



Application  
**Advantage**

## **International Admissions**

### **Round 2: Will You Go the Distance?**

By Walter Hutchinson, business school admissions and career strategist

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With January MBA program deadlines right around the corner, that question probably passes through your mind at least once a day. As well it should! For international applicants, January is the final deadline that counts for a number of reasons.

Once you are admitted, you need ample time to: 1) have your student visa processed, especially if you are heading to the United States or Europe; 2) wrap up projects at work while ensuring you don't burn bridges (preserving your professional relationships); 3) find a place to live and evaluate quality-of-life factors, especially if you will be on campus with a family, and 4) take other steps to minimize your adjustment phase so that you can get the most out of the MBA program from Day 1.

But before you can do all that, you first have to get admitted. So just how ready are you for the next MBA admissions round? Will you meet all the requirements over the next 30 to 40 days?

### **Essays**

Essays – the wildcard that swings you either toward or away from the school of your choice. By now you realize the impact a good essay can have when combined with strong test scores and grades. However, did you know that a personalized, original group of essays can help compensate for low quantitative numbers, even at the most competitive programs? Of course, your chances for admission are better with a higher GMAT score and GPA.

However, no matter how strong your “numbers” are now, the fate of your entire dossier depends heavily on how you craft or polish your essay responses within the next 30 days. What do you have to say and do your comments give the committee better insight into you and your goals? Are you interesting; what is it about your background or personality that your classmates would find equally compelling? Why should the committee favor you over someone else with similar qualifications; how do you qualitatively distinguish yourself? When you walk into a room, how do you affect the people in it? Do you have an impact? Can you convey that in-person presence on paper? Are you sure that what you have written gives the impression you think it does?

### **Recommendations**

If you haven't approached your referee candidates yet, you should be prepared to do so as soon as possible. Remember that content is not the only factor here. You are also depending on your writers to: a) complete their part in a timely fashion and b) do justice to the exercise so that whatever they say on your behalf generates as much mileage as possible with the admissions

committee.

If you have already gotten the recommendation process started, you probably discovered your referees have schedules as busy as (or busier than) yours. This time crunch, believe it or not, creates a better opportunity for you to strategically influence what goes into the final draft than if you simply sent the form or the online recommendation link to someone who had tons of time to consider their comments. Generally, referees who are not pressed for time can and often do take longer to complete their part.

Have you prepped them on the types of things they need to highlight about you and on strategies for doing so? If not, you need to be ready to do so now.

### **Resume**

Your resume is one of your most important job-hunting calling cards. For business school applications, it can, depending on the MBA admissions office, be a determining factor in whether or not you receive an interview invitation. To be certain, how you represent yourself on this document is going to influence MBA admissions interviewers' perceptions of you – just as in the case of job interviewers.

That said, is your resume highlighting all your accomplishments? Is it clear, at a glance, how your responsibilities differ from your achievements? Are instances of initiative and impact on your organization prominently placed? Is your format impressive or is it distracting, hindering your ability to catch the eye of the reader for the right reasons?

### **Interviews and Other Matters**

Everyone knows they ought to be prepared for their interviews. And yet even the smartest, most accomplished applicants tend to neglect this part of their preparation until the very last minute. The risks are obvious; evidence of lack of preparation during an interview can be and often is fatal for chances of selection. Some schools say the interview is just one factor. Our position is, “why take the chance?” You put all those hours into filling out the application forms, tracking down referees, brainstorming essays and stories, recalling details about your background and personal history, getting feedback from colleagues and friends, adding the burden of applications to your normal work schedule. Is all that effort not worth ensuring you have taken at least the basic steps toward making a strong positive impression during the interview, even if in some cases it “doesn't count that much”?

Resumes, recommendations, essays, application forms and interview prep. That is a formidable

list to complete in a 30 day period, especially if you are applying to 2 or more schools. Luckily for you, help is nearby. A top admissions consultant can help you not only create a schedule for completing every document you need by January, but also execute brilliantly every step of the way. How you manage time is, at this point, perhaps the most important factor you face, and with 30 to 40 days remaining, you simply cannot afford to waste any of it.