

Opinion **MBA blog**

## Application essays: Visualise your game plan for life

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Harish Sivashanmugam SEPTEMBER 16, 2016

I had a slew of rejects before my first acceptance from a business school, but the one thing that ran repeatedly through my mind was that of all the skills required to get an MBA, communication is top. As I enter the final stage of my programme, I still believe this and to get that spark of interest in your applications, essays are vital.

When I first started my essays, I went on a consulting spree to hear opinions on what is expected. After speaking with colleagues, career advisers, current students and doing a tonne of research online, I had a long list of what to cover. So I set about carefully engineering my essays.

It did not work. Why? It was because the essays turned out to be a checklist of the must-haves or, at best, a neatly arranged bullet point presentation. They lacked a coherent story of who I am and where I want to go, etc. They did not fit the overall game plan for my life, not just my career.

I realised this after the first few rejections. And it was not until I provided a flavour of what I was like as a person, beyond my career, that I felt I was on the right track.

In my management consulting classes, my professor highlights that goal visualisation exercises he conducts with top managers are a first step towards creating the long-term plan. The technique

applies to MBA aspirants as well. Visualising yourself after 10 years in a place you want to be, and charting a path on how to achieve it, can help create a compelling essay.

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