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1. We believe one of the keys to effective leadership is the ability to transform ideas into action. Describe a time within the last three years in which you exercised such leadership. What did you learn about your leadership strengths and development needs? (500-word maximum)

“This is not going to be a smooth ride” was the thought on my mind when I was assigned the task of leading the attrition reduction initiative at IBM BTO, Bangalore. With 20 % of new recruits leaving within three months of joining, attrition was becoming a major pain area and was impacting business and overhead costs. I envisioned achieving 50% reduction in attrition over a span of eleven months.

I created a cross functional team comprising of Human Resources, Training and Recruitment leads. Along with the team members, I put in place a structured approach for the project. This approach included identification of owners for different activities, data analysis, detailed process study and implementation of recommendations. Subsequently critical factors impacting attrition were identified and solutions for these factors were devised.

Having identified hiring of right profiles – in terms of age, education and work experience – as a critical parameter impacting attrition, I suggested that a new hiring model be created based on analysis of historical demographic data. The proposed outcome was a set of profiles which would lead to lower probability of attrition among new hires. The recruitment head, however, was reluctant to accept the benefit of a new model over the existing one. Similar situations were faced for recommendations corresponding to other critical factors. Improper assessment of candidates’ competencies was found to be a major contributor leading to job dissatisfaction and hence attrition. In order to rectify this, I proposed modification of assessment methodology used to evaluate skills of new hires on various parameters such as communication and logical reasoning. Considering the amount of effort involved in implementation, validity of this idea was required to be established to get consent from senior management.

In order to convince the leadership team, I always substantiated the recommendations with analysis and statistical proofs. I used six-sigma tools to provide a strong basis for implementation of proposed solutions. In addition, I used the approach of conducting pilot implementation to highlight potential benefits of recommendations. Through these steps, I was able to influence the leadership team to permeate the implementation across the organization.

In this project I used six-sigma tools for finding root causes and solutions which strengthened my analytical reasoning abilities. Moreover, handling of numerous situations which required convincing a cross functional team enhanced my skills in persuasiveness and in leading a team towards a common goal. As the project lead I was required to get tasks done from different team members, which helped me develop strong people management skills. This project also emphasized certain areas of improvement for me. While working with team members from multiple entities, I observed that some people are impeccable in their deliverables and others require constant supervision and need to be dealt with apposite professional aggression. In some situations I gave way to camaraderie where professionally aggressive approach was required. I need to develop this skill as I move on to take higher responsibilities.

2. What are your career goals? How will a Ross MBA help you achieve your goals? How might the action-based learning aspects of the Ross curriculum make a difference? (500-word maximum)

I have envisioned my goal to be a business leader and drive people towards a business objective. I wish to pursue this goal by becoming a partner with a firm in consulting domain.

After graduating as a Mechanical engineer from IIT Delhi, I started my professional life with Eicher, one of India's leading automobile firms, where I lead short term projects in Manufacturing, Product Design, Marketing and Vendor Development. My subsequent experience at Asian Paints Limited, among top 10 decorative coatings companies in the world, involved working at grass root level in a green-field project. As Production and Planning executive for the project, I lead a team of 72 people to achieve design capacity. These exposures strengthened my interpersonal and leadership skills. Also, while dealing with a variety of people related issues, I realized the importance of developing further on my people management skills.

In my current profile as Transformation manager at IBM BTO, my responsibilities include providing support for business transition, synthesizing solutions for clients and driving projects with global teams. Through this experience, I improved my ability to work with cross functional teams, resolve problems in different areas and deal with customer requirements. While resolving issues with IBM clients, I also felt the need to learn more about business strategy to have a better alignment of business goals to specific problems.

I believe that at this point in my life, a management education will complement my work experience and provide additional skills required to pursue my career goals. Ross MBA will equip me with knowledge on business strategy with focused courses in the curriculum. With an emphasis on action based learning, Ross MBA would provide me an interactive real-time environment. This is the type of environment in which I learn and work best. Here I will get an opportunity to work on practical business issues through student clubs like Business Organization and Development (BOND) and through Multidisciplinary Action Projects (MAP) program. These real life problems would prepare me for my future role and also hone up my ability to align organization objectives to specific problems, which I believe is imperative in a consulting role.

Working in a team environment with a dynamic community at Ross will enhance my people management skills. And a focus on nurturing community spirit as an integral part of Ross culture would help me build strong networking skills which are critical in a consulting profile and dynamic business environment. In addition, participation in student organizations like Consulting Club at Ross would enable me to explore opportunities in consulting domain.

After MBA I want to join a business consulting firm as a strategy consultant. This would act as a platform for getting involved in business problems of a diverse set of companies. In this profile, I would be able to apply learning from my work experience and business education to resolve challenging issues. By growing further in this role, I look forward to become a Consulting partner and take on higher responsibilities.

3. Describe the initiatives you have taken over the past two years to develop professionally and personally. What motivated you to take those initiatives? (500-word maximum)

Adding value to myself by exploring and learning new things is one my passions. This is something which makes me dynamic and is critical for enhancement of my personal and professional skills.

My current role as Transformation Manager at IBM BTO includes supporting business transformations, devising solutions for clients and driving six sigma projects. While working with clients and IBM teams on various improvement areas, I am required to perform an in-depth analysis in order to build a strong business case. All these activities involve a significant amount of data analysis and decision making which motivated me to strengthen my analytical skills further. At this stage I decided to undergo Black Belt training in Six-Sigma, a methodology which provides a structure and a set of statistical tools for problem resolution.

I got myself enrolled for an online Black Belt training program at IBM. Thorough training sessions in this program substantially increased my knowledge in Six- Sigma. After successful completion of the training with a test score of 95 %, I started applying this methodology with a rigor. I used six sigma tools in various projects to convince senior management as well as clients regarding various business decisions. In a critical business project to improve productivity, I used six sigma tools in order to identify and prioritize major contributors to low productivity. I have also been able to extract direct business impact of this methodology because it provides a strong basis for negotiation with clients in various stages of business transition and delivery.

I believe that understanding of people holds prime importance in life and is imperative for developing myself as a good human being. As there is a wide difference between ideologies of people, I need to understand things which may be uncomfortable for others in order to build good relations. Since face value can not give a complete understanding in all circumstances, I wanted to learn some tools for assessment of behavioral traits. I particularly felt this requirement when I moved to different places during my work experience and I wanted to quickly adjust to new culture and environment. At that stage, I decided to learn Body Language and Graphology, a tool for assessing personality traits through handwriting analysis. I started reading books and analyzing handwriting samples while taking guidance from a Graphology expert. Slowly this activity became a part and parcel of my life. As about two third of communication happens by body gestures, interpretation of body language provides a direct measure of individual thoughts. In addition, through handwriting analysis I have been able to develop a better understanding of my neighbors, friends and other people I interact with. Usage of these tools helped me in

interpreting and avoiding the causes which may hurt other people and hence improved my personal relations.

Is there anything else you think the Admissions Committee should know about you to evaluate your candidacy? (500-word maximum)

During my graduation at IIT, I was selected to go for an International Student Exchange program with University of Massachusetts, Amherst in Fall 2001. Spending four months with a diverse community and in a different education system was a unique learning experience. I quickly adjusted in this new education system where my hard work earned me a place in Dean's List for Fall 2001 semester, on basis of outstanding academic performance.

My stay in an international dormitory and interaction with people from across the globe added a new dimension to my thinking and persona. Courses at UMass involved working in teams with members from different countries and this enhanced my abilities as a team player. In addition, my participation in various extracurricular activities and my involvement in a course on "Inter-Cultural Living" enabled me to mingle with different people and cultures. An entire gamut of events on the campus made me feel like being a part of a global community and gave me a global exposure.

I believe that making contribution to community development is essential and is something that keeps me humane. When I was in XI standard, I got an opportunity of teaching underprivileged children as part of a small campaign organized in my school. I got a feeling of personal satisfaction after teaching in this two day campaign. This motivated me to contribute my bit for benefit of society by devoting some time for social cause. Carrying forward on this idea at IIT Delhi, I was involved in teaching children at the "Central School" located in the campus. I also took part in a campaign for creating education awareness in villages. As part of this campaign, I stayed for one week in a nearby village with a team of 10 volunteers and conducted various sessions to create interest in education among villagers.

During my IIT life, I also utilized my hobby of poetry composition to contribute for social cause. I wrote some poems for a Non Government Organization (NGO) magazine – "Yuva Samvad" to convey a message on issues such as agricultural development. My attachment with this organization inspired me to contribute more and pursuing this desire I donated my first salary

amount, after graduation, to an orphanage run by an NGO. I felt that giving returns from my first efforts in professional life was one of the ways to give something back to society.

During the course of my learning about MBA programs, I have also interacted with a current student, Manish Dabas, at Ross. I was enthused to know about Ross education and culture. His description of the diverse community and a mire of activities on the campus have inspired me to become a part of this vibrant culture. Having heard about the practical learning environment that he is experiencing, I look forward to join Ross school of business.

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**Participation in different activities and exploring new areas has always been my passion. During my school life, I developed this passion by taking part in extra curricular activities such as debating, dramatics, painting and poetry. My interaction with a diverse set of people inspired me and I furthered this passion, as president of the school student body, by starting a system of activity clubs in my school. Having discovered art and poetry as an interesting medium of expression, I became an active participant of “Fine Arts” and “Hindi Council “clubs at IIT Delhi.**

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Having been born and brought up in a middle class joint family, I have gained some of my most obvious personality traits from family values and culture. One trait that my family encouraged me to learn is to make best use of given situation and resources. Reaching my current position, given resource constraints, while getting the best possible of everything would have been difficult

without this attitude. This virtue has significantly influenced my way of working, both in personal and professional life and has enabled me improve things, even in situations with constraints.

Participation in different activities and exploring new areas has always been my passion. During my school life, I developed this passion by taking part in extra curricular activities including debating, dramatics, painting and poetry. My interaction with a diverse set of people inspired me and I furthered this passion, as president of the school student body, by starting a system of activity clubs in my school. Having discovered art and poetry as an interesting medium of expression, I became an active participant of “Fine Arts” and “Hindi Council “clubs at IIT Delhi during my graduation. These activities have motivated me to learn more about society and enhanced my interpersonal skills.

IIT experience also provided me an opportunity to go for a Foreign Exchange program with UMass, Amherst in Fall 2001. Spending four months with a diverse community, in a different education system was a unique learning experience. My stay in an international dormitory and interaction with people from across the globe added a new dimension to my thinking and persona. My involvement in a case study with team members from four countries and in off campus trekking trips enhanced my abilities as a team member. I built a better understanding of different cultures through this experience and was also excited to see my name in the Dean’s list. My work experience as Transformation manager at IBM has helped me develop further on these experiences by exposure to global teams and direct client interface. This has helped me develop good people management skills and added value to my role as team leader in various projects.

How to stand in case of a failure, make positive learning out of it and use it as an example setting exercise is a lesson my work experience has taught. Being a part of a green field project at Asian Paints involved a few small failures. While leading a team of 72 people, as production and planning executive for the project, I tried to use learning out of these failures for developing robust systems and present an example for others to follow. This challenging exercise helped me understand that learning from failures is imperative for a leader to keep team spirit high.

I believe that by sharing these experiences with others I would be able to add value to the Ross community, not only during the education experience but also for the rest of my life.

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### Essay 3

I was always fascinated to see others playing musical instruments. A group of friends, with passion in music, fuelled this desire. I felt that learning a musical instrument would have a significant impact on my personal life by enhancing patience and concentration. This is also one of the finest ways to relax and keep a good work life balance. Inspired by such thoughts, I started to learn playing synthesizer. With guidance from music classes and friends, I started to catch up on the basics of chords and soon I started spending time on this activity on a routine basis. I am excited about this new dimension in my life. Elated about the feeling of satisfaction that music brings along, I am working on enhancing this learning further.

During three and a half years of my work experience, I have stayed in different parts of India. Staying in culturally diverse parts of the country made me realize the need to explore further the immense diversity of people and cultures. I decided to do this by visiting different places, interacting with people and being a part of festivities and local culture. Interaction with people, both in office and in my neighborhood helped me appreciate the cultural uniqueness. Through participation in festivities like “Garba”, one of the state dance festivals, I started becoming a part of these cultures. These experiences helped me build further on my ability to mingle with different communities and develop myself further on the social front.

On a personal front, I believe that making contribution to community development is essential and is something that keeps me humane. When I was in XI standard, I got an opportunity of teaching underprivileged children as part of a small campaign organized in my school. I got a feeling of personal satisfaction after teaching in this two day campaign. This feeling motivated me to contribute my bit for benefit of society by devoting some time for social cause. Carrying forward on this idea at IIT Delhi, I was involved in teaching children at the “Central School” located on the campus. I also took part in a one week campaign for creating education awareness in villages. As part of this campaign, I stayed in a nearby village with a team of 10 volunteers and conducted various sessions to educate villagers. I also took certain classes for local children in

order to create interest in education which was at very low level in that village due to lack of awareness.

During my IIT life, I also utilized my hobby of poetry composition to contribute for social cause. I wrote some poems for a Non Government Organization (NGO) magazine – “Yuva Samvad” to convey a message on issues like agricultural development, illiteracy and human rights. My attachment with this organization inspired me to contribute more and pursuing this desire I donated my first salary, after graduation, to an orphanage run by an NGO. I felt that giving returns from my first efforts in professional life was one of the ways for me to give something back to society. My participation in these activities has developed me as a better human being.



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