***First, break the question into components***

**PART ONE: What is your career objective?**

What do you want to do with your degree, in the short and long term?

The admissions committee is looking for an organized career strategy that rests on solid self-understanding.

They want to know why you have made the decisions you made, how they have brought you to this point in your life, and where you are going from here.

Goals can include broader, non-career and personal or community aspirations – but your first priority is to establish a clear professional path.

* Dream and be real: You have to walk a fine line here. On the one hand you must think big. Whether you want to manage a billion dollars, or create new brain technology industries, or fix Africa – whatever it is, you should communicate high aspirations and a potential career worthy of an MBA graduate in 20 years time. On the other hand you must demonstrate career-path realism: your dreams will take a lifetime to mature, and even then they may not. You should sound like you understand how careers evolve in your field and the ways you might have to “do your time” (even if highly paid) before you become a true titan of your industry.
* Show first steps: The best don’t wait for acceptance of their b-school application before getting on with their dreams. You raise you stock immeasurably if you can show you have already taken steps towards the goal you claim to aspire to. Have you done the certifications you need for your career move? Do you have a plan for attracting investors to the business you hope to set up? Convince the committee that you will make it happen no matter what – even if you don’t get into their school, or any school.
* Have a worthwhile future: Faced with applicants who have equivalent grades and GMATs, the admissions committee will promote those who are on a unique, interesting, worthwhile career mission. You may have to work hard to polish up whatever dullness or omissions lurk in your past, but your aspirations are safely ahead of you where no committee can verify them. So don’t hesitate to project yourself into valuable, distinctive roles.

(found at http://www.topmba.com/articles/admissions/what-do-admissions-directors-look-application; accessed 2011/09)

**Short-term goals**

The cornerstone to this essay is your “Short-Term Goal” because it guides what information you should include in your “Career Review” and highlights what you still lack to achieve your goals. Having a detailed short-term goal is also crucial to explain how this school best prepares you to achieve your goals.

Start with your direct goal on graduation.

Your readers (admissions committee members, aka AdComs) want to confirm the following:

* Are you qualified (credible)?
* Are you competitive (ambitious)?
* Are you a good fit for their program (aware of how your own strengths and weaknesses relate to those of their program)?

Adcom readers want to see a goal that is both believable and ambitious.

If your goal is simply to continue what you are doing now, that is too realistic. It is a waste of an MBA. If your goal, however, is to do something radically different from what you are doing now, and there is not a clear sense of how you are going to get there, that is too ambitious.  Many of my clients use MBA to change careers. Others want to lead their current industry.

Most goals fit into one or more of these three categories

1. Vertical move

C-suite office (CEO, CFO, COO, CTO, CIO, etc.)

2. Change career

Go into financial services

Go into consulting

Go into consumer goods / marketing

Go into technology

Go into media / entertainment

Go into non-profit / social ventures

3. Join or launch start-up (entrepreneur)

Which of these three are you pursuing?

Are you ambitious yet realistic?

What problem are you trying to solve?

**Long-term goals**

Outline your long term goal. This is your mission in life. Try to show that you are confident to achieve these goals with or without business school (though earning your MBA from their school certainly increases the scale and scope of your future success)

Your long term goal can be general, but should still express your visions and insights about the industry you would like to work in, perhaps in 10 years.

A good LTG = the logical next step after your STG

For example: "After growing Tokyo operations to 200-300 staff within 5-10 years, I will expand my service into other parts of Asia."

**PART TWO: Why MBA?**

Why an MBA at all? (Why not another kind of Masters, or a PhD?)

First - identify what skills you need from your MBA:

I need technical skills such as: finance and accounting

I need analytical skills: corporate strategy, strategic planning (long-term thinking)

I need interpersonal skills: to lead cross-cultural and cross-functional team (organizational behavior) to motivate experts in finance, accounting, sales, marketing, engineering, and operations....

Second - chose majors / focus areas at your target schools by studying actual MBA curriculum at the programs to which you plan apply

Can you create a skills-based argument?

For example

Still, I need an MBA from X to create the right partnership model, secure and manage the JV funding and scale my new venture to cover demand in Japan and eventually other parts of Asia. To capitalize on my idea, I plan to use my time at X to explore the right JV partnership, funding and profit sharing schemes, and develop supply-demand optimizing models.

[VINCE HINTS]

A client recently asked me to explain the difference between technical skills and analytical skills. Here is my answer:

Technical skills can be tested (CPA, CMA, language certifications) because they involve facts and formulas that one can memorize.

According to [NYTimes columnist David Brooks](http://mobile.nytimes.com/2013/04/05/opinion/Brooks-The-Practical-University.xml?f=76" \t "_blank),

"Technical knowledge is the sort of knowledge you need to understand a task - the statistical knowledge you need to understand what market researchers do, the biological knowledge you need to grasp the basics of what nurses do.

Technical knowledge is like the recipes in a cookbook. It is formulas telling you roughly what is to be done. It is reducible to rules and directions. It's the sort of knowledge that can be captured in lectures and bullet points and memorized by rote."

Analytical skills can also be tested (GMAT critical reasoning) and they involve technical skills (finance and and accounting knowledge) but they are more complex. Sometimes, they involve creativity and intuition. For example, strategy consultants display analytical skills when they form (and test) a business hypothesis.

Business schools teach technical skills like finance and accounting so that students can apply these skills when analyzing business cases.

**PART THREE: Why this MBA program?**

* Why THIS SCHOOL?
* Why an MBA from this school particularly?

Clients often ask me, “How can I differentiate between all these top schools that seem similar?”

I encourage you to use a process of elimination. Start by making a complete list of all the things that can help you achieve your short and long-term goals. Many MBA programs offer the same things (classes, internships, connections, consulting projects, etc.), so only by being specific in your goals can you connect with what the school offers.

Pick the best 3-5 points from your chart above and explain in your essay:

1. Curriculum / professor (1 or 2)

2. Special programs (1 or 2)

3. Network / student culture (1 or 2)

Use "BEST / ONLY" logic: "I could confirm my interest in School X through my ongoing conversations with Mr. FirstName LastName (Class of '07), who told me about (specific aspect of school). This perfectly fits my (specific goal /learning objective) because..."

Use a combination of logic and emotion to convince them of your “fit” with the school

Passion is SHOWN through detailed examples that prove you have done your homework.

X’s unique combination of

* Curriculum / professor(s)
* Special programs
* People

...best prepares me to (restate goals)...

I suggest you focus on “people", such as a particular professor, current students and/or alumni. For example: "I have known Mr. A before, during, and after he attended School X's MBA program. I saw how it impacted him in terms of (specific hard and soft skills). I have also seen how he applied those new skills and perspectives in his career. I hope to have a similar transformative experience that only (this program) can provide."

Next, be sure to show that you have done your homework by reaching out to current students and alumni. Just be careful not to waste their time. They are busy and receive many such inquiries. Instead, ask if they agree with an idea you have, and ask for any suggestions or tips to help you make your idea better.

Finally, synthesize your findings into a few sentences that prove your “fit” with your target program.

For example

(SAMPLE A) I could confirm my interest in THIS SCHOOL through my ongoing conversations with Mr. FirstName LastName (Class of '07), who told me about (specific aspect of school). This perfectly fits my (specific goal /learning objective) because...

(SAMPLE B) Through my recent campus visit and ongoing networking with X (‘09) and Y (‘11), I am convinced that only THIS SCHOOL gives me the skills necessary to break through my company’s silo-based organizational structure. To persuade 40,000 professionals across different functions and cultures, I need to introduce new goal-based teamwork models to persuade entrenched opinion leaders to embrace changes that will yield new opportunities. I also recently participated in THIS SCHOOL Club of Japan’s Business Awards Ceremony and realized the strong bond of alumni to continue to grow together regardless of age or title. After graduating from THIS SCHOOL, I plan to work with the executive director of The THIS SCHOOL Japan Research Center to transform my company into the world’s most innovative SCM service provider.

(SAMPLE C) The flexibility of THIS SCHOOL’s curriculum will allow me to focus on necessary courses, especially in Entrepreneurship. THIS SCHOOL'S Entrepreneurship courses, such as “Entrepreneurial Finance and Private Equity” (Kaplan) and “Building the New Venture” (Deutsch), support not only basic framework but also practical Finance issues through case study oriented approach with demanding assignments. I also expect to participate in “New Venture and Small Enterprise Lab” which will give me hands-on learning opportunity to work directly with managers in X-area ventures. Participating in THIS SCHOOL-sponsored contests such as the Edward L. Kaplan New Venture Challenge will test and crystallize my business plan.

Still confused?

* Please see my ["Why this school" links on Delicious](http://delicious.com/admissions/ysx)

**PART FOUR: Why now?**

* Why an MBA right now, at this point in your career?
* Why do you need an MBA now? Why is this the ideal timing to pursue formal management training in a full-time program?

You need to answer this question directly, but your answer can be short (two sentences).

Think about:

* Internal factors (pushing you to get an MBA now): I have mastered certain technical, analytical and/or interpersonal skills; I am now ready to develop my skills and knowledge in new (specific) areas as stated above
* External factors (pulling you to get an MBA now): what makes this the ideal market timing for implementing your great business idea after you earn your MBA from this particular school?

**FULL VERSION**

**INTRODUCTION**

The key to getting your admissions essays right is knowing what each question seeks – what the school expects from your response in each case, and what bonus information can legitimately be added. But schools each ask different questions. Or do they? They appear different but if you look closely they are just variations on a few classics and the most common of all is "Why an MBA?"

Briefly assess your career progress to date. Elaborate on your future career plans and your motivation for pursuing an MBA.

Notice that there are five parts to the question, covering three time periods:

* Past – What experiences have led you to this point and this ambition?
* Present – Why an MBA right now, at this point in your career?
* Future – What do you want to do with your degree, in the short and long term?
* Why an MBA from this school particularly?
* Why an MBA at all? (Why not another kind of Masters, or a PhD?)

You should touch on all five topics somewhere in your complete essay set, but be careful to answer this and all questions exactly as posed.  
  
In general, shape your “Why an MBA” answer carefully to whether the question asks more about your past (“What has led you to want an MBA?”) or about your future (“What will you do when you graduate? How will an MBA help you?”)

How to tackle it

This essay should be done in a clear and straightforward way. You can be creative in your answers to many other questions, but here it is risky. The committee is looking above all for unequivocal evidence of your professional maturity, as shown by your clarity of purpose.  
   
Show due diligence: The “Why an MBA” question is one of the best places to prove you have done your homework on the school, and to argue that there is a specific match between your agenda and what’s on offer. Mention the school’s features, courses or extra-mural opportunities, say which are relevant to you and why.

Have definite goals: The admissions committee is looking for an organized career strategy that rests on solid self-understanding. They want to know why you have made the decisions you made, how they have brought you to this point in your life, and where you are going from here. Goals can include broader, non-career and personal or community aspirations – but your first priority is to establish a clear professional path.

Connect past to future: The committee is asking how your past connects to your future via business school. You must show that the MBA is the bridge between you yesterday and you tomorrow. Paint a picture of a future that rests naturally on your past, assuming the MBA from the school in question. Past, present and future can be presented in any order. What works will depend on the details of your situation.   
  
A generally versatile template is:

* Start with your direct goal on graduation
* Then give a sense of your long-term (major) goals
* Show why an MBA is relevant to these goals, and why now
* What in your past has led you to this point?
* Finish with the particular aspects of the target school that are relevant and attractive, given your stated goals

Communicating future aspirations

a. Dream and be real: You have to walk a fine line here. On the one hand you must think big. Whether you want to manage a billion dollars, or create new brain technology industries, or fix Africa – whatever it is, you should communicate high aspirations and a potential career worthy of an MBA graduate in 20 years time. On the other hand you must demonstrate career-path realism: your dreams will take a lifetime to mature, and even then they may not. You should sound like you understand how careers evolve in your field and the ways you might have to “do your time” (even if highly paid) before you become a true titan of your industry.

b. Show first steps: The best don’t wait for acceptance of their b-school application before getting on with their dreams. You raise you stock immeasurably if you can show you have already taken steps towards the goal you claim to aspire to. Have you done the certifications you need for your career move? Do you have a plan for attracting investors to the business you hope to set up? Convince the committee that you will make it happen no matter what – even if you don’t get into their school, or any school.    
   
c. Have a worthwhile future: Faced with applicants who have equivalent grades and GMATs, the admissions committee will promote those who are on a unique, interesting, worthwhile career mission. You may have to work hard to polish up whatever dullness or omissions lurk in your past, but your aspirations are safely ahead of you where no committee can verify them. So don’t hesitate to project yourself into valuable, distinctive roles.  
   
<http://www.topmba.com/articles/admissions/what-do-admissions-directors-look-application>

When answering this question, please consider the following:

* What are your strengths and weaknesses? (Please see this link for comprehensive tools http://www.vinceprep.com/interviews/strengthsweaknesses)
* Why is this the right time to study management in a two-year, full-time graduate school program?
* What do you want to do right after earning your MBA?
* How do you plan to utilize your MBA over the long-term?

My clients answer the “Why MBA?” question (YMBA?) through a series of dialogues. Dialogue is the absolute most powerful tool in figuring out your life goals. I ask my clients to tell me

* What are you good at now?
* What do you want to do right after earning your MBA?
* What do you want to do after that?
* Why are you not able to achieve these short and long-term goals now?
* What skills do you need to develop to achieve your goals? In other words, what critical weak points do you need to overcome before realizing your leadership potential?
* Why is MBA the best place to develop the skills that you need?
* Why is this school your best fit?
* Why you? What is your deeper motivation?

How to fail the “why an MBA” question

* You don’t answer parts of the question asked, or you answer parts not asked
* Your style for this essay is flippant or frivolous
* You fail to talk about the specific attributes of the program you are applying to, and why they are relevant to your education and your future
* You have aspirations that are too low, too dull, or you are uncertain of them
* Your career goals don’t require an MBA, or the role of an MBA is not clear
* You have goals that are unrealistic, or you fail to explain a realistic path to them
* Your goals are illogical or an extreme stretch given your past – suggesting career flakiness. (You’re a Kurdish linguist: you want to be a Wall Street analyst.) The committee will ask: “Is this aspiration logical? Will s/he be recruited?”

(found at http://www.fortefoundation.org/site/PageServer/link/swf/DocServer/blog/PageServer?pagename=mba\_articles\_admission\_essay; accessed 2011/09)

**STAGE ONE**

**MAKE A COMPETITIVE RESUME**

First, all of my clients begin by making a resume.  
  
Going through resumes helps me learn about you, word by word.  
  
The resume can be completed in one or two counseling sessions sometimes in a single day.  
  
In order to help client create competitive resumes, I ask open-ended questions.

* Why did you choose this university and this major?
* Why this industry and this company?
* What do you do on a daily basis?
* What objectives are you required to meet?
* What accomplishment are you most proud of?
* How do they add value to your organization, industry, and society?
* What do you want to do next?

**STAGE TWO**

**ANALYZE THE QUESTION BEHIND THE QUESTION**

Break the "Why MBA?" essay question down into seven distinct components:

* Career analysis
* Short term goal
* Long term goal
* Why MBA?
* Why now?
* Why this school?
* Why you? (optional)

**STAGE THREE**

**CREATE AN** [**OUTLINE**](http://techwritingtodai.blogspot.com/2011/03/outlines.html)

Start by writing more than you need.

Even if the question only asks “Why do you want an MBA?”, you should begin by addressing each of the seven topics below  
  
A. Career analysis  
B. Short term goal  
C. Long term goal  
D. Why MBA?  
E. Why now?  
F. Why this school?  
G. Why you? (optional)  
  
If you fully explore your career vision, you will learn more about your motivations, strengths, and weaknesses. Doing so makes you stronger you overall. You might even find ways to use some of your writing for other essays and interview responses.  
  
Here are more details about each of the seven sections.

**A. Career analysis**

Ask yourself these questions

* What skills have you nearly mastered?
* What experiences have led you to this point and this ambition?
* Include some highlights of your accomplishments to establish your current abilities, experiences and strengths.

Possibilities include a brief statement of your goals and your personal and professional background relevant to those goals. Another possibility includes economic or industry changes that enable your goals.  
  
For example:

During my eight-year career as a management consultant in Big Consulting Company, I have developed global-standard consulting skills through intensive participation in 25 projects across multiple industries and functions. My unmatched performance has propelled me to get promoted at the fastest speed. This June, I became Senior Associate, an official project manager, at the youngest age in the Tokyo office’s 30-year history.

**B. Short term goal**

Outline your short term goal (STG). Your readers (admissions committee members, aka adcoms) want to confirm the following:

* Are you qualified (credible)?
* Are you competitive (ambitious)?
* Are you a good fit for their program (aware of how your own strengths and weaknesses relate to those of their program)?

Start with your direct goal on graduation. Adcoms want to see a goal that is both believable and ambitious. If your goal is simply to continue what you are doing now, that is too realistic. It is a waste of an MBA. If your goal, however, is to do something radically different from what you are doing now, and there is not a clear sense of how you are going to get there, that is too ambitious.  Many of my clients use MBA to change careers. Others want to lead their current industry.  
Most goals fit into one or more of these six categories

* Vertical move
* Change career
* Join or launch start-up (entrepreneur)
* Go into consulting
* Go into finance
* Go into industry

Which of these six are you pursuing? Are you ambitious yet realistic? What problem are you trying to solve?  
  
The cornerstone to this essay is your “Short-Term Goal” because it guides what information you should include in your “Career Review” and highlights what you still lack to achieve your goals. Having a detailed short-term goal is also crucial to explain how this school best prepares you to achieve your goals.

**C. Long term goal**

Outline your long term goal. This is your mission in life. Try to show that you are confident to achieve these goals with or without business school (though earning your MBA from their school certainly increases the scale and scope of your future success)  
  
Your long term goal can be general, but should still express your visions and insights about the industry you would like to work in, perhaps in 10 years.  
  
A good LTG = the logical next step after your STG  
  
For example  
  
After growing Tokyo operations to 200-300 staff within 5-10 years, I will expand my service into other parts of Asia.

**D. Why MBA?**

First - identify what skills you need from your MBA:

* I need technical skills such as: finance and accounting
* I need analytical skills: corporate strategy, strategic planning (long-term thinking)
* I need interpersonal skills: to lead cross-cultural and cross-functional team (organizational behavior) to motivate experts in finance, accounting, sales, marketing, engineering, and operations....

Second - chose majors / focus areas at your target schools by studying actual [MBA curriculum](http://www.delicious.com/admissions/curriculum) at the programs to which you plan apply  
  
Can you create a skills-based argument?

For example  
  
Still, I need an MBA from X to create the right partnership model, secure and manage the JV funding and scale my new venture to cover demand in Japan and eventually other parts of Asia. To capitalize on my idea, I plan to use my time at X to explore the right JV partnership, funding and profit sharing schemes, and develop supply-demand optimizing models.

VINCE HINT: A client recently asked me to explain the difference between technical skills and analytical skills.

* Technical skills can be tested (CPA, CMA, language certifications) because they involve facts and formulas that one can memorize.
* Analytical skills can also be tested (GMAT critical reasoning) and they involve technical skills (finance and and accounting knowledge) but they are more complex.
* Sometimes, they involve creativity and intuition.
* For example, strategy consultants display analytical skills when they form (and test) a business hypothesis.

Business schools teach technical skills like finance and accounting so that students can apply these skills when analyzing business cases.

**E. Why now?**

Why do you need an MBA now? Why is this the ideal timing to pursue formal management training in a full-time program?  
  
You need to answer this question directly, but your answer can be short (two sentences).

Think about:

* Internal factors (pushing you to get an MBA now): I have mastered certain technical, analytical and/or interpersonal skills; I am now ready to develop my skills and knowledge in new (specific) areas as stated above
* External factors (pulling you to get an MBA now): what makes this the ideal market timing for implementing your great business idea after you earn your MBA from this particular school?

For more hints, please see these [links](http://www.delicious.com/admissions/Ynow)

**F. Why this school?**

Clients often ask me, “How can I differentiate between all these top schools that seem similar?”  
  
I encourage you to use a process of elimination. Start by making a complete list of all the things that can help you achieve your short and long-term goals. Many MBA programs offer the same things (classes, internships, connections, consulting projects, etc.), so only by being specific in your goals can you connect with what the school offers.  
  
Pick the best 3-5 points from your chart above and explain in your essay:  
  
1. Curriculum / professor (1 or 2)  
2. Special programs (1 or 2)  
3. Network / student culture (1 or 2)  
  
Use "BEST / ONLY" logic: "I could confirm my interest in School X through my ongoing conversations with Mr. FirstName LastName (Class of '07), who told me about (specific aspect of school). This perfectly fits my (specific goal /learning objective) because..."  
  
Use a combination of logic and emotion to convince them of your “fit” with the school  
Passion is SHOWN through detailed examples that prove you have done your homework.  
  
X’s unique combination of

* Curriculum / professor(s)
* Special programs
* People

...best prepares me to (restate goals)...  
  
I suggest you focus on “people", such as a particular professor, current students and/or alumni. For example: "I have known Mr. A before, during, and after he attending School X's MBA program. I saw how it impacted him in terms of (specific hard and soft skills). I have also seen how he applied those new skills and perspectives in his career. I hope to have a similar transformative experience that only (this program) can provide."  
  
Next, be sure to show that you have done your homework by reaching out to current students and alumni. Just be careful not to waste their time. They are busy and receive many such inquiries. Instead, ask if they agree with an idea you have, and ask for any suggestions or tips to help you make your idea better.  
  
Finally, synthesize your findings into a few sentences that prove your “fit” with your target program.  
  
For example

* (SAMPLE A) I could confirm my interest in THIS SCHOOL through my ongoing conversations with Mr. FirstName LastName (Class of '07), who told me about (specific aspect of school). This perfectly fits my (specific goal /learning objective) because...
* (SAMPLE B) Through my recent campus visit and ongoing networking with X (‘09) and Y (‘11), I am convinced that only THIS SCHOOL gives me the skills necessary to break through my company’s silo-based organizational structure. To persuade 40,000 professionals across different functions and cultures, I need to introduce new goal-based teamwork models to persuade entrenched opinion leaders to embrace changes that will yield new opportunities. I also recently participated in THIS SCHOOL Club of Japan’s Business Awards Ceremony and realized the strong bond of alumni to continue to grow together regardless of age or title. After graduating from THIS SCHOOL, I plan to work with the executive director of The THIS SCHOOL Japan Research Center to transform my company into the world’s most innovative SCM service provider.
* (SAMPLE C) The flexibility of THIS SCHOOL’s curriculum will allow me to focus on necessary courses, especially in Entrepreneurship. THIS SCHOOL'S Entrepreneurship courses, such as “Entrepreneurial Finance and Private Equity” (Kaplan) and “Building the New Venture” (Deutsch), support not only basic framework but also practical Finance issues through case study oriented approach with demanding assignments. I also expect to participate in “New Venture and Small Enterprise Lab” which will give me hands-on learning opportunity to work directly with managers in X-area ventures. Participating in THIS SCHOOL-sponsored contests such as the Edward L. Kaplan New Venture Challenge will test and crystallize my business plan.

Need more hints? Check out Vince's links [here](http://www.delicious.com/admissions/YSX)

**G. Why you? (optional)**

Ask yourself these questions:

* What is your motivation for pursuing your goals?
* Why are you the ideal person to achieve these goals?
* What are your current core competencies (strengths) that prepare you to bring this solution to market? (hard and soft skills) (logical appeal)
* Why is this the most interesting future career goal that you can imagine? (your motivation) (emotional appeal)
* This is your mission in life. Try to show that you are confident to achieve these goals with or without business school (though earning your MBA from their school certainly increases the scale and scope of your future success)

For example

My career vision is rooted in my environmentalism as an outdoorsman who enjoys fishing. Beyond providing economic benefits, I desire to enhance sustainable and environmentally friendly business models to our consumption-intensive world.

**STAGE FOUR**

**CONSIDER YOUR YMBA STORY**

**IN THE CONTEXT OF YOUR APPLICATION PACKAGE**

The tone of your YMBA essay sets the tone for all other essays.  
  
As you complete your outline and move into writing, revising, and editing your essay draft, you can begin to consider how your goals relate to your accomplishments and setbacks.

Will your reader believe you can achieve your goals, based on what you have accomplished already?

Do you have the potential to become the person you say you want to be?  
  
How about setbacks? Have you learned enough lessons about life and business to persist and achieve your objectives?

**STAGE FIVE**

**REVISE AND EDIT FOR AUTHENTICITY**

I specialize in helping international applicants. Most of my clients are not native English speakers. I do my best to hear and respect your authentic voice.  
  
Perhaps you need a partner to help you find your voice. Fine. Ask a mentor or friend. If you cannot burden them throughout your entire application process, consider contacting a counselor, consultant, coach, or advisor. But be careful. We do not all work the same way. If you want editing, get that. If you are willing to work harder to build your writing and speaking skills, please get in touch.  
  
Too many  international you use American editors to "sophisticate" their own words. This can work against you. As any writer knows, tone is hard to master. Your essays need to sound like they were all written by the same person - you. Are you too busy to write your own essays? If so, how do you expect to graduate from HBS, MIT, Stanford, Wharton, LBS, or any other rigorous MBA program, let alone lead your industry someday? Presidents and CEOs might hire speech writers, but the smartest ones also know how to produce their own content, and do so whenever time permits. Take the time to make your application the best it can be, and never trust someone more than you trust yourself. Use your own voice.  
  
I was trained to be a hands-off counselor. It is harder to pull a story out of you than to write one for you, but the effort pays off every time. I practice counseling Aikido rather than Sumo. Please forgive the Japanese martial arts reference; I am not trying to push you out of the ring. Rather, I use creative tension to bring you down into the work of realizing your own power and your own potential.  
  
You can be authentic even if you ultimately decide to pursue other career goals after graduation. Many MBA holders end up pursuing different goals than they wrote in their admissions essays. Out of the nearly 500 applicants I have helped, I can think of only a few that did what they wrote when applying. Adcoms know this, and respect it. In fact, they want you to change and grow as a result of your MBA experience. Some schools, most notably MIT Sloan, do not ask you to explain their future goals because they hope that you will co-create their future vision from within the MIT community. I respect MIT for this. For those of you applying to nearly any other program, you need a goals story.  
  
When I applied to graduate school, my goal was to create educational video games to teach communication skills. I still envision creating educational tools and communities that help lifelong learners improve the lives of others. Admissions counseling represents a step toward my long term goals.  
  
Please get in touch if you want to work hard to discover more about your potential to lead your industry and your community.

In the meantime, please check these links <http://www.delicious.com/admissions/brainstorming_goals>

Most of all, please continue researching your goals and how they fit the curriculum, professors, alumni and special programs offered at your target schools.

As you are writing your life story, you should be brainstorming your future goals by talking to your friends, mentors, and trusted career advisers. When you feel ready, write down three or more scenarios for your possible short-term and long-term goals. If you need help brainstorming, please feel free to check Vince’s links here  
  
<http://delicious.com/admissions/GoalsResearch>  
<http://delicious.com/admissions/brainstorming_goals>  
<http://delicious.com/admissions/goals_essay>