



4 Testimonials – WHY MBA

Content

	<i>Heroes</i>	<i>page</i>
01.)	David, the Innovator	2
02.)	Sophia, the Conductor	3
03.)	Igor, the Doer	4
04.)	Laura, the Mentor	5



“David (The Innovator), tell me about a situation when you realized you needed an MBA to attain your objectives in life.”

I’ve nurtured a career path that values professionals able to relate different knowledge areas in business. I am good at cross-pollinating ideas from a wide range of disciplines, to combine and recombine these ideas and build new ones. I am sure that an MBA will help me enhance my potential in this capacity. I will tell you a story that explains why I feel the need for an MBA.

Everything happened during lunch at the Brazil-India Chamber of Commerce, when I was still an intern. My boss and I were helping a CEO of a Brazilian pharmaceutical company understand the impact of a change in a specific law in his M&A deals. You know the difficulty of working in Brazil: rules change all the time. We were analyzing the new rules involving restrictions imposed by OMC in the BRIC countries. The CEO appreciated our study and after staring at nothing, as if daydreaming, looked at us and said “I’m sorry, I just got distracted thinking... I wonder how this new law will affect my business now”. Then he started explaining that the entire company should be looked from a different perspective because of that unforeseen change. I don’t know if you’ve seen the movie ‘Beautiful Mind’. At some defining moment, mathematician John Nash anticipates tons of possible solutions to one single problem. The CEO, too, in his own way, presented tons of possible changes on a chess board because of a mere peon was changed. Although I just loved his rationale, I felt something weird: I felt like a mere peon in a universe of absurd complexity. The change in the law was the change of a simple peon. Of course, we all know that a peon can be decisive to win or lose a game. But I was not wrong: I was a simple peon. I needed to change that situation. I could barely sleep the night after that meeting. In the same week, I started planning how to make a transition to the business front. After countless selection processes, I could finally shift to management consulting, my current industry.

In my MBA I expect to synthesize new ideas. Business is getting more and more complex. I expect to become a leader well acquainted with several disciplines. Taking advantage of different academic resources, I will learn to combine, for instance, history, psychology, and neuroscience in order to take strategic moves. In a nut shell, I will ‘learn to learn’ business. I must continue my search for constant involvement in a professional environment that values the relationship among different areas of knowledge. I need an international MBA.

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“Sophia, tell me about a situation when you realized you needed an MBA to attain your objectives in life.”

I’ve nurtured a career path that values professionals who know how to articulate individual actions with collective efforts. I am good at defining, establishing, identifying, and translating a direction for collective action by followers. I am sure that an MBA will help me enhance my potential in this capacity. I will tell you a story that explains why I feel the need for an MBA.

When I entered college, I strongly believed that my professional success would depend exclusively on my effort, on my interest, and on my analytical capacity. Everything happened in France when I did my research on Institute of Robotics at the French Aerospace Center. Science and technology thrilled me with intellectual challenges. Research demanded sophisticated analyses, but did not allow me to synthesize impactful end-product solutions. Since I stood out among the researchers, I was invited to do my Ph.D. there. In a discussion with a professor on a technical detail, I suddenly had a breakthrough moment: “I could not spend my life in that lab discussing detail that only two or three technicians in the entire country could understand fully. I need to insert the people factor in my professional life”. Essentially I missed people in the process. I noticed that I needed those elements on a daily basis to achieve the balance I was looking for. I came back to Brazil and joined a Big-4 management consulting firm. Years later, acting temporarily as a post-MBA associate in one specific assignment, I realized that there is so much regarding leadership that I must still learn. As a consultant I have to learn about balancing the work and life pressures, and where do you draw the line? In this specific engagement, I realized that I got completely lost as I attempted to balance my personal life with a scenario that was testing my skills and resistance. In my three years of consulting, I have seen many directors get divorced; partners that miss their children’s birthday celebrations; I even witnessed one of my mentors having a crisis of identity. These are not inspiring leaders. Since I was responsible for one analyst, I felt frustrated to perceive that I could not change his resistance to my leadership style. After this engagement in which the group blew out for lack of leadership, I realized that leadership is something rather complex. I started to read about everything related to that subject and, mainly, I try to be involved in every possible leadership opportunity in my Firm. After this wake-up call, I got involved with different engagement where I could witness how certain managers or partner use their leadership styles to manage different leadership opportunities. Most of the inspiring leader in my Firm attended an international MBA.

The MBA offers experiences through which students can learn more about values of group dynamics. The MBA practical experience challenges management consultant analysts like me to, upon their return to the market as future managers, go beyond their analytical function (‘problem solvers’). They are expected to add teamwork to the equation. In sum: given that post-MBA challenge involve more than the pure need to ‘solve a problem’, the trick is to inspire genuine problem solver become a leader. My professional exposure has allowed me to identify my passion for a path in the management career. To move on, I cannot take shortcuts: I need to delve into an estate-of-art leadership Program. It’s simple: I need an MBA to become a better leader. I need an international MBA.

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“Igor, tell me about a situation when you realized you needed an MBA to attain your objectives in life.”

I’ve nurtured a career path that values professionals who can couple strategic/analytical rationale and at same time promote implementation/change actions. I am good at combining two complementary skills: analytical aptitude and action-oriented attitude. I am sure that an MBA will help me enhance my potential in this capacity. I will tell you a story that explains why I feel the need for an MBA.

As the son of a professor who quit his job in a college in order to set up a small biotech company, I was taught to value the combination of complementary skills: the ability to do the tough analytical work, but then step back and pull the trigger and execute. My father often says that a professor from USP will only leave the university in a hearse, straight to the funeral parlor. He was a pioneer. Despite the abyss in Brazil between scholar research and society, he identified an opportunity and was brave enough to leave the academic environment and build his first company in the biotechnology industry. In his fondness of challenges, he quit a safe and promising career. I witnessed his restless dedication to each of his ventures. When I was in doubt whether to quit my consulting job, my father convinced me to do so. I remember the details of our chat in the kitchen in the middle of the night. I had just arrived and I was exhausted. The engagement was tough and, honestly, I was not fond of what we were recommending to the client. I just did not believe in my actions. Interrupting my complaints, he was serene as he said: “a ship is safe in harbor, but that’s not what ships are for, huh? How about some action? How about that opportunity in PE you told me?” I went on with my crazy life as a consultant, to which I added countless interviews and innumerable financial books. Four months later, I quit my consulting job and officially became a PE guy. In the past twelve months I have learned how hard it is to think strategically without getting so caught up that you’re still able to take on some risk, since every business action requires a certain level of risk taking. The inciting event that triggered my desire to attend an MBA happened only when I joined XXX, a PE Fund with a hands-on approach. Through tough turnaround engagements, I realized that the MBA might help me enhance my ability to do the tough analytical work, but then step back and pull the trigger and execute. I do have a couple of examples of engagements where I felt I had done the right move.

In an MBA I expect to have courses designed to challenge students to incorporate concepts they learned from the curriculum to real business problems. While I expect to learn theories in class, nothing will ever go by the book. And it should not. After all, business is messy. From what I learned from my colleagues, MBA alumni, an MBA program is much more than frameworks and models. I want to be encouraged to think critically about these models. Obviously much of the business education is about valuing a company, pricing an option, managing away risk, etc., but I expect much more. I want to build new, pragmatic models. I value the rigor that only knowledge can offer, but I aim at developing a career in which I can work with something intellectually sophisticated, yet concrete. I enjoy seeing my ideas gain shape. I look forward to studying real-life case cases with diverse people from all around the world. I look forward to ‘Learning through Experience’. I need an international MBA.

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“Laura, tell me about a situation when you realized you needed an MBA to attain your objectives in life.”

I’ve nurture a career path that value professionals who believe the power that only team values can bring to human efforts. I am good at promoting a culture of team members that balances individual initiatives with team accomplishments. I am sure that an MBA will help me enhance my potential in this capacity. I will tell you a story that explains why I feel the need for an MBA.

When I entered college, I strongly believed that my professional success would depend exclusively on my effort, on my interest, and on my analytical capacity. As I a recipient of a scholarship offered by Fundacao Estudar (FE) and as an active participant in its several collective initiatives, I changed my opinion. Now I believe that the most important quality in a leader is his/her ability to gather people around an ambitious project, acknowledge their contribution, and reward their efforts. You don’t need to be the most intelligent, devoted, or strategic, but you can put together the brightest guy, the most determined girl, the best Napoleon around, and the high-achieved jack-of-all-trades. I believe in my potential for doing so, but I still have a lot to learn. For the last 7 years, I could admire the work philosophy of the FE leader, Jorge Paulo Lemann. In the book [‘Como Fazer Uma Empresa Dar Certo Num País Incerto’](#) Mr. Lemann defends that his greatest merit as a businessman is his capacity to attract high-achievers to ambitious projects: “no one does anything on his own; I’m in favor of having partners.” He is a genuine team builder. He is also a great supporter of the role of an MBA can play helping students embark on a personal development journey. Like him, I am positive that an MBA program should help students improve their self-awareness in order to build more effective relationships. My experience at FE offers plenty of cases where I lived the most of a group. I could witness the power to create an environment where people feel comfortable enough to take measured risks and learn while propelling the team and the ideas forward. It is truly rewarding to know that you belong to a group in which people exchange inspiring experiences.

As I have heard, if you went back to the early days of MBA education, you would find people working as individuals. Today, much of the learning is done in teams. The shift is from passive classroom learning to working with other people who have different strengths. That reflects what happens in the real world of work. Whether in business or in my life, in my community or at home, I always hope to lead by doing everything I can in order to bring out the best in people. I look forward to learning, teaching and sharing with my future colleagues. Like Lemann, I want to be an inspirational business leader. I need an international MBA.

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