4

What are your post-MBA short-term and long-term career goals? How have your professional experiences prepared you to achieve these goals?  
b. How will an MBA from Haas help you achieve these goals? (750 word maximum for 5a. and 5b.)

Leading international PR efforts for Viapay (Brazil's PayPal), I've been managing the rollout of a new product called "express payment" from Brazil to the Argentine market. In this project, I've advised the product team to adjust the offerings to better suit the local needs. I created Viapay's social media strategy, advised on marketing campaigns and led the creation of an online user tutorial. My leadership in this effort paid off as payment volume in the region increased by 300%.

My first go-to-market experience ignited my passion for product marketing which not only taught me how to think strategically but also follow through the execution process. More importantly, I was excited to

notice that a successful marketing campaign can actually make a difference in people's life.

My post-MBA short-term goal is to work as a Product Marketing Manager at an innovative high tech company such as eBay, Twitter or Apple. I am seeking a role where I will be responsible for outbound marketing activities for my products such as the Android Platform or Apple iPhone to obtain exposure to the best high tech marketing practices. My long-term goal is to become the CMO of a large Brazilian Internet company such as my current employer Miravira Group where I redefine marketing for Brazil's high tech industry by mapping out refined product strategies and bringing extraordinary value and experience to Brazilian consumers.

I have five years of work experience in Brazil's high tech industry, and have been exposed to diverse vantage points including accounting, auditing, process improvement, marketing and public relations. After graduating with a criminal justice degree, I chose auditing as my fast track into the business world. It took little time and lots of sweat for me to develop from a complete outsider to an accounting professional. As a criminal investigator, I was taught to look at everything from multiple angles and to relentlessly seek information to corroborate my findings. This has allowed me to develop better problem solving skills and more holistic view than my peers with only business degrees.

Later at a start-up financial service firm, I was in charge of acquiring and serving the company's foreign clients because I was the only one who truly understands both North and South American markets and could bridge the communication gap. After one month onboard, I landed the firm's first foreign account and increased the firm's revenue by 15%. As my portfolio grew, my team increased from 4 people to 8.

At Miravira, I've had the privilege of a front-row seat at the most innovative company in Brazil, and have had the opportunity to roll out the newest and coolest things to a global audience. I helped to craft messages for the Brazilian media and coordinated communication among US, Brazil and Argentina teams. I worked closely with the senior management on the messaging of the privatization of world's largest B2B eCommerce platform which created the largest high tech IPO of US \$1.9 billion after Google in 2007. I introduced Brazil's first cloud-based operating system, which has been running in over 4 million mobile phones, and rolled out Viapay as the first online payment option for small businesses in Uruguay.

These varied positions have prepared me for my long-term goal of being a CMO by teaching me analytical and communication skills, strategic thinking as well as leadership skills. In my career, I envision myself leading the transition from price-driven marketing to a more value-based approach. There is a huge opportunity for Internet companies to better convey the value to users based on a deep insight of customer needs and product positioning which in turn helps to make more great products.

The rigorous general management training at Haas will equip me with the essential business knowledge to solve all sorts of problems in today's changing business environment from examining all angles of product strategy to analyzing technology investment to enhancing product P&L. I will definitely bid for the Marketing Strategy elective course taught by Professor Villa-Boas where I get to work in teams in the Markstrat simulation making typical marketing decisions in a competitive market with limited information to win more customers. I am convinced that such an experiential learning will help me develop an understanding, the skill, and experience in formulating and planning marketing strategies for my next product, probably Facebook mobile.

Having been an effective event planner for college graduation parties and company annual conferences, I am excited about organizing the annual >Play Digital Media Conference in 2013. I am also highly interested in becoming a member of the Haas Technology Club where I could contribute my insights about Brazil's high tech industry, set up trek visits to Brazilian high tech firms and visit innovative companies such as Google and Amazon with my fellow classmates. These companies are the most innovative in the world, and we will be doing our own creating at their doorstep, in their halls and, someday, in their boardrooms. Nearly 1/3 of recent Haas MBA graduates are working in the technology industry, an invaluable resource in my future career.

Most importantly, I love the vibe at Haas. People are not only smart but also down to earth. When I asked Catherine Lu, a Haas MBA graduate from Bain Capital and Jeremy Patola '13 what they like most about Haas, they both said it was the close-knit collaborative community where everyone is willing to lend a hand to help others succeed. I am sure I will not only benefit from such a culture but also contribute to maintain that type of connection.

\*\*\*END OF PREVIEW\*\*\*