

Start your MBA Admissions process with the Interview preparation



Interview stories should feed the application essays and not the other way round

The MBA admissions interview is not just a casual chit chat to put a face on the name of the candidate, exchange pleasantries and finish a formality to admit a candidate. It is way more complicated than the application essays and has four critical goals for the admissions process—

- 1) Test the appearance, personality, and communications skills of the candidate
- 2) Probe certain areas of the candidate's application which were not evident in the application
- 3) Cross-check the critical skills and achievements the candidate

4) Test the candidate's maturity, vision, drive, and attitudes and decide if she is a good fit for that school

An MBA application asks detailed questions about the applicant, but an interview unearths certain aspects of her profile that can only happen in personal interaction. Also, business schools know most applicants use external help from friends, family or admission consultants to prepare the application, but they cannot ask someone else to appear on their behalf in the interview. Thus, they use the interview to sanctify the application process and select only the best candidates for their accomplished class.

The admissions interview can make or break the fortunes of an applicant. This does not mean the MBA application with its myriad essays, recommendations, short questions, and resume are not important. The candidate's application must be robust for the school to invite her for the interview. However, while a good interview can help the candidate overcome flaws in the application, a bad interview can kill a good application. Thus, smart candidates develop their interview skills through serious preparation, and uses the interview as a strategic tool to enhance their profile and achieve success in a selective admission process.

An experienced interviewer interviews with a clear set of objectives and tailors her questions to extract the required information from the interviewee. But, do the candidates also approach the interview with the same seriousness? Often, the euphoria of getting the interview invitation, and the upcoming end of a long and excruciating application season makes the candidate complacent, and she commits the classic mistake of underestimating the interview. It becomes a tragedy when after all the hard work of building a good profile over many years, working hard to get the best GMAT score, networking with alumni and admission officials, and slogging to complete the applications in time, the candidate falters at the last step out of ignorance and arrogance. It is like climbing Mount Everest but returning just a few hundred meters from the top, without summiting.

In most cases, the time frame for completing the interview is 1-2 weeks from the interview invitation, which is not enough time to prepare the content and also practice the delivery and presentation of the answers. Interview preparation requires time and effort to reach a

stage where the candidate gets the results she wants irrespective of the format of the interview or the nature of the questions asked. Thus, interview preparation must start several months before the actual interview.

The best time to prepare for the interview is at the beginning of the admission season when there is no pressure of the application deadlines. Candidates can use the standard interview questions to think about their personal and professional stories and prepare their personal branding, profile highlights, vision, and career goals. Interview preparation can not only help the candidate build the communication and presentation skills required for the interview, but also develop a body of useful material for the application essays. So, instead of using the application essays in the interviews, it is better to use the interview material in the essays. By spending several months developing and practicing the interview material, the applicants can create a stellar impression in the interviews and make a strong pitch to convince the business schools to accept them in their class.

The interview is the ultimate corroboration of the applicant's value. It is easy to show a candidate can walk on water in the applications, but without sustained practice, it is difficult to produce the same image in the interview. So, start your application process with the interview preparation and then sustain it through the application cycle.

Give the interview the respect it deserves and develop it as a powerful tool to reach your dream school.