

London Business School MBA Admissions Essay

Wednesday, 07 June 2006

Programme: MBA 2008 (Class beginning September 2006) Question 1 (600 words max) In what role do you see yourself working immediately after graduation? Why? How will your past and present experiences help you achieve this? How will the London Business School MBA Programme contribute to this goal? Finally, how do you see your career progressing five years after graduation? Upon graduating my aim is to join a top-five consultancy. I enjoy analysing and solving complex problems and am keen to gain the variety of experience that project-based work offers. McKinsey, for example, nurtures new talent giving opportunities to make a real impact by analysing problems, framing hypotheses and making recommendations in areas that directly and positively affect the client firm. This short-term goal is determined by my long term goal to be a politician, a member of parliament and ultimately a minister. More than political experience alone, I strongly believe that a solid grounding in business, leading large teams, developing long-term strategy, championing innovation and implementing change, will give me skills needed to run a government department. Communication and leadership skills together with problem solving abilities are crucial for a management consultant and I have already developed these in different spheres. Having been invited to stand at my local council's election I am leading a youth project for X Voluntary Organisation. This has resulted in me becoming a regular contributor on the X TV Channel as a political commentator on a live prime-time programme that digests the week's major stories, including a section where viewers telephone with their questions and comments. This is always challenging and I can now deal well with quick-fire and unscripted questions and providing solid rationale for my opinions. As the channel is viewed by a very mixed group of people I ensure the language I use is both professional and understandable; crucial skills to develop as a business consultant, business leader and politician. At X Company I have developed risk management strategies and IT policies from scratch and without any prior experience, e.g. I evaluated and customised the risk management process of the Institute of Risk Managers into a system that was manageable for a small organisation. I then implemented the strategy by negotiating support and resources from the senior management team. This has required me to develop and use my research skills and negotiation and team building skills; all of which are vital for my academic work and McKinsey. As LBS attracts high calibre students, this peer group will challenge and stretch me. I feel that that level of stimulation and growth is what makes the LBS MBA an excellent investment. I expect my professional, voluntary and political experience will let make me a valuable contribution. LBS's MBA will provide the right balance of practical learning and theoretical analysis through interactive lectures and group projects. This suits my learning style as I engage best with real-world based approaches. Electives in global strategy & management and economics of competitive strategy together with the consultancy summer internship will have an immediate impact on my employment upon graduation by providing directly relevant knowledge and experience that I can draw on during client work. Knowledge of business and management techniques will undoubtedly improve. I also expect to make life-long friends and build a strong, international network to help both my business and political career and their careers. After five years I plan to move to a PLC such as BP where I can make a more concerted effort in developing and leading the strategic direction of a large organisation. The experience will help me gain greater operational experience and would include dealing with institutions, change management and strategic planning. I expect to be dealing with people who are external to my firm on a regular basis which will allow me to further develop my communications and influencing skills and to help build important contacts for building a career in politics and when entering Parliament. Word count: 600

Question 2 (500 words max) Please describe your experience of working in and leading teams, either in your professional or personal life. Given this experience, what role do you think you will play in your study group, and how do you intend to contribute to it? I am currently leading a team of three at X Company. When I was promoted to my current position I was conscious that I wanted to create a collegiate culture where hierarchy is minimised and domain experts are given responsibility. This desire coupled with my limited experience of some areas under my control made it important that I delegate to my staff. To this end I delegated project management responsibilities on several major projects including the annual subscriptions run which provides the organisations only revenue stream. The empowerment of the team from a task-oriented base has, at times, been a difficult one as my staff were not experienced in project management. This coupled with a lack of confidence in making decisions meant that I had to be very aware of their concerns as the subscriptions run project was developing. I started by planning the stages of the project with staff and we jointly produced a detailed project plan. As the project was progressing I discussed issues on a daily basis and helped plan the weeks activities. As confidence levels have increased I have begun to allow staff to approach me as and when issues arise. I also get updates in weekly team meetings and monthly one-to-ones. The delegation of some project work has allowed me to concentrate more on strategic issues, has allowed the domain experts to take control within their areas of expertise and has given new development challenges to my staff. In a team setting I often take on the role of the coach who ensures that agreement and harmony are maintained in order to create a positive team atmosphere and reach a consensus. This has proved to be a valuable skill, especially during my voluntary work with the X Voluntary Organisation where I am currently leading a project. As all of the team members are volunteers my seniority is notional and, whilst in a professional setting I can take an autocratic approach where appropriate, it is not an option in voluntary work so reaching a consensus is crucial. My experiences both in my professional and personal life should be suited to the non-hierarchical LBS study group. I believe building consensus will be an important role to play in study groups which will be composed of people from different professional and ethnic backgrounds. Effective and joint project planning will help to ensure that fellow students have 'bought-in' to the rationale behind decision making and the ethos of allowing experts responsibility should ensure a quality output. I believe my professional, voluntary and political experience will allow me to make a valuable contribution at LBS, I have experience of private and public sector enterprises as well as political organisations and the groups that lobby them. These multidimensional perspectives should allow me to provide a different perspective in classroom discussions and project work and I hope to be seen as someone who can provide refreshing and challenging

input. Word count: 490 Question 3 (400 words max) Student involvement is an extremely important part of the London MBA experience and this is reflected in the character of students on campus. What type of student club or campus community event do you envisage yourself initiating? How would you set about organising this, and how would you communicate it to the wider School community? As a British Muslim I am conscious that the general public are unaware of the nature of Islam and its commonalities with British culture. I have been working, through the X Voluntary Organisation to address issues internal to the Muslim community; I would like to give my fellow students at LBS the opportunity, within the "New Muslim Markets Club", to challenge their perception of Islam and Muslims in general so they can confirm or alter their perception, expand their knowledge about the faith of a third of the world's population and examine how this impacts the world in areas such as the global economy. I will develop a series of lectures which would provide direct access to scholars and more importantly, Muslim business leaders. Direct access to business leaders, such as entrepreneurs and company executives will help fellow students to understand how they have achieved success in the business world. As business leaders themselves, my fellow students can only benefit from understanding a massive and increasingly affluent market. I would also hope to dispel some of the myths that surround Islam and Muslims in general. I will aim to link the events with the "Entrepreneurs Club" by explaining to its members that the events will help attendees better understand a growing market with significant opportunities. This will allow me to present the events as something other than religiously or ethnically based. It will also allow that club's members to bring in their ideas and its mailing lists will ensure that the events receive suitable promotion. I envisage sending promotional emails, having advertisements in Aluminews and also wider advertising within the business community using the schools links. I will build a multi-faith team to develop and deliver a series of events over an academic year. The vision of what the team will deliver will be developed by the team and tasks will be allocated based on people's specialisms. I will seek sponsorship for the events from the X Voluntary Organisation and its affiliate organisations, embassies of Muslim countries and government departments such as the Home Office. The benefit to the sponsoring organisations will be the increased awareness of Muslims and related business opportunities for potentially influential future leaders. Such sponsorship should help to draw in high calibre speakers which would include business leaders dealing with Muslim markets, such as Islamic financial services which is an existing area of growth. Word count: 400 Question 4 (100 words max) Describe any experiences outside of your home country. What did you gain from these? Whilst working for Y Company I went to India to evaluate offshore assets. Left unattended with a junior member of staff I asked him questions on what he was doing. He would not give details. I later discovered that a subtle hierarchy was in place with a senior manager needing to be present for him to explain details. This showed me that although people's attitudes to work initially appeared very similar to those at home there were still many cultural differences present. I now try not to make assumptions based on how similar things appear and ask permission before acting. Word count: 99 Question 5 (100 words max) Please explain if you have been involved in charity/volunteer and/or entrepreneurial activities, giving examples of your involvement, the amount of time you gave to each activity and why you chose to get involved. After the London bombings, I felt it was my duty as a young Muslim, to become more involved with my community as many people speaking on behalf of Muslims were unrepresentative of us. I contacted X Voluntary Organisation and now lead a project working to support disenfranchised young Muslims giving four hours weekly. Initially we worked to understand the life experiences of young Muslims. Our research was presented at the annual X Voluntary Organisations Youth Conference. We are currently looking at methods of bolstering support services specifically aimed at young Muslims, with an emphasis on mechanisms for funding these services. Word count: 100