

ESSAY 1 - Describe an experience that has fundamentally changed the way you see the world. How did this transform you? (400-500 word maximum)

When I was 15, my family of four moved from India to the suburbs of Washington DC. Short on money, we spent our first year here living in my uncle's basement. A successful tax attorney in India, my father's professional credentials meant nothing in the U.S. He ended up working temp jobs to make ends meet. My mother also embarked upon a 'career' in retail. I sensed my parents' stress about paying college tuition for their two sons, and I wanted to help.

I went from feeling secure in the world to intimately understanding the unpredictability of life. All of a sudden I felt conflicted about my role in my family, and somewhat guilty about focusing solely on my studies. Instead of viewing my father as our sole provider, I now saw each of us being equally responsible for our overall welfare. The role I had in my family, as well as the role I had in the world, changed overnight. I desperately wanted to contribute to the family income. I needed to find a job.

I approached my high school career counselor about finding a job, but came up empty. Next, I discussed my situation with Mrs. Kimber, my high school English teacher. Her husband happened to be the IT director at a financial research startup in DC, and she graciously put me in touch with him. He hired me soon thereafter. Because of my savings from this job, within nine months, my family was able to move into a place of our own. I had never felt as good as I did when I saw the look of pride on my parents' faces.

I had started at this company as a low-level data entry intern, but I asked my supervisors for more challenging assignments. They gave me the opportunity to play with some new reporting software they had recently acquired, but had not yet implemented. I was grateful for the opportunity. I created the company's first management reporting system, still in use today after 13 years. Being promoted made me feel that I was in control of my own career and I learned that I had the power to change my situation.

In retrospect, watching my father go from a successful tax attorney to a struggling accountant made me especially vigilant about updating my own skills. If he had been more open and willing to change, he could have obtained his credentials in the States. Instead he dwelled on the past, made excuses, and avoided updating his skills because he felt he was too old. In an effort to learn from his experience, I vowed to constantly improve myself and be open to change. I decided to determine my own destiny and to improve my situation, no matter what the challenge.

ESSAY 2 - What is your most significant professional accomplishment? (200-300 word maximum)

Six months ago, I was hired by the Department of Justice to lead a team of fourteen developers. This team was delivering new software applications every four weeks, yet consistently missing deadlines. The client was frustrated – and questioning the productivity of the team.

Within my first few months, I noticed it was difficult to track how the team was spending its time. We needed cohesive project tracking and communication tactics. The team was experiencing multiple external bottlenecks that impeded our ability to close out projects – and our client was not aware of these.

I knew of a tool (TFS) that allows teams to coordinate projects online. When I introduced TFS to my team, it was seen as yet another administrative initiative that would siphon time away from their actual work. Furthermore, adopting TFS would force the team out of its comfort zone by implementing a new process, something they resisted.

I was motivated to adopt the Agile software delivery process, which would allow the team to react nimbly to changing client needs. Still very green in 'Agile,' I read up on it and led the team in collaborative discussions.

By the end of three months, we had implemented TFS and Agile. Our client can now see how we are spending our time, and is able to defer lower priority requests. Today, everyone can see what each other is doing, thus allowing us to strategically manage our time. We are now meeting deadlines, feeling successful and have regained the client's confidence.

It is my comfort zone to first master a subject before teaching it. I'm proud of having grown beyond this, because it was very rewarding to improve this team's performance. Along with improved performance came an improvement in the team spirit, work environment and subsequent job satisfaction.

What is your desired post-MBA role and at what company or organization? In your response, please specifically address sub-questions a., b., and c. (500-600 words)

- a. How is your background compelling to this company?**
- b. What is something you would do better for this company than any other employee?**
- c. Why is an MBA necessary and how will Haas specifically help you succeed at this company?**

Post-MBA, I'd like to work for Google as a Product Manager on their Search team. Google's many search products rely on machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI). Looking at the job description of my desired position, Google would like to use AI to increase the amount of time users spend watching YouTube videos.

I am uniquely qualified for this position because, as a SharePoint Expert, I have a good grasp of search technology. SharePoint has, at its core, a powerful search engine. I have extensive experience with search-based solutions, and have helped many organizations index their information. In 2013, I gave a presentation on how to "Manage Unstructured Content Using Search-Powered Solutions." Although I understand the technical underpinnings of the SharePoint search architecture, I also have good instincts on how users search, and what a good user experience looks like.

I'm also experienced with product development. At my startup, I led the development of a product that enhanced the capabilities of Microsoft SharePoint (almondlabs.com/alisa). When I launched my startup Almond Labs, I took a vague idea and broke it down into actionable steps so that my team could create a marketable product around it. We sought to create a solution that integrated seamlessly within the framework of Microsoft SharePoint as a means to maximize user adoption.

WHY HAAS?

During the first year of Almond Labs, my partners and I learned some tough lessons. A year after launching the company, we had succeeded in selling our consulting services to keep our doors open, but still hadn't sold any software licenses.

I've since learned that there's a world of difference between coming up with a product, and running a successful business. Having completed three management courses at the Harvard Extension School, I now want to get my MBA so I can learn how to build a business around commercially viable AI innovations.

Attending Berkeley will afford me the opportunity to learn about both business and AI. As I see it, I will need to intern for an AI company such as Google, as well as obtain formal education in this field.

At Berkeley, I intend to take elective courses such as 'Statistical Learning Theory (CS281)' and 'Artificial Intelligence Programming Techniques (CS294).' Courses such as 'Innovation Strategies for Emerging Technologies (MBA290E)' will help me learn how to bring cutting edge AI innovations to market. I'm attracted to the Berkeley Innovative Leader Development (BILD) approach, emphasizing problem solving, leadership development and experiential learning skills, all of which will be critical to my success as an AI startup entrepreneur.

Haas and its location offer a powerful combination of resources. Located two blocks from the university is the Machine Intelligence Research Institute (MIRI). I will take advantage of the Haas Technology Club and the Lester Center for Entrepreneurship. Being located in the tech hotbed will allow me to network with Silicon Valley entrepreneurs through initiatives such as Y Combinator, Berkeley Startup Weekend, The Startup Conference and the Founder Institute.

In sum, Haas will help me become a part of the emerging conversation on AI. Taking advantage of these resources at Haas will position me to obtain my desired role with Google as a Software Engineer, focusing on Artificial Intelligence. Given my interest in AI, entrepreneurship, and innovation, Haas will be at the center of my living laboratory.