**The statement of purpose should be a concise, well-written essay about your academic and professional experiences, your career goals, and how completing the Ross School's PhD program will help you progress toward the realization of these goals. The statement of purpose should be between three and five pages.**

I have always had a huge passion for technology and how it has emerged as the single solution to a number of problems that businesses or governments face in challenging business environment. Thus from my childhood itself I was inclined to doing my higher studies in this field. I thus did my Bachelors in Computer Science Engineering and directly joined the Research Department of TCS (TCS Innovation Labs).As a researcher I got the opportunity not only to work on some of the most innovative projects like TV Viewership measurement, Context Aware Recommendation System etc but also interface with some renowned scientists and researchers from all over the world. Our Project on TV viewership (designed for a big market research firm) was built to create a real time TRP generating system which could solve the problem of delay while disseminating viewership data to media houses like Sony etc.This project was a big success and helped TCS win a big contract from the company. Parallel, to this we also filed a patent(Patent No: 2012143939) and published a paper on this(presented at ISCI Malaysia (2011)).Next we worked on a Movie Recommendation System project where our idea was to not only build the recommendation engine but incorporate the important parameter of context in the recommendation system perspective. The system would intelligently identify the user’s present context before making the recommendations appropriately. We made the recommendation system flexible enough to include not only what was learnt about the user’s behavior over a period of time but also include user specified preferences. This endeavor also resulted in one patent(Patent No: 2013046220) and 1 paper published at CITA Malaysia (2011).It was at this juncture that I started thinking about what I should be doing next. Thus, it was these experiences that made me inclined towards research even further.

After working for a few years, I decided to go for my MBA and got admitted to the Indian School of Business (one of the most reputed schools in India with 12% admission rate).The primary motivation for that was I wanted to understand the business impact of the technological applications. While I was doing great research I was not getting a sense of the business impact that it was making. With that in mind I took a lot of courses in Analytics and Technology Strategy to understand how technology was changing and revolutionizing the market place, how new companies at the long tail were emerging and how agile methodology of work was engulfing the globe. While at ISB I got involved in a lot of activities apart from academics, one of the major ones being taking part in Business case competitions. One of my major achievements was winning the CK Prahalad Case competition at Ross school of Business where I along with my team designed a unique revenue generation strategy for sustaining the Jaipur foot business. We had a two-fold strategy: first we wanted to expand globally (horizontal expansion) by setting up permanent bases in war struck & land mined countries or through providing consulting services to governments in these low cost countries, and Second to penetrate the Indian market further(vertical expansion) via effective collaboration with government/army hospitals, Tier 2 & 3 Medical centres and partnering with placement agencies. This opportunity gave me a global platform to showcase our idea. I got to interact with reputed Professors and was amazed at the quality of work and initiatives which were being undertaken at Ross including partnership with Aravind Eye Hospital. I was already thinking about my PHD and this incredible experience at Ross made my goal even more firm.

Apart from this I also worked on a project under an ISB Professor where the goal was to do an Infrastructure benchmarking of Indian cities and strategize the conversion of these cities into smart cities. I also worked on an ELP (Experiential Learning Program) with Amazon (live project) to try to gauge customer’s preferences for Pickup point option and its feasibility across major regions in India where Amazon was expanding. For this project, we carried out a survey to understand the existing customer biases/opinions about availing these options, a focused group which helped us uncover important factors affecting customer convenience and a framework to automate the lengthy existing payment process. All these experiences, taught me how to work under tremendous pressure while at the same time being patient and focused on the job at hand. I was amazed at how much could be achieved in a small span of time.

After my MBA I wanted to join a company on an interim basis where I could directly enrich my knowledge which would in turn help me prepare towards my PHD .Thus I joined Barclays Bank as a Data Scientist(in their analytics team). In this role I get the opportunity to not only interface with Business at one end to understand the requirement but also at the other end design and build the predictive models to be able to draw actionable insights for the bank as it tries to move from being a conventional bank to a technology driven “Go To” Bank while reducing unnecessary costs dramatically.

Though my decision to pursue a PHD had been lurking since my days at R&D it became firm when I came to ISB and interacted with multiple Professors. We had some of the best Professors from most top schools visiting us to teach various courses, but I realized that though this was a tremendous experience to gain, since a huge amount of material was getting condensed in a very small span of time, retention would be a problem. On talking with Professors I realized that MBA programs were meant to be condensed and just give a flavor while to go in-depth into a field and be a master at it , PHD was the correct option. Additionally after my MBA experience, I also feel that MBA programs are meant to prepare students as trained professionals who do well in the job market, it prepares you to think about a problem in a structured manner, on the other hand PHD programs encourage you to think about problems that you love and come up with solutions independently (however radical and unstructured the solution may be). For people who are inquisitive by nature and want to discover solutions to real world problems PHD is the right path. I prefer being part of group of people that conceive revolutionary ideas, with the intension of producing new knowledge that is relevant to industrial practices rather than following those practices myself.

In the cognitive era of open innovation and crowd sourcing it is important for corporations to remain agile and follow a rapid prototyping model .This is the only mechanism by which they can stay at the top of technology disruptions that are now a norm. In this regard macro level strategies need to be developed so as to define the optimal strategies that corporations should follow to survive in the long term. I am really intrigued by this situation and would like to focus my research on these lines. A PHD would not only give me the opportunity to follow my passion but also create something which might have a macro level impact on the technology industry.

Similarly the recent boom of Ecommerce businesses in India and every big company’s shift to digital marketing as one of their main marketing arms signals changes in the marketplace and customer mindset. Thus to stay relevant Brick and Mortar stores are starting to create separate online arms and spending huge amounts of money promoting these channels. This is an area where there is tremendous scope of optimization and formulating strategies over the shorter and longer term for such businesses.

The PHD program at Ross is ideally suited for me since it gives me the opportunity not only to learn and collaborate with the best professors in the world but also grow as a person intellectually and personally. The program takes a macro level view of the market conditions and formulates strategies for the same. Moreover, the focus on value creating transformations aims towards taking a real life situation and making it better than it was previously. Thus, I think my research interests and background in analytics and research are well aligned with what is essential for pursuing the program. The academic development program is one of the best in the world and gives you a tremendous platform to not only learn and showcase your research but also execute your learning infront of some of the brightest students .This will help develop the confidence required to teach infront of any audience in any part of the globe. The mentorship program and the collaborative approach to research is ideally suited for my ambition. Further, the flexibility that students get in choosing their dissertation and thesis is unparalleled. It allows students to pursue their research interests while at the same time providing them with all the tools and resources they need coupled with the world class infrastructure.

After a PHD from a school like Ross, I think many doors should open up. My primary goal after completing my PHD would be to look for tenure track research professorship in a good college. This is my cherished dream since it would give me the opportunity to not only thinks deeply about problems that I love and explore in that area independently but it would also give me chance that only a handful of people get to make a significant contribution to a filed vis-à-vis have a positive impact on society at large. This would also give me the opportunity to directly apply all my learnings and teaching experience straight out of school. Additionally, teaching is probably one of those rare professions that provides you a sense of satisfaction for all your efforts (since in this filed what effort you put in is proportional to what you get) while at the same time giving you the opportunity to share your knowledge with bright students and help transform their lives as well. This experience is akin to that of a budding entrepreneur who pursues his passion to the fullest and tries to make a successful career out of it independently (not being bound by any corporate beurocracy) while simultaneously touching millions of lives. Thus my primary motivation will always remain to establish myself in the world of academia even if that requires me to take the strenuous route of doing a post-doc to secure tenure track position in a reputed research driven university.

I aver that I shall utilize every opportunity given to me to the best of my abilities. I will be much obliged if I am admitted into your institution. With the guidance of your eminent Professors, state-of-art infrastructure, intellectual capacity and an amicable environment, I sincerely believe that my objectives will be met to the fullest.

Few things for the next iteration:

- Definitely take out the 'backup option paragraph' - 2nd last. Academics don't look kindly on people who even intend to move into industry after a PhD.

- In extolling the virtues of a the phD, you've bad mouthed the MBA a bit. If you have to compare the two - your tone should be - "This is how the PhD is different than the MBA"  NOT "This is how the PhD is better than the MBA".

- The paragraph "In the cognitive era of..."  feels like an abrupt transition from the previous paragraph - it does not flow naturally. Think some more about how you can fit it in better.

- The tone of the essay is "This is how the PhD is going to benefit me and help me achieve my goals".  This probably is good enough for an MBA essay. However, for a PhD essay the tone should be " This is how the PhD is going to help me acquire the skills necessary to serve a cause that I really care deeply about" - such as furthering the understanding of how technology affects people etc....

- Replace technology has emerged as the only solution with "tech. has emerged as an important part of the solution".

- Try to shift the tone from "I want to have an impact...." to "I want to serve this cause that I deeply care about and this is how the PhD is going to make me more capable of doing that..."  Remember the cause is not to run a non-profit etc.  The cause is more about furthering human understanding of a

certain phenomenon - either in firms on in the larger society'.

Look forward to seeing the next iteration.

Best,

Ajit.

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Thanks a lot Ajit ,I will start on these points right away and try and make the best I can.

On another note,there is one more essay which is the "personal statement.",which talks about "background,life experiences(cultural ,geographical,financial etc) and how these have effected the decision to pursue a PHD. I wanted to know since a lot of stuff is getting covered in the first essay itself this might become representative,can you please advise how this essay differs from the SOP(broadly).

regards,

siddharth

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SOP = What do you see as your contribution AND how the PhD will help.

Personal Statement = Who you are as a person (some of the MBA experiences might fit in here better).

Best,

Ajit.

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