

Essay Prompt: Based on your self-assessment of your candidacy, what are your growth areas or how do you intend to strengthen your application?

Essay Length: 300 words or fewer

Two days before my trip to Kabul, Afghanistan, a tragic terrorist attack on the city's military hospital occurred. It seemed like every media outlet was reporting on the news, and as such, I began receiving phone calls and texts from friends and family asking questions like: "Why do you want to go?" and "Do you have the option to cancel?"

I was going there to prepare a proposal for one of most strategic contracts in my company's history. I would be building relationships with our local contacts and gathering information on their operating structure. It was the opportunity of a lifetime!

While researching the history of Afghanistan, I learned much about the current volatile environment. Armed with a half-dozen headscarves in my luggage, I arrived in Kabul. I was greeted by a security representative, escorted into an armored vehicle, and buckled into a bulletproof vest. In the days that followed, I came to learn that although the threat of danger posed an enormous challenge, significant cultural differences would also impact my business interactions. As a woman, I had to avoid eye contact with males and only shook hands if the man initiated. It was not unusual for a man to refuse to speak to me, let alone negotiate a deal.

Since my return, I have shared my findings and best practices with colleagues to develop a broader strategy for conflict areas. I have worked with our pricing team to design a project cost proposal. Upon assessing my original admission packet, I identified the need to improve the quantitative component of the application. I believe that this eagerness to seek out and resolve challenges guarantees that I will be successful in significantly improving my performance in my MBA quantitative courses.

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~~Two days before my trip to~~ ~~I was scheduled to travel to~~ Kabul, Afghanistan, ~~a~~ ~~in two days, and every media outlet was reporting on the~~ tragic terrorist attack on the city's military hospital ~~occurred~~. ~~It seemed like every media outlet was reporting on the news, and as such, I began receiving phone calls and texts from friends and family asking questions like:~~ ~~earlier in the day. As a result, I received questions such as:~~ "Why do you want to go?", ~~and~~ "do they even want us there?", and "Do you have ~~the option to cancel a choice?~~"

~~I was going there to~~ ~~The purpose of the trip was to~~ prepare a proposal for one of ~~the largest and most~~ strategic contracts in my company's history. ~~I would be~~ ~~was presented with the opportunity to~~ building relationships with our ~~local~~ contacts ~~and on the ground and~~ gathering information on their ~~local~~ operating ~~structure~~ ~~environment~~. ~~Not only was this my choice,~~ ~~it~~ ~~this was the opportunity of a lifetime!~~

~~While researching the history of Afghanistan, I learned~~ ~~I spent the evenings prior to my departure sifting through articles to learn more about the countr~~ ~~much about y~~ ~~from its history to th~~ ~~the current e~~ ~~volatile environment~~ ~~security situation~~. ~~Armed w~~ ~~With a half-dozen headscarves in my luggage, I~~ ~~had~~ arrived ~~into~~ Kabul. I was greeted by a ~~security~~ representative, ~~from our security provider before being~~ escorted into an armored vehicle, ~~and~~ ~~buckled into~~ ~~and fastening a~~ bulletproof vest ~~around my chest~~. ~~In the days that followed, I came to learn that although~~ ~~While th~~ ~~the threat of~~ ~~danger~~ ~~conflict~~ ~~posed an enormous~~ ~~the greatest challenge,~~ ~~significant cultural~~ ~~there were also cultural~~ differences ~~would also that~~ impacted my business interactions. As a woman, I ~~had to~~ ~~learned to~~ ~~avoid eye contact with males during meetings,~~ and only ~~offered~~ ~~shook hands if the man initiated a handshake when appropriate~~. ~~According to local etiquette,~~ ~~it~~ was not unusual for a man ~~to~~ ~~refuse to speak to~~ ~~me a woman,~~ let alone negotiate ~~a deal with her.~~

Since then, I have shared lessons learned and best practices with my colleagues to contribute to a broader ~~company~~ strategy for conflict areas. I have ~~also~~ worked closely with our pricing team to develop our cost proposal for this ~~project~~ ~~opportunity~~. ~~Apart from my recent trip, I~~ ~~joined my company's~~ ~~corporate~~ social responsibility ~~working group to,~~ supporting my ~~personal~~ development in this area ~~for~~ ~~during~~ this next chapter in my career. ~~Upon conducting my self-assessment, I found that my most notable area of improvement lays in the quantitative component of my application.~~ I will continue demonstrating this same eagerness to seek out and resolve challenges during my MBA program, ~~which will,~~ ~~allowing~~ me to succeed in the quantitative courses.

~~Upon conducting self-assessment, I found that my most notable area of improvement lays in the quantitative component of my application.~~

Commented [JC1]: I need to cut this down to 300 words. I think it's a bit wordy in certain areas.

Commented [JC2]: If you think it strengthens this paragraph, some other examples of me overcoming challenges include: 1) one local male I needed to coordinate with at the compound wouldn't speak to me, so another male I was with dealt with him 2) the alarm signaling an attack at the compound went off during a meeting – I kept calm and waited for security, and we finished up the meeting when it was all clear.

Commented [AA3]: you've used opportunity several times already.

Commented [AA4]:

Commented [AA5R4]: I don't really understand this. it seems wordy and unnecessary. Cutting it out completely will save 20 words, and I don't miss it.

Commented [JC6]: I'm not sure if this seems randomly placed. I'm trying to link my ability overcoming challenges to my ability to do well in the program's quantitative courses. The reason I was waitlisted, I assume, was because my quantitative score on the GMAT (standardized test) wasn't high enough.

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