

The logo for myEssayReview, featuring the text "myEssayReview" in a blue, sans-serif font. The word "my" is in a smaller size and a lighter blue color, while "EssayReview" is in a larger size and a darker blue color. A thin orange underline is positioned beneath the word "Essay".

myEssayReview.

A Dedicated and Personalized Essay-Review Service for Undergraduate and Graduate School Applicants

# A COLLECTION OF 10 SUCCESSFUL MBA ESSAYS

**Gateway to your dream schools**

- *Written by students who were  
accepted into top 20 schools*

Poonam Tandon  
CEO, myEssayReview

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# Introduction

## About myEssayReview

Founded in 2011, myEssayReview (MER) is a simple, dedicated, effective, and personalized B-school essay-review service that believes in the principle that all applicants possess unique perspectives and life experiences that set them apart. Because of this personalization, 90% of MER students have been accepted into majority (not one, but majority!!) of the schools of their choosing. MER students with scores between 610 and 680 have secured admission to schools such as Kellogg, Booth, ISB, CMU, Manchester, HAAS etc. Similarly, MER students with high GMAT scores (typically 700+) have not only secured admissions but also fellowships from Darden, Ivy Richards, Emory, Tippie, Cornell, CMU, etc.

## Why Choose MER?

### More Personal

Every customer works directly on a one-on-one basis with Poonam, the founder and CEO of myEssayReview. Unlike other consultants, she works full time on her business and takes a lot of pride in her work. She goes above and beyond to ensure that your application reflects the quality that she is known for. Also, if she has bandwidth, she can even complete your application in a week at no extra charge. Last year, she helped one customer turn around his application in 3 business days (and yes, he was accepted).

### A proven track record

Poonam recently released the stats of students who she recently worked with.

### A snapshot of MER's Recent Successes

School Name	GMAT Score	Received Admit
Wharton	760	Yes
MIT	760	Yes
Kellogg	660, 720, 720	Yes (Multiple)
Booth	660, 720, 610	Yes (Multiple)
INSEAD (Global EMBA)	No GMAT	Yes
Darden	680, 760	Yes (Multiple), with scholarship
Tippie	720	Yes, with scholarship
LBS	680	Yes
ISB	620	Yes
Ross	670	Yes
HAAS (EMBA)	720, 700, 630	Yes, Multiple
UCLA (MISM)	630	Yes
Kelley	680	Yes, with scholarship
UNC Kenan Flagler	680	Yes, with scholarship
Emory	680, 700, 720	Yes(multiple), with scholarship (multiple)
Tepper	680	Yes, with Scholarship
Ivy Richards	620, 720	Yes (multiple), with scholarship
Cornell	720	Yes
Georgetown	700	Yes, with scholarship

School Name	GMAT Score	Received Admit
Tepper	620	Yes, with scholarship
Manchester	610	Yes, with scholarship
Schulich, Rotman	620	Yes
UC Davis	710	Yes, with scholarship
Rice	650	Yes, with scholarship
Rochester	650	Yes, with scholarship
RSM	590	Yes
Purdue	620	Yes with scholarship
Wisconsin	580	Yes with scholarship
William & Mary	630	Yes with scholarship

### Success rate and scholarships:

As is evident from the table above, Poonam has a great success rate with her students who not only received admission but received scholarships as well. For example, Nitya (710) worked with Poonam in R-3 and received 50% scholarship; [Rajeev](#) (720) got accepted into 3 out of 4 schools and finally joined Tippie with 70 % scholarship. Similarly, Amrita (680) got through and secured scholarships from schools such as Kelley, CMU, and Emory. Most recently, [Carlos](#) worked with Poonam for 4 schools and got admits from Ivy Richards, Emory, and Cornell with more than US \$70K in scholarships. Also, [Muhammad](#) (630) worked with Poonam on 4 schools (Babson, William & Mary, Purdue, and George Washington University. and has been accepted into Purdue and William & Mary with \$10,000 and \$20,000 in scholarships respectively.

### Admits to Ivy League:

Poonam has helped many students get admits from [Kellogg](#), [Booth](#), [INSEAD](#), HAAS, and Wharton etc.

### Admits with low GMAT score:

Poonam has helped students get into ISB and Manchester with GMAT scores of 620. Recently, she helped a student get admission with scholarships in [Cornell](#) and [Wisconsin](#) with a [580 GMAT score](#). Also, one of her students recently got accepted into [Kellogg](#) with a [660](#).

### Simple

Poonam believes that every customer deserves the best. Hence, unlike some of the other companies, she does not segment the packages into Silver, Gold, and Platinum. You will get the same level of service regardless of whether you purchase a single essay or a 3-school package.

### High Value

At \$999 for one school package and at \$1799 for three schools, MER offers unbeatable value, any way you look at it. The contrast becomes more prominent when you consider that it offers better service than the expensive Gold packages offered by some companies. This has been made possible by minimizing technology and personnel overhead.


## Why Poonam's Students Love Working with Her?



Read below to learn why her students love working with her. You will find below screenshots of some of the many reviews of Poonam's services as posted on GMAT Club Reviews section.

# myEssayReview

**Thank you!!** June 06 | 2013

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 **gmatclub** VERIFIED REVIEW [ [What's this?](#) ]

★★★★★ By [yuyi626](#) joined: March 14, 2013 |  0 |  0 |

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**The reviewer was admit to the schools that they applied to:**

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**This review is for:** [Multiple School Package](#) **Location:** [Online](#) **Taught by:** [Poonam Tandon](#)

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I applied to 4 top schools in Canada in R-3 this year and I am already accepted by one of them- Schulich.


Thank you , Poonam for your invaluable help. The essays revised by you played a key role when Schulich reviewed my files. You guidelines made me dig into my memories and experiences to get the right content for my essays. Also, you helped me eliminate unnecessary details and information. My chosen stories might not have been the best ones, but you turned them into the ones that best represented me. The sample essays on your website helped a lot by giving me directions for each paragraph.

Also, your editing helped me focus on a particular point in each paragraph so that the story can be effectively told. I could see you are very good at this by trimming down one of my essays from 739 to 400 words. When writing essays, I was used to writing many more words than necessary to give you as much information as you might need. You might have found difficulties on these long essays, and I am sorry about that. The sentences revised by you were varied and expressed my ideas effectively. **You effectively used one precise word to replace what I took three words to say.** That helped trim down my essays a lot. Punctuation marks, comma, semicolon, colon etc. were effectively used for various purposes, such as emphasis and distinction. Since I made errors on prepositions very often, your careful review on every word was much appreciated.

And, yes, you did a great job on the turn-around time. I would rather say I was the one who slowed down the editing process. **Thank you very much for your patience.** Also, I would say I made a smart choice by availing your resume services as well, so all parts of my application package, including recommendation, letters presented my candidacy in the best light. Even my weak areas such as employment gap and suspension were carefully portrayed, so they didn't affect my admission prospects.

I have already received accept offer from Schulich, and I am positive that I will receive interview invite from Ivy Richards, Rotman, and De Groote as well. Poonam, I will get back to you with some more essays for international change program in my second year of MBA.

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**Was this review helpful to you?**    **Comments** [0]

## myEssayReview

**Great service and Choose myEssayReview if you are serious about your essays.** March 19 | 2013

 **gmatclub** VERIFIED REVIEW [ [What's this?](#) ]

★★★★★ By [gmatcracker24](#) joined: June 29, 2010 |  108 |  44 |

The reviewer was admit to the schools that they applied to: **Yes - got into all**

This review is for: [Essay Review](#) Location: [Online](#) Taught by: [Poonam Tandon](#)

If you are looking for a dedicated and quality essay review service, myEssayReview is the service you should choose.

I enrolled for one essay review. I am not sure about other admission consulting services but Poonam is one of the best for sure. She is very dedicated and quick with her reviews on my essays. She sticks to the timelines and makes the process stress-free. She has a flair to transform your initial draft to attractive essay.

I applied for only one school and i got in with scholarship. I would recommend anyone who is looking for streamlining their initial draft and make their essay standout. Poonam is very quick to understand out concerns and recommendations on how we want our essays to be and works on those lines.

Overall, I am satisfied with her service and would recommend anyone who is in process of writing their essays.

Was this review helpful to you?

Yes



No

 **Comments** [0]

## Excellent services

February 18 | 2014

 **gmatclub** VERIFIED REVIEW [ [What's this?](#) ]

★★★★★ By [Anonymous](#) joined: March 20, 2010 |  9 |  7 |

The reviewer was admit to the schools that they applied to: Yes - school of my dreams

This review is for: [Multiple School Package](#) Location: [Online](#) Taught by: [Poonam Tandon](#)

First of all, Poonam is a wonderful coach.

She started by putting a lot of effort into digging out my best stories in order to get a good selection for typical themes (leadership, setback, goals, etc).

The editing process is pretty structured: she uses the first couple of edits to get the right content (without concerning with word count) and the last couple of edits to make the essays comply with the word count limits.

During the whole process she kept me very motivated, especially when I needed some wake-up calls.

I worked with her on 4 school applications and every single school invited me to interview. Furthermore, I have already been accepted by 3 of them (adding to more than US\$70k in scholarships).

as this review helpful to you?

 **Comments** [0]

[in to create/modify/remove your own comments](#)



## nyEssayReview

Great service!

October 30 | 2013

 **gmatclub** VERIFIED REVIEW [ [What's this?](#) ]

★★★★★ By [davidlf](#) joined: December 9, 2011 |  31 |  3 |

The reviewer was admit to the schools that they applied to: Yes - got into all

This review is for: [Essay Review](#) Location: [Online](#) Taught by: [Poonam Tandon](#)

I really enjoyed the process of working with Poonam, she offers a great service for those who need some directions or recommendations on how to put your ideas into paper.

She offers a structured approach on how to tackle the most common essay questions, and help you identify the best way to approach specific essay questions, in order to show the best of you in each essay. The service is excellent and the price is affordable, I have been already invited to 2 interviews and as an international applicant I would definitely recommend her services.

My native language is Spanish, and even though I feel comfortable with my level of English, as an international applicant, I wanted to make no mistakes. This was my first experience with a school application. She helped me structure my ideas in a logical way in order to show the best of me in every essay. I would definitely work with her again.

Was this review helpful to you?

Yes



No

 [Comments](#) [0]

## My essay review rocks!

March 10 | 2014

 **gmatclub** VERIFIED REVIEW [ [What's this?](#) ]

★★★★★ By [Anonymous](#) joined: March 25, 2011 |  0 |  0 |

The reviewer was admit to the schools that they applied to: **Some, but not all**

This review is for: [Multiple School Package](#) Location: [Online](#) Taught by: [Poonam Tandon](#)

I always feared to sign up with a consultant until I met you. In fact, I thought that I wouldn't find someone who would understand me and help me the way you did. I truly valued each moment of working with you. It was amazing to have someone who is more dedicated to my success than I was. Poonam you're the best consultant I know.

You're a master story teller. Before I signed up for school review, I didn't have any clue about how to deliver my story in the most compelling way. Your suggestion and guidelines on each essay's first edit gave me enough information that helped me correct my mistakes and restructure my story.

Your structure for essays and recommendation letters were well defined and easy to follow. I think that you did a great job specifically with this part which on my hand helped me to write my essays quickly. I also noticed and appreciated your suggestion on recommendation letters. In fact, you nicely and smartly forced the recommenders to write a compelling recommendation by answering the questions asked instead of skimming through the questions.

I was particularly pleased that you always trimmed my essays down to word-limit and were still be able to picture the most important parts of my story. You helped me to understand that a long essay doesn't always make a compelling essay. It's all about structure and how to use words wisely. You chose the words concisely and smartly. Your use of grammar was impeccable. I had a friend read my essay and she couldn't find any grammar mistake (she's very good in English grammar). ☺

I was especially impressed with your turn around. You're the most dedicated person in turning around your edits and you have good time management skills. In fact, I am the bad one. ☹.

This week, I have received admit from Cornell with a scholarship. I have also interviewed with Wisconsin and am awaiting their decision.

Thank you for your dedication, time and help. You helped me to believe that I can do it even with a below 600 GMAT score !!

Was this review helpful to you?

Yes



No

 [Comments](#) [0]

## Thankyou for outstanding services.

March 19 | 2014

 **gmatclub** VERIFIED REVIEW [ [What's this?](#) ]

★★★★★ By [mjahanzeb](#) joined: June 13, 2013 |  0 |  0 |

The reviewer was admit to the schools that they applied to: **Yes - school of my dreams**

This review is for: [Multiple School Package](#) Location: [Online](#) Taught by: [Poonam Tandon](#)

I was very concerned about my applications for business schools because I have low GMAT score and less than 3 years of work experience. I searched for best consultant and shortlisted 3 of them, and myEssay Review was one of them. Because of its reviews on gmat club, I decided to enroll for one school package first to check how she works. After discussion with Poonam on telephone, I thought that I made a right decision.

Poonam provided very valuable insights on structure of my essays. I loved the way she guided me on how to structure essays to develop a logical structure. This was a great advice and I followed this advice diligently in all the essays. Poonam also gave me suggestions to improve my resume that helped me a lot.

I was very impressed with the quality and professionalism of my Essay Review services. **At first I signed up for just one school, but I liked her services too much that I signed up for 3 more schools. Poonam is the single point of contact and this makes a huge difference. She will guide you at each and every step.**

Poonam guided me very effectively to choose the right and to the point contents to make my essays look interesting and compelling to the reader or admission committee. I had a lot of stuff to put in essays and Poonam really helped me to choose effective words and she edited my essays in such a beautiful way that we met the words limit requirement without excluding any important element of my profile.

Poonam has excellent command on punctuation and grammar. Punctuations are very important and ignored part of writing, but Poonam uses her skills of punctuation to make your essays look very professional. Poonam knows how to make proper flow of your story. Also, she knows where the best place for every sentence is. The turn-around time of the edits was perfect. All the critiques/edits were provided within 24 hours as promised on the website and as per our initial discussion.

**Poonam guided me to think and help me focus on the key contents required to showcase my profile to the admission committee. She highlights strong elements of my profile like leadership, management, and volunteer experience to overcome my low gmat and less than 3 years of work experience, making it compelling for the reviewer.**

**I already interviewed for 3 of the schools, and the best thing is that I received admit from Purdue University (my dream school) with a scholarship. I am very happy that I chose my Essay Review services. I will strongly recommend my Essay Review to everyone who is looking for outstanding services and especially to those who have some weaknesses in his/her profile. Poonam will expertly highlight your strength to conceal your weaknesses.**

## Free Resources

To benefit from the free resources offered by MER, visit Poonam's [blog](#). Some of her most useful articles are listed below:

1. [Mistakes You Should Avoid in Application Essays](#)
2. [MBA Resume- Mistakes You Should Avoid](#)
3. [Goals Essay](#)
4. [Accomplishment Essay](#)
5. [How to show leadership without having managerial responsibilities.](#)
6. [How Can IT Applicants Distinguish Them Selves in their Essays?](#)
7. [Proofreading Tips for Non-Natives](#)
8. [Business School Application Essays- 'Less is More'](#)

If you are interested in light reading, you may click [here](#) to read about her travel pieces and articles on various other topics published in [Valley India Times](#).

## Importance of 'Sample' Essays in this collection

When working with MBA applicants, Poonam receives one common request from almost all of them, "Could you provide me with a sample for this essay? Even though all applicants possess their own unique writing style that they use to showcase their unique traits and accomplishments and backgrounds, it is also true that a model can provide them pointers to brainstorm ideas for their own essays, making their essay writing process a little easier. Hence she picked 10 essays on ten different topics written by some of her most recent successful students for the top 20 schools.

## Sample # 1- Goals Essay – Booth

*How will an MBA from Chicago Booth - from the Evening MBA Program or Weekend MBA Program specifically - at this point in your life help you achieve both your short- and long-term goals? (500 word maximum)*

As a teenager, I was fascinated by personal computers which could screen movies, engage me for hours in visually-striking games and find me answers to all my questions. I picked computer science as my major for bachelor's degree and was drawn to the practical applications that access to real-time data can provide. My curiosity led me to pursue my Masters in computer science at the University of Illinois, where I started my career as a Research Programmer. Noticing my communication, leadership and organizational skills, the IT director soon tasked me with leading a multi-campus team to implement a student portal.

The transition from a non-profit to a startup software company gave me the opportunity to help architect the digital buying system which played a vital role in transforming the company to a market leader. My deep knowledge of the products earned me Product Manager's role which is more aligned with the core business and provides more opportunities for growth. My experience as a technologist has been invaluable in performing my current role as a product manager, helping me provide commercially viable and technically scalable solutions.

My short-term goal is to rise to a senior product role in the advertising technology industry, and in order to achieve that I need the marketing, operations and management skills that an MBA has to offer. Also, working together with future leaders at Booth will help me identify my unique style of leadership. The skills and the network I will acquire through an MBA, along with my industry experience, will help me achieve my long-term goal to be an entrepreneur in the digital marketing technology space.

## Sample # 2 - Leadership Essay - Booth

*What leadership characteristics do you feel make for the best leaders, and how do you strive to obtain them? And, on the flip side, what are you doing to avoid any potential leadership pitfalls that you observe in yourself or others? (750 word maximum)*

In my opinion, a good leader should be able to communicate and collaborate, and in the process, inspire people to work towards the goal. Working closely with others, listening to the issues they are facing, and collaborating with them to work towards a solution creates a bond. Later, when faced with problems they will reach out to their leaders for solutions to deal with the situation.

A few months ago, I was working as Product lead on a critical and time-sensitive project to upgrade one of our key external integrations. The project had a huge operational impact for our clients and had a tight deadline which required the team to put in several extra hours. I worked out a plan with the technical team and stayed back late nights with the technical team though I did not have a role to play. My action boosted the morale of the team who volunteered to work harder to meet the deadline. However, a few days before the deadline, we ran into a serious issue that jeopardized the project. The solution I proposed was deemed risky as it involved significant coordination and required an explicit approval from all of our clients. In 24 hours, I coordinated a mass effort with 10 different account teams to get the needed permissions from 100+ clients.

Finally, the project was delivered on time and in the process has saved the company hundreds of thousands of dollars every year. When my group's VP praised me for my effort, I told him that the real credit should go to the technical team who worked round the clock to make this project a success. Later that day, the technical lead informed me that my VP had appreciated the team's effort. The technical lead thanked me for my gesture and mentioned that in the past projects the team was not given the due credit.

Another quality of a great leader, I believe, is the ability to identify the right talent in his team, groom their skills and build efficient teams. Earlier this year, our company went through a merger. We welcomed five new team members to our team, and as the lead of the digital product, I was tasked with integrating the team. The members of the team had varying experience and technical backgrounds and were spread across three different time zones. I first identified the strengths of each of the new members and assessed how their qualities and abilities could complement the team. Through discussions, I found out their interests and skill set. I then created several two-person groups and assigned them to work on specific areas so each member would complement the other's skill-set, pick up new skills in the process and lead to cross training. Every few weeks, the members changed teams and the areas they worked on. Within a few months, this process created a well-knit and skillfully diverse team, which was efficient in handling various tasks. The integrated team was able to handle 30% more workload and improve their average response time for support by 50%. Its huge success motivated two other teams to implement a similar approach.

I think the largest pitfall that I have observed in a leader is being deceitful. Giving false promises and skewing the facts may work in the short term, but will eventually lead to losing people's trust. A leader should be able to communicate factually and set realistic goals to inspire others. If

I had not been truthful in communicating to the technical team that they will have to work long days and nights and set real expectations on the end results, the project would have been a failure.

Another major negative quality of a leader I have noticed is being selfish and putting one's self interest before that of the team/organization. I keenly notice the contributions of every specific team member and make sure everyone gets their due recognition. If I had taken the credit for the success of the project, the word would have gotten out which might have affected my chances of expecting the same level of cooperation for the next project. I strongly believe that having leadership in thought and vision is not enough to make one a leader. The small personal gestures enhance the perception of a true leader and can motivate others to work towards the ultimate goal. I am excited to further enhance my leadership qualities through the courses and workshops offered through the Lead Exploration and Development program offered by Booth.

## Sample # 3 - Team work /Challenge Essay - Kellogg

*Describe an instance where you encountered resistance in a professional team setting. How did you address the situation? (300-500 words)*

“Don’t try to re-invent the wheel.” said my colleague, Deepak after I showed our team, consisting of 6 IT professionals and myself, my solution for a framework for Johnson Controls (JCI) enterprise applications. The solution was a re-engineered process to build a framework for the foundation services for the JCI enterprise applications that is the heart of our client Johnson Control’s \$30 Billion multi-industry business. I had developed a similar solution to several other major clients before, so I was confident that my solution was efficient and versatile enough to handle the upcoming product upgrades. I, therefore, expected no resistance from the team. Deepak was wary about the changes to the framework as it is utilized by many client applications, whereas I knew that the existing framework will not support the future product upgrades and is bound to fail.

The next day, I approached my client manager and told him how confident I was about my solution and explained to him the benefits of adopting it. But he told that he and the team were not confident about my solution. He also told me that since I was dealing with a system that was an important part of JCI IT infrastructure, it required more than just a presentation to convince the team.

Disappointed, but confident, I decided to prove my results by gathering the supporting data and demonstrating the team with sample prototypes. Over the next one month, I worked on building application prototypes, developed a presentation to demonstrate the benefits of using my framework, and collected few case-studies to support my theory.

A month after the last meeting, I approached my client manager and proposed him my plan. I also showed him few case-studies and explained him how the new solution could help the client cut down 20% of maintenance cost that is spent on supporting the applications. Then I addressed some of his concerns related to security and code migration. Impressed with my analysis, the client manager agreed for the presentation.

A couple of days later, I presented the solution to the team with a complete analysis on the benefits of the solution. I also demonstrated the prototype that I developed using my solution. After multiple rounds of presentations and discussions, the team was convinced that my solution offered greater benefits, so they agreed to adopt it. We later presented this solution to the IT directors from other JCI divisions and showed them the benefits the solution offered to their enterprise IT applications. Six months later, this framework was established as a standard for enterprise IT applications across all JCI divisions.

Personally, overcoming this challenge is significant to me in terms of my confidence. Challenging the client team at a client location and winning my proposal made me more confident in speaking my mind about the project issues at work. Since then, I have never hesitated in expressing my opinion, and it has helped me provide many valuable contributions to the projects.



## Sample # 4- Setback Essay- Kellogg

*What's the greatest obstacle you've overcome (personally or professionally)? How has overcoming this obstacle prepared you to achieve success now and in the future? (350 word limit)*

In 2004, during my junior year, when I was at my parents' house for the mid-year vacation, I received the terrible news during a medical check-up: I was diagnosed with cancer. I felt devastated- my world had fallen apart. I was frightened with the possibility of never being able to have children.

During two weeks of vacation left, I underwent a delicate surgery and faced the dilemma "Should I request a leave of absence or not?" Requesting the leave of absence would be like admitting that cancer could beat me. Although I understood the seriousness of my medical condition and the need for continued treatment, I was not willing to pause my life as I had worked hard towards my academic goal for three years. I asked the doctors if I could continue my studies for the semester and start radiotherapy treatment during the year-end vacation. They told me that there were some risks attached, but that could be mitigated with monthly follow-ups until I started radiotherapy.

I decided to continue with my studies. It was an extremely demanding academic semester, where I had to conciliate my studies, the research assistant internship and the constant fear of bad medical news. The GPA for that semester was the lowest, yet the most 'celebrated'. After exams, I returned to my parents' house and underwent a month of radiotherapy. Finally, after five years of semiannual medical follow-ups, I was declared clinically cured.

This setback taught me to go against the stream and take calculated risks. In my last project, I suggested going beyond the initial scope. I knew if my plan failed, I would be blamed, but I still decided to take the risk and succeeded in getting the project got back on track.

I strongly believe that one of the most important business skills is to believe in your intuition and take the leap; the higher you climb the corporate ladder, the faster you have to make important business decisions. Learning to trust my intuition and taking calculated risks has made me a better prepared professional for present and future success.

## Sample # 5 - Background Essay- Wharton

*We'd like to get to know you beyond your professional life. You may tell us about the people or experiences that have shaped you, what inspires and motivates you, and anything interesting that we wouldn't otherwise learn from your application. (1000 word limit)*

Having grown up in a joint business family of 30 members – Grandparents, parents, 10 uncle and aunts, and 15 siblings, qualities of working for agreement among conflicting views, organization, belongingness, teamwork and sharing are engrained in me. I still recall the time when, as an 8<sup>th</sup> grader, I had to convince my grandfather, eldest uncle and my father separately and altogether to allow me to go on a 15 days' educational school trip to New Delhi and Shimla. Since my growing up years, my eldest cousin brother has been a role model for me – he was a top ranker at high school and in Chartered Accountancy Exams. Also, he has always been thoughtful of the needs of all individuals in a joint family. Today, he is thriving in his business that he set up solely on his own. Another person who influenced me significantly is my mother. She used to save almost every penny of her pin money for my future advanced studies. Thus, she taught me great lessons of saving for the future while living a simple life.

At the tender age of six, I learned a lesson that shaped my success in later life. I flunked in kindergarten grade and had to repeat KG for another year at a convent school in my hometown Bhagalpur. I was frustrated to see all of my classmates advancing to the next grade, and myself amidst a new group of students. I still remember the first few days in my second year at Kindergarten when I used to peep into next grade class to get a glimpse of my old friends. This event engrained values of hard work in me; since then, I was in the top ten percentile of students in my class and later excelled in my professional career.

While working in more than ten cities across India and USA in the last fifteen years, I have interacted with co-workers and customers across continents - in Canada, Mexico, Italy, UK, France, Germany, Singapore, Japan, and Australia. These experiences have taught me to work with people from different cultural groups effectively, appreciate their culture and build trusted friendships while working towards common goals. My cultural adaptability has enabled me to resolve conflicting situations more effectively.

One of my passions is traveling various places. In the last 20 years, I have travelled to over 100+ cities, towns and villages in USA, India, Singapore and China – from pilgrim spots to beach towns to mountainous terrains to fast-paced cities. I enjoyed varied cultures and experienced different way of life in these places. I am now looking forward to alternate travel experiences during my executive MBA at Wharton.

I am a true family person. I love to spend quality time with my wife and two sons aged 9 and 4. I enjoy playing with my sons in the park, helping them with their home-work, and sharing with them stories of my growing up years. I try to inculcate in them distilled ethics and values that are key to my culture. My wife has been always there for me in time of joy and sorrow. I love to share with her my daily life experiences. The sudden death of my father in late 2004 had suddenly matured me. On Nov 10, I, along with my wife and older son, had reached my hometown and the whole family was jubilant to be jointly celebrating the festival of Diwali for

the first time after my marriage. However, destiny had other plans for us. That evening my dad had severe cardiovascular attack; we rushed him to local hospital and then to heart center at Kolkata, where he breathed his last on Nov 13. Those four days of my life were extremely challenging as we desperately tried to save him. This experience of those last moments with my dad had taught me to live each day to the fullest and be of service to others

My continuous urge to serve others has led me to various opportunities at work and community. In December 2011, while talking to some of my colleagues I came to know that most of them were spending huge amounts with most expensive health plan option – ‘Premium Health Plan’. It was their general perception that costliest health plan option would provide best health risk coverage. To break this perception, I quickly compiled related information and conducted 5 sessions covering 150+ colleagues in the bay area – presenting health insurance expense scenarios and related risk coverage. A year later, I was amazed to see that many of these colleagues reported significant savings with better health coverage provided by economic Plan – a consolidated savings of \$250+ K for my them.

My passion to serve others motivated me to join a charitable institution called Tej Gyan Global Foundation, headquartered in Pune, India. Many of my beliefs were shattered when I came across Tej Gyan Global Foundation – My strongest belief “Nothing is free in life” was crushed and transformed into much stronger belief that “Best things in life are all free”. After my association with this organization, I realized that helping others is the best way to help yourself. I attend weekly session to deepen my understanding of core purpose of life, happiness, and world peace. Also, I have organized and conducted 15+ seminars in the last four years to spread the message of happiness. Currently, I am preparing and refining training content focused on development of school children to build confidence and self-esteem, and I plan to conduct these trainings in local elementary and middle schools in 2013.

As I have grown in my life, I have cultivated humility and openness as key values. I believe my personal values of determination, cultural understanding, and serving others, combined with my professional attributes of leadership, global experience, and team working skills will reinforce the values of Wharton community. At Wharton, I am not just looking for an executive MBA, but a lifetime bonding with fellow students, professors and alumni.

## Sample # 6- Contribution Essay – INSEAD

*What can you bring to the program and how will you contribute to the experience of your fellow students. (Limit - 300 words)*

My life's journey has taken me from kinder garden in France, elementary and middle school in communist Angola, high school in post-apartheid South Africa and university in a pre and post 9/11 United States. Over my nine years of professional experience, I have taught at the university and have helped to establish a financial institution in Angola and its sister institution in Portugal. I am now attempting to transform a 25 year-old core-banking software vendor with clients in seven countries.

What can I bring to IESE's Global EMBA program and how will I contribute to the experience of my fellow students? Well, when pondering on this question, I thought about my education, my work experience, my values, but it was not until I thought about my late father that I found my real answer. My father had kept a positive attitude towards life even though he was going through eight months of treatment for pancreatic cancer more than 12,000 kilometers away from home. He built a \$130 million business from scratch, yet what I always admired him the most for was his ability to make a positive impact on people's lives.

I believe I will not only bring to the IESE the internationally diverse experience I have had, the academic awards I have won, or the potentially interesting projects I have participated in, but also the lifelong influence of a man who understood his place in the world and throughout his life, strived to make a difference in the lives of those around him. The one true contribution that I believe I can make to my fellow students is the commitment to fully dedicate myself to an educational experience and continue my personal attempt to make the world a better place.

## Sample # 7 - Ethical Dilemma – Kelley

*Describe an ethical dilemma that you faced in your professional career. How it was resolved and what did you learn from the experience?*

While working with CVS Caremark, I completed healthcare certificates and understood the security constraints on sharing the private information of patients. In Apr 2012, Caremark acquired new business for one of the MCOs (Managed Care Organizations) participating in the Medicaid program of Texas, and the State mandated to do the certification testing on the actual patients' data before receiving Medicaid claims from real time environment of Caremark. Due to time constraints, MCO had very strong opinion of producing claim file from the test server to meet the state timelines. I was leading my team to build the business functionality and was responsible for delivering this Medicaid file from Caremark.

The discussion between Caremark and MCO about generating file from test server shocked me as any employee could download the patients' confidential information from test server and share this with third parties which is technically a PHI (Protected Health Information) violation of federal government. I was in two minds, "Should I go ahead with the normal process without making a big deal of PHI? Or "Should I do what is ethically right?" Under the pressure of delivering file on time, I aligned my team and generated the first two test files from the test server but did not feel right about it. I then weighed the integrity of the organization against the client's demand and eventually stopped certification testing in the middle of the project. Due to this decision, I got many escalations from the client and was on the verge of losing my contract with Caremark. In the meantime, I did brainstorming with Caremark technical experts for 2-3 days and came up with another approach for generating the test file without violating PHI. My team worked closely with these experts to setup a different real time like environment so that only specific contracted people were provided access to this environment and allowed to generate those files. Once it was finalized, I persuaded Caremark management to follow this process going forward. This process eventually laid the foundation for using this new environment to do such **testing** with the state.

This experience reinforced my belief to listen to my inner voice and do what is ethically right. I am proud of myself for my courage to displease my client by not meeting the deadline and did what was ethically right. Also, I have become more confident now to handle similar situations, so in similar situations in future, I will take the decision fast enough to meet the demand of the client.

## Sample # 8 - Best Mistake - Kellogg

### *The best mistake I ever made was...*

Born into a family of professors and engineers, I was expected to be academically proficient. With above average scores in high school and college entrance exams, I faced high expectations to get into a good college for undergraduate studies. In my state, the undergraduate admission process is centralized through the single window system in which all Class XII students are ranked based on composite index of the state entrance exam and university final exam scores. Based on this ranking, the students were given the opportunity to pick the school and major of their choice.

In class XII, I was ranked in the 90 percentile and had a decent shot at getting into the engineering program in a good school with scholarship. I had been tracking the availability of seats at all the engineering colleges and was thrilled to know that some seats were available at the best school in my city. I knew which school I wanted to pick, so I imagined the whole process to be quick. Unfortunately, I was in for a rude shock when the counselor told me that the last seat for engineering with a scholarship had just been taken in my dream school. I almost felt robbed and drew a blank as to what my Plan B should be.

Now I was faced with two options- either pick a seat in the school of my choice without a scholarship or settle for a new college with an unknown reputation but with a scholarship. I had never imagined myself to be in this situation as I was very particular about going to school with a scholarship. I thought the effort I put in to get good scores would be meaningless if I did not get a scholarship. Much to the disbelief of my parents, I finally made my decision and picked the new college with a full scholarship and Computer Science major.

As I signed the papers and walked out, I felt that I had just committed the worst mistake of my life. I had picked a school about which I knew nothing about only for the sake of scholarship.

Contrary to my expectations, my undergraduate days at the college I had unexpectedly picked were some of the best of my life. Through the years, I was the secretary of the Computer Science Association, the president of the school's ACM Students Chapter and the coordinator for the Placement Services Council. The various roles and opportunities that the school provided me with in terms of organizational, leadership and communication skills have molded me into a well- rounded individual. It was the perfect foundation for me to start my career in the lucrative information technology industry. I benefited from the practical and interactive teachings on and off the classroom, and in the process had made great friends for life. I consider my decision about choosing my undergraduate school the best mistake of my life because it has played vital role in shaping my career.

## Sample # 9 - Culture Essay – Emory

*Your most memorable cross-cultural experience... ....(250 words)*

I was hired by XXX (name of the company) to coordinate the local risk management process. This was my first work experience in a multinational firm, and the most demanding part of my job was to manage the cultural differences.

In April 2012, when my reporting contact in Germany, Mr. Anthony, came to visit our local operation, I had the opportunity to deepen my contact with the German culture. While we were working on action plans, I started writing minutes of the meeting to be sent by email after the meeting. Mr. Anthony, however, seemed to take offence and asked: “Why are you writing all this? Isn’t my word enough?”

This started a discussion about the work ethics differences in Brazil and Germany. He told me that Germans have a strong sense of responsibility, and whenever they commit to something, they keep their word. In the meetings, they just jot down their notes about ‘things to do’, so they do not require formal ‘minutes’ of meeting.

His reaction shocked me because emailing minutes of meeting with supervisors copied has been natural to me. We Brazilians usually avoid direct conflict, and sometimes, even if we don’t agree with something, we say “I’ll do that”, meaning we will actually never do that. Unless there is a written commitment and a supervisor on the loop, verbal agreements do not mean much.

This incident is memorable to me because it has taught me to value my word more and think twice before committing to something.

## Sample # 10 - Strengths/Characteristics Essay – UNC

*What are the 2 or 3 strengths or characteristics that have driven your career success thus far? What are the other strengths that you would like to leverage in the future? (500 words maximum)*

There is a symbiotic relationship between my work and my personal traits – just as much as my strengths have helped me excel at work, my work experiences have been conducive to my self – discovery.

Handling a family business is a challenging work. My family's business is heavily dependent on coal and after decades of successful operations, it is gradually getting tough to carry on coal mining and its ancillary business due to plummeting natural resources, market trends and new environmental regulations. Seeing my father always worrying about business sustainability, I always wanted to do something to help him. Two years back, I came up with the idea of diversifying our business into hospitality industry, and recently, I partnered with my father to setup a guest house in which I have 25% stake. I am confident that the business will flourish in our hometown - the next destination of business in the state. My father thinks highly of my vision and always appreciates this decision.

My vision to become a global leader has infused in me the passion to take up challenging work in cross-cultural environments. Despite grieving from the untimely demise of my mother, I decided to join TCS at Chennai in a promising but laborious project. Even though I had the option to join TCS in my hometown, I went to Chennai because I wanted to get familiar with new work culture. Soon I got opportunity to work in the USA to handle complex projects. My passion to accept challenges in diverse cultures has been instrumental in my career and has helped me define my goals.

Furthermore, I am great at developing a trustworthy and efficient working culture with the customers and influence them with efficient communication .To tap my talents, my TCS Business Relationship Manager entrusted me with the responsibility to setup a new process at Client sites. I proved myself by bringing business of \$1M for TCS and helped in client retention and client extension. I am the favorite choice of the business owner who chooses me to represent the company in meetings, make negotiations and deal with the clients. I successfully handled a deal with a client which resulted in 15% profit in the business.

There are some traits that I would like to leverage more in the future. I have an intrinsic skill for networking and have connections starting from film industry to corporates and local government body. I have been given the responsibility to organize events at TCS and at Project Management Institute West Bengal Chapter. However, I feel that these skills have not been satisfactorily put to a test. I would like to leverage my networking skills and organizing capabilities to make corporate connections, connect with industry leaders and NGOs in the interest of UNC Kenan Flagler and bring in prominent personalities for guest lectures. Kenan Flagler will give me opportunity to enrich these skills, build a bigger network and a launch pad to succeed in my business and NGO venture in future.