

**50 MBA Tips**  
**To Get Into The Best**  
**International B-schools**



**MBA Crystal Ball<sup>®</sup>**

# Clear Your Mind



## Tip 1. Take a stock of your career progression

What are the interesting, exciting, frustrating parts of your job? What have you done so far that you are proud of?

## Tip 2. Create a career plan

Think of what you want to do in 5-10 years. Focus on an industry / role / geography. Have a sense of general direction for your career. More on this later.

## Tip 3. Look for alternatives to get there

Explore options within your current company. Talk to your boss, your HR dept, your colleagues to see if you find opportunities to reach your career goals.

## Tip 4. Bring The MBA into the picture

Rather than waiting for the right opportunity to come knocking on your door, evaluate whether an additional degree will help you more. Or does that create a bigger risk?

## Tip 5. Create a backup plan

Remember that your plans may not work as expected. If you decide to take up the MBA route, think about the worst that can happen & how you will handle that scenario.

## MBA Crystal Ball Links

- [Free Career Counseling](#)
- [Career MAP \(Mock Appraisal Process\)](#)
- [Beyond The MBA Hype \(Book\)](#)

# Crack The GMAT



## Tip 6. Become familiar with the test format

The test is more predictable than you think. Well, at least when it comes to question types, and in fact, many of the answer options as well.

## Tip 7. Start with the basic GMAT books

The [Official Guide](#) is the bare minimum that you will need. Add the other books on a need basis and based on the specific help you need.

## Tip 8. Take a few free GMAT practice tests

Apart from the smaller practice sessions to clear the concepts, try out a few free GMAT tests too. It'll help you build up the stamina to deal with the real test.

## Tip 9. Take offline / online assistance if needed

A little structure & discipline can go a long way in getting a strong GMAT score. Rather than re-inventing the wheel, see if taking professional help can help speed up things.

## Tip 10. Re-take the test if it can make a big difference

Multiple attempts are allowed & highly recommended if your first score is significantly lower than you expected.

## MBA Crystal Ball Links

- [Free GMAT Practice Test](#)
- [Free GMAT Preparation Articles](#)
- [Best GMAT Books](#)

# Application Strategy



## Tip 11. Understand how application timelines work

MBA application processes can take more than a year. Start preparing early & have an idea of the various milestones involved – from GMAT prep to essays to interviews.

## Tip 12. Get an MBA profile evaluation done

Profile evaluations are like a general health check-up. They'll highlight your strengths & weaknesses. The approach & overall value differs for free & paid versions.

## Tip 13. Create a single, solid, basic 'storyline'

Many think they can have different career aspirations for different schools, just to fit into the general brand perception for that MBA program. Bad idea!

## Tip 14. Identify gaps in your storyline

No story is perfect. There are bound to be logical, credibility, consistency and practicality related questions. Fix as many as you can *before* writing essays.

## Tip 15. Spread out your applications

Most B-schools have multiple admissions rounds. Learn about the implications of applying in [Round 1 vs Round 2](#).

## MBA Crystal Ball Links

- [Free MBA Profile Evaluation](#)
- [MBA MAP \(Mock Application Process\)](#)

# B-School Research



## Tip 16. Start with the popular MBA rankings

The problem is, there are too many of them and the ranking methodology varies. Financial Times, BusinessWeek have been doing MBA Rankings for a long time.

## Tip 17. Create your own list

Your expectations from the MBA are different from everyone else. List down the criteria that's important for you. Knock off b-schools that don't satisfy them.

## Tip 18. Dig deeper

With a smaller set of schools on your radar, you can dive in to find out more about each school. Check the official websites for the basic data – class profile, placement statistics

## Tip 19. Attend B-school events

Many schools try to reach out to the applicant community through MBA Fairs, online chats & other events. Attend those & ask questions.

## Tip 20. Read interviews with admissions officers

Many admissions officers provide useful information about their MBA programs in interviews on popular websites.

## MBA Crystal Ball Links

- [Most popular B-schools](#)
- [Admission Officer Interviews](#)

# Connect With Students



## Tip 21. Interact online with b-school students / alumni

Current students & alumni are active on various MBA & B-school forums. Join these forums and start interacting with them.

## Tip 22. Create a list of questions for each b-school

A lot of data is already available on the official b-school websites. Create a list of points that are not addressed there.

## Tip 23. Identify the right forum & discussion thread

GMAT Club, Beat The GMAT, Pagalguy are the big ones. Plus there are a whole lot of smaller forums (like [MBA Crystal Ball](#)) as well. Target a few.

## Tip 24. Read the earlier responses before posting

Resist the urge to ask questions that the b-school representative has already addressed. It shows that you haven't done your homework before posting.

## Tip 25. Follow student blogs

Apart from the Q&A on forums, many students share their admission stories on their blogs or on other MBA websites. These can provide good perspectives on their challenges and strategies.

## MBA Crystal Ball Links

- [MBA & GMAT Forum](#)
- [MBA Admission Stories – Student blogs](#)
- [Ask B-school students / alumni](#)

# Gain Industry Insights



## Tip 26. Start planning for your post-MBA career

Your essays will delve into your aspirations and motivations for pursuing an MBA. Adcoms want to know what career you are aiming for. And they want to know *now*.

## Tip 27. Target the right industry

[Management consulting](#) and [Investment banking](#) are the most popular post-MBA industries. But you may have other preferences – Technology, Retail, Media etc

## Tip 28. Target the right role

Decide whether you want to be in an operational, financial, strategic, managerial role. More importantly, why?

## Tip 29. Become familiar with jobs in these domains

Like you did with your b-school research, it's important to learn more about your target job and company. Where do they recruit? What do they look for?

## Tip 30. Contact real people to know more

Reading up general information is fine. A better way to gain insights is to locate folks working in your target industry & talk.

## MBA Crystal Ball Links

- [Free Career Counselling](#)
- [MBA Jobs & Careers Forum](#)
- [Consulting Jobs Training](#)

# Jazz up your Essays



## Tip 31. Understand why essays are so crucial

This is the *single most important* piece that can make or break your chances. Even more so for competitive applicant pools (like tech / engineer / male).

## Tip 32. Know what essays are supposed to do

You get 3-4 essays on an average to narrate your story, highlight your potential and effectively make the Adcoms go – ‘Wow!’

## Tip 33. And what they are NOT supposed to do

Though language is important, this is *not* a test of your literary prowess & your impressive vocabulary. Focus on content.

## Tip 34. Keep it real & honest

Don't think you can fool admission officers with cooked up stories and aspirations. Think about facts, figures & general evidence that you can share when asked.

## Tip 35. Get an external perspective to fix flaws

An essay is a *business sales pitch*. Ask a knowledgeable & trustworthy friend, relative, colleague or consultant to do a brutal review and uncover your blind spots.

## MBA Crystal Ball Links

- [Free MBA essay writing tips](#)
- [Professional essay editing](#)
- [Success stories](#)



# Rocking Recos / Resume



## Tip 36. Don't submit general recommendations

MBA recos aren't the same as the general ones you might be familiar with at work. They need to be customized for each school & be aligned with your essays.

## Tip 37. Choose the right recommenders

Folks with impressive designations aren't always the best choice for recos. So don't blindly head to the office of your CEO or CFO to get a superficial sounding reco.

## Tip 38. Educate the recommender

Your recommenders may not be fully aware of how an MBA reco works. Help them understand the nuances. Share your main storyline & aspirations with them.

## Tip 39. Don't submit your job resume

MBA resumes differ from job CVs. Find out the difference between the two and make the appropriate changes before you submit it.

## Tip 40. Aim for a 1-page well-presented resume

Whether you have spent 3 years or 10 in your company, you can still fit it all in a single page. You will need to prioritize & present it to maximize the impact.

## MBA Crystal Ball Links

- [General resume writing tips](#)
- [Tips for Recommendations](#)

# Polish your Interviews



## Tip 41. Be aware of the most likely questions

Unless the admissions officer is feeling adventurous or creative, most of the questions will revolve around your profile, aspirations and career.

## Tip 42. Know your resume like the back of your hand

For most b-schools, what you have already done is a better predictor of what you can do in your post-MBA career. That's the real proof of your capabilities.

## Tip 43. Be ready to defend your claims

In the essays, you got away with a monologue of all that you've achieved. In the interview, you could get counter-queries on your essay & resume content.

## Tip 44. Focus on your voice, diction, accent & speed

You will be talking to a complete stranger who knows nothing about you apart from the basic application. Don't let poor communication skills spoil the party.

## Tip 45. Practice, & then practice some more

All the brilliant answers in your head mean nothing if they cannot be articulated in 3-4 minutes per topic. Don't assume you'll get it right the first time .

## MBA Crystal Ball Links

- [MBA Interview tips](#)
- [Situational Interviews](#)
- [Interview experiences of applicants](#)

# Admission Consultants



## Tip 46. There are pros to hiring consultants

In any super-competitive race (MBA admissions are no different), the right coaching can be the key difference between a *good* attempt and a *successful* one.

## Tip 47. And yup, there are cons as well

Credibility, track record, capability, pricing, working styles can vary quite a bit across consulting teams. Searching for the right consultant can be a mini-project in itself.

## Tip 48. Don't 'outsource' your work to consultants

Don't ask others to write your essays for you. It's unethical. Use consultants to validate your story and identify gaps & areas of improvement.

## Tip 49. Prepare for a longer process, not shorter

Working with a consulting team will increase the total time. So if you want to hire a consultant, start early and include the right buffers to avoid last minute chaos.

## Tip 50. Stick to your story & retain your voice

B-schools want to know YOU better. If you decide to get some support, ensure that your application projects the *real* you.

## MBA Crystal Ball Links

- [Admissions consulting articles](#)
- [MBA Consultant Profiles \(MCB\)](#)
- [MBA Consulting reviews \(MCB\)](#)

# Free MBA Resources



## GMAT

- [GMAT Quantitative lessons](#)
- [GMAT Verbal lessons](#)
- [GMAT Helpdesk for your queries](#)
- [GMAT success stories](#)
- [Average GMAT scores admission chances](#)

## Interact with B-school Reps

[ISB](#) [MIT Sloan](#) [INSEAD](#) [Tepper](#) [Mays](#)  
[W.P. Carey](#) [NUS Singapore](#) [IMD](#) [NYU](#)  
[Stern](#) [IIMB](#) [EPGP](#) [Kelley](#) [IIMC](#) [PGPex](#)  
[IE Spain](#) [Manchester](#) | [More B-schools](#)

## MBA Financing

- [Non co-signer students loans](#)
- [MBA scholarships from organizations](#)
- [GMAT Scholarships from B-schools](#)
- [Graduate assistantships](#)

## Career

- [Mid-life career crisis](#)
- [Free career counselling](#)
- [Non-MBA Jobs & Careers](#)
- [Management consulting profile evaluation](#)
- [Consulting case interview preparation](#)

## Admission Officers Q&A

[ISB Hyderabad](#) | [MIT Sloan](#) | [Darden](#)  
[NUS Singapore](#) | [Georgetown](#) | [Cambridge](#)  
[Ivey Canada](#)

## General

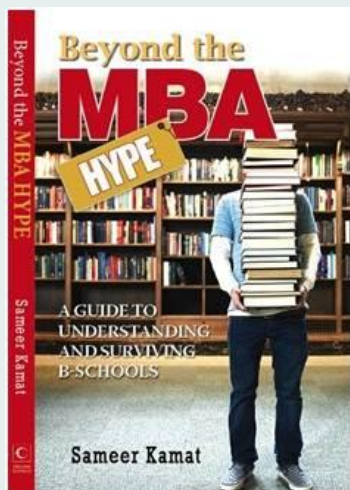
- [MBA Humour](#) | [Achamba Super MBA](#)
- [MS, MFE, MPhil, PhD courses](#)
- [Free MBA Networking](#)

# How we can help you



**MBA Crystal Ball<sup>®</sup>**

**Introspection**



**Strategy**



**Counseling**



**Execution**

**MBA Essays**

**Interview Prep**

**Consulting Jobs**

Click on each of the above to see further details

Hope to see you soon on this → [\*\*Special Page\*\*](#)