



I am applying for admission to the Ph.D. program in Business Administration because I want a career in the research and teaching of management. In particular, I am interested in factors that affect the competitive performance of a business concern, and the manner in which changes in technology affect an organization's structure, long-term business strategy, product development, manufacturing, supply chains, distribution network, information needs and standard systems. In order to gain an appreciation of these and related issues, it is essential for me to have a strong grounding in Economics, Supply Chain Management, and issues connected with Information Technology, as well as gain a General Management perspective.

Review para1

I believe that the Ph.D. program in Business Administration (with concentration in Management) would be invaluable in helping me achieve these objectives. It would enable me to channel my quantitative and conceptual skills in analyzing business issues and would open up new avenues in research. Subsequent to earning a Ph.D., I would like to apply for a faculty position at a leading university; and investigate issues concerned with technology as it affects organisation strategy, structure and systems.

Review para2

I believe that my background in engineering and management has prepared me for such a career. I have found research fascinating since my engineering days, where I received the highest marks in the Department for my final-year undergraduate dissertation; and was judged to have presented the best paper at a Departmental seminar. My four years of engineering education have provided me with a strong grounding in mathematics (I stood first in my department for each of the four Math papers) and the theoretical aspects of technology.

Review para3



career prospects. Economics and psychology - subjects new to me - were interesting, and I enjoyed applying quantitative and conceptual skills to analyze business problems. I did very well in projects, desk research, workshops and class discussion, although academically I did not perform to my satisfaction (I finished with a GPA of 2.91, partly due to health reasons). I was voted as one of the ten most promising students in my batch, and received a national-level award for the best business school project, awarded by the Institute of Management Consultants of India. This was for a summer project, entitled "Formulation and Implementation of a Marketing Strategy for HandiCrafts, a unit of the Special Person's Association".

Review para4

Upon graduating from business school I was offered a job with AZ & Co., a management consulting firm which ranks as among India's largest. This is where I learned how to apply the principles and lessons of management to real life. It was fascinating; and transformed my interest in management research into a passion. I read extensively, trying to keep myself informed about management thinking in my areas of work - structure and systems in an industry and organisation, industrial marketing and strategy.

Review para5

I have learnt a lot on my present job. With the rest of my team, I have analysed markets and examined supply and distribution networks for such diverse products and industries as bulk chemicals, fresh fruit exports, toys, packaging machinery, retailing, adhesives, diamonds and pharmaceuticals. I have helped formulate entry strategies, plans for expansion and diversification; and also company business plans. As part of a team, I have carried out preliminary feasibility studies; compared technology options; suggested to the Forex Bank of India, a plan for improving the export competitiveness of India's Chemicals Sector; and studied government schemes for their efficacy. I have studied in detail the organisation structure and systems for one of India's largest manufacturers of



their new systems.

Review para6

These assignments have involved interaction with people at all levels of the value chain, and at organisational levels from the Chairman of a \$ 200 million firm to a packing clerk earning \$1 daily. They have given me the opportunity to interview a number of policy makers, industry analysts and economists in an effort to understand the functioning of, and important issues connected with, each of these industries.

Review para7

All this has given me valuable insights into the environment in which companies operate - how they affect this environment and are affected by it. It has enabled me to observe some of the better and worse ways of running a business. Certain assignments have been thought provoking; my most recent assignment, on the redesigning of a company's structure and systems, helped me understand the necessity of good organisation structures, and appreciate the significance of systems that work well. A study on the export competitiveness of India's chemicals sector brought home to me the importance of technology in determining a company's or industry's competitiveness. An assignment involving the evaluation of an air freight subsidy scheme for exporters of fresh fruits raised fundamental questions in my mind about the efficacy of subsidies in improving the competitiveness of an industrial sector, and encouraged me to look at more lasting measures instead.

Review para8

The time limitation on each assignment has taught me to plan well, work systematically and keep my reports up-to-date. At the same time, having to defend my analyses and recommendations, during both internal discussions and presentations to clients, has taught me to think rigorously and creatively. Our extensive use of computers for analysis



word processing and presentation packages.

Review para9

While the highly diverse nature of assignments has helped me gain a broad exposure to Indian industry, it has not been possible for me to study specific business and technology - related issues in depth. I realise that in order to be able to do so, I need a better understanding of the various facets of management; the interlinkages between different functional areas and between different business entities. Equally important, I need further training in research methodology.

Review para10

I want to do a Ph.D. at the College of Business, XYZ University for many reasons. I have heard about XYZ's Ph.D. program in Business Administration from my business school professors and am impressed with the emphasis placed on technical and analytical skills, general management orientation and rigorous research methodology. The School's strengths in supply chain management and information management are commensurate with my research interests. The faculty's reputation for excellent teaching, challenging coursework and the excellent facilities are added attractions.

Review para11

While the study of and research in management is my prime objective today, my interests in literature, music, travel and nature help me maintain a sense of perspective in life. I like to write and have had some articles published in Indian newspapers. I have organized and participated in a number of extra-curricular activities during my college days and have won university and national level prizes in debating, writing and quizzes. I also believe that each of us must give something back to society - to this end, I have worked on a voluntary basis for the Hunger Project for a year; as a teacher and counselor to physically and mentally handicapped children for three years; and as a



environment of my hometown, Allahabad.

Review para12

I hope that the admissions committee finds my background and strengths commensurate with the requirements of XYZ's Ph.D. program in Business Administration.

Review para13

Review Summary

REVIEW

1st Paragraph

If you can capture your ambitions in a few words, this is the sort of beginning you want to shoot for. Far too many essays begin with cliched sayings or throwbacks to the author's childhood.

However the pitch does get a bit queered in the next line. There are a few words about 'factors that affect ...' and then an extremely long spiel about 'changes in technology affect' absolutely everything there is about an organisation. You don't have to be a business major to understand that things get a bit confusing since these unrelated ideas are presented in the same line. This results in things coming across in a rather unbalanced manner.

2nd paragraph

Notice how strongly this paragraph follows up on her avowed career goals illustrated in

some strong backing up later, if it isn't to sound pretentious.

3rd Paragraph

This is a discreet way of getting in the details of one's academic career that otherwise deserve to be on a resume. Far too many applicants like to quote their achievements without explaining how it will affect their careers. If you're not tactful about it, it could sound a bit vain.

4th Paragraph

The award-winning project is rich with unfulfilled promise. Schools are on the lookout for applicants who have contributed to society and a line about how the voluntary sector also needs modern management techniques (or even a contrarian view - corporates needing to learn from NGO's) would add some value.

The explanation for a poor GPA is unwarranted. Such issues could be dealt with in a brief note accompanying the application package. Here, it merely serves to offset the otherwise upbeat tone.

5th Paragraph

Applicants could do well to consult a style-guide when attempting to be grammatically adventurous. For instance, '...fascinating; and ...' doesn't really gel. Also, notice how things get personal here - 'interest ... into a passion' runs the risk of sounding cliched, but works nevertheless.



6th Paragraph

We generally advise applicants to leave most of the hard facts and details for the resume. Here, however, the detailing doesn't necessarily detract from the essay. It could certainly have been tightened. The diversity of products and industries the author has worked in could have been expressed in fewer words.

And there's a minor gaffe when she refers to redesigning of new systems. Once again, this sort of mistake is by no means fatal, but deserves to be eliminated at the editing stage.

7th Paragraph

These paragraphs justify the details of Paragraph 3. And do so quite well, by the way.

8th Paragraph

In any field, you want to show how you've had unique experiences, and more importantly, how you've learnt from them. The author handles this beautifully by listing how she's interacted with different levels within the corporate hierarchy and how this has shaped her perspective on life.

The part about the efficacy of subsidies illustrates that the author is prepared to think on issues. It also plugs in well with current international opinions on subsidies. On the other hand, if you're applying to, say, the Karl Marx University of Cuba, you may want to revise how you express these opinions.



9th Paragraph

The paragraph does well to spin her experiences in a business perspective.

However, essay writers are advised to look out for skills that are generally taken for granted within an industry. Proficiency in basic tools like spreadsheets etc. has been passe for the past few years now. Remember that while such lapses don't necessarily trash an essay, you don't want a drop in pace at this stage of the game. This is the sort of sentence that should've been dumped at the editing stage.

10th Paragraph

This is an ideal way to express what you're looking for from the University you're applying to.

11th Paragraph

While most of the essay has been tightly edited, things get a bit loose around here. Notice the repetition of 'excellent' in the last sentence. Also, 'commensurate' isn't used very accurately here.

12th Paragraph

The references to extra-curricular activities could have been slipped in earlier and more naturally. Coming this late in the essay and the accompanying cliches (each of us ... to society) blunts the edge that it would have carried if placed earlier in the essay.



13th Paragraph

This paragraph would've had a stronger impact if the author had dumped the previous one. Also, we believe it'd be a better strategy to link up your talents and suitability for the university with their need for students who will enhance the diversity and experience of the entire incoming class. It's like a job interview – they shouldn't get the feeling that theirs is the only game in town as far as you are concerned. So a brief mention about how they need you too wouldn't hurt at this stage.

Summary

This essay surely makes a strong case for the applicant. We'd like to believe that this essay sets a lot of good examples that other applicants could follow.

All the I's and me's lend it a personal touch. 'for me', 'I believe', 'enable me', 'I would like' : these are terms that all personal statement writers should use profusely - especially when you're rattling off a bunch of buzzwords. It doesn't take much for the reader to start believing that the lines have been lifted from a trade magazine, so making everything seem personally relevant is the key. This is merely a palliative, however. You have to back this up with some credible experience. If it seems like you've spent your entire life doing nothing much but watch television, saying '*it's my experience that employee-empowerment helps an organization leverage core competencies*' won't convince anyone.

This essay also illustrates how you need to present yourself in an all-round light, especially when you're applying for management courses. It pays to stay in touch with the prevailing ethos that schools believe in. While many of us may have had socially relevant experiences, it takes a certain savvy to highlight them while applying to schools



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