

Question 1 (600 words)

In what role do you see yourself working immediately after graduation? Why? How will your past and present experiences help you achieve this? How will the London Business School MBA Programme contribute to this goal? Why is this the right time for you to pursue an MBA?

Five years ago, in a study about the concept of luxury in China, the Comité Colbert issued a recommendation for luxury brands to use the Internet as a "high-impact way of informing the Chinese about a brand, its history and its cultural background". Upon graduating, my aim is to assist European luxury brands in executing this recommendation through a position of e-business strategist in either a consulting firm or a luxury conglomerate. This short-term objective is guided by my desire to evolve to a role that will allow me to benefit from the wealth of opportunities available in Asia, while making good use of my bicultural French-Chinese understanding and taking advantage of the valuable experiences I have acquired so far.

As a French person of Chinese origins, I have always felt blessed for being the offspring of two wonderful civilisations. With my move from Tahiti to France as a teenager freeing me from the apprehensions about relocating to faraway distances, I was eager for international mobility. For many years, working for Accenture provided opportunities matching my interest and biculturalism helped me adapt to new grounds. Eventually, I embraced an international life in Australia where I worked with Singapore and the Philippines. But a conversation on a transcontinental flight changed my perception. My neighbour was considering business in China and, as I explained certain cultural aspects, our discussion shifted to how relevant they are to the way Chinese work with foreigners. To my surprise, he was enthusiastic about this information, which he found highly valuable. It made me realise how rare and precious my French-Chinese biculturalism is. I soon decided to transition to a new career as a bridge between Europe and Asia.

But a career change needed to be a logical evolution from past experiences. While studying away from my family, I familiarised with the Internet to stay in contact with them. Then, recognising a source of countless opportunities, I decided to integrate it at the core of my career path. My work as a Web consultant through the dot-com bubble and crash later taught me cautiousness and that, to succeed, e-business requires a dedicated structure, specific set of skills and a strong business strategy. Nowadays, with Web 2.0 and innovative concepts coming into play, I guide my clients toward the right e-business decisions in terms of benefits vs. costs, away from buzzword confusion. In this context and with positive feedback from clients, I know that the skills I have accumulated are relevant and will remain so in tomorrow's world. With my career aspirations maturing, I now realised that I must complement my knowledge of Internet consulting with new skills: in marketing and international business. An MBA was the answer.

Selecting the right one was the next step. The target MBA needed to last over fifteen months for effective professional transition and complement a well recognised marketing programme with an international point-of-view. Beyond prestige, flexible programme and strong course offering, the reason I chose to apply to LBS is international focus. The LBS MBA is one of the very few to combine location in a truly global city with high proportion of foreigners attending the course and real commitment to an international learning experience – as demonstrated by the importance of learning languages. Furthermore, I have no doubt that the lively student atmosphere will provide more exciting and fun opportunities to learn from different cultures. The LBS's genuine approach to globalisation, its leadership in the internationalisation of MBAs and its connections with Asia make me believe that the LBS MBA is a right fit for my career goals.

Word count: 599

Question 2 (200 words)

Where do you see your career progressing five years after graduation and what is your longer term career vision?

As a child, the story of Pa umotu people living in poorer areas of Papeete saddened me. Lack of local jobs had pushed these islanders into Tahiti's unskilled workforce and living conditions were poor. The black pearl development, years later, created a miracle by providing a sustainable activity to the islands: it allowed inhabitants to stay and gave them world recognition. Today, with globalisation triggering more migrant labour, my long-term goal is to encourage similar miracles around the world.

Luxury companies can support this vision, as no other industry stresses as much the importance of uncompromisingly sublimating high-quality raw materials with craftwork mastery rooted in tradition. The social rewards, already established in Europe, are increasingly observed outside: Polynesian islands, with the black pearl, and Morocco, with the argan oil empowering women, are inspiring examples.

A few years after integrating the luxury industry, I hope to accelerate this trend by promoting items from untapped countries to the developed world. In this respect, Asia's long history and refined traditions provides ground for unique opportunities. Then, hopefully, with their traditional values recognised and local jobs made available, the people from the region's backyards will no longer be forced into the void of megacities.

Word count: 200

Question 3 (500 words)

Please describe your experience of working in and leading teams, either in your professional or personal life. Include any specific challenges you have faced. Given this experience, what role do you think you will play in your first year study group?

As a young consultant based in France, my first project was in Zurich. People always have a tendency to stay with their own group and keep with their own language and, in German-speaking Switzerland, that became a challenge for me. I did not know the language and, while I was regularly praised for my good work, I sometimes felt unfairly excluded from the action. With time, I understood that I had to make the first steps for them to change. I organised after-work activities that brought us together and taught myself a bit of German to break the ice. Slowly, people's attitude toward me changed for the best and my Swiss experience ended-up being the most rewarding career start I could expect. Indeed, differences can bring us further than where we could reach alone. The lesson I learned then remained true throughout my career in France or other countries.

As a team lead on a new project I was responsible for five people. Deadlines were extremely tight and we often worked over eighty hours weekly to meet them. After months, with no shorter workdays, things had clearly gone wrong. Requests to slow down were rejected due to project priorities and people resigned massively. Those who stayed, including myself, suffered but "esprit de corps" prevailed. Eventually, I experienced serious fatigue and stress related health issues and, although considerably hit, took this as an opportunity to prove a definite case. I had previously reported dysfunctions but my medical note further alerted the Human Resources department. Eventually, the project enquiry I helped initiate resulted in a change in management and better work conditions. Turnover dropped. This experience taught me about my own physical limitations but that a failing can become an opportunity to show leadership.

It also taught me that the business value of truly respecting people and their wellbeing is loyalty and support. Throughout my assignment, while the project was plagued by high turnover, and subsequent loss of skills, the people under my responsibility stayed – it later provided a decisive case for my promotion to Manager. As one of them said: "Because you showed us you cared" was their reason. Eventually, my interest in people either on or outside of my projects led to my nomination to the role of People's Advocate for my group at Accenture and I now care for the wellbeing of over sixty people.

At LBS, I envision an inclusive study group that accommodates the differences and allows the expression of each individuality, not one that sacrifices the uniqueness of each to form a standardised whole. My experiences have taught me that this attitude is not just a matter of good conduct, but also a factor of performance. As a result, in my first year study group, I see myself involved in encouraging others to develop and reach a potential that is personally gratifying for them, and then bringing these skills and aspirations together to create an exceptional learning experience for myself and each.

Word count: 498

Question 4 (400 words)

Student involvement is an extremely important part of the London MBA experience and this is reflected in the character of students on campus. What type of student club or campus community event s will you be involved with and why? How will you contribute?

When researching about clubs and campus activities for this essay, I was both a mazed and excited about the vitality of the student community at LBS.

The community event that inspired me most is the Hong Kong Finance Career Trek.

While the subject might be a bit different following the finance crisis, organising a similar event in Hong Kong and China is definitely an activity that I look forward to in a year that will see the World Expo in Shanghai. It brings me back to my undergrad years when, as the president of the Asian club, I coordinated a school trip project to Singaporean companies and universities. Our aim was to teach students not only about state-of-the-art production capabilities but also about the Asian way of life and culture. Today, I still believe such trips to be necessary in educating tomorrow's business leaders; especially now that, more than ever, China will be expected to be a major driving force for the World's economy.

Although I plan to be involved in the various clubs promoting Asian and cultural awareness, I'm likely to further contribute to clubs that fight discrimination. Indeed, I strongly believe discrimination to be not only counter-productive but also poisonous. A few years ago, I volunteered at the PASTT, a French association working for the insertion of transgender people. What started as a standard consulting exercise for their website became a life changing experience. I learned that stereotypes often hide a broad spectrum of individual truths, and that an attentive ear can be someone's lifeline. At LBS, just as I did then, I will offer my work experience to help fight against discriminations. Counselling is a first step; promoting better acceptance via events and communications is the next.

Finally, I would also like to initiate a club dedicated to food and gastronomy. As a mixed bag of French, Chinese and Polynesian culture, and the granddaughter of a chef, I naturally consider good food of primary importance. Moreover, I believe that, just as the Chinese approach to cooking relates to traditional symbolism, and French gastronomy includes references to the country's long history, food is probably the simplest and most powerful mean of conveying one's culture. By making traditional food from many countries approachable for everyone and teaching of how peoples connect to it, such a club will, I'm sure, make a strong addition to the multicultural environment at LBS.

Word count: 399

Question 5 (150 words)

Describe any significant experiences outside of your home country. What did you gain from these?

Coming from Tahiti, I've had the exceptional fortune of enjoying a highly international work style throughout my career. Working in many places and three continents made me understand and value the cultural, but also political, differences that exist between people from countries such as France, Switzerland, USA, Australia, India, Singapore and the Philippines.

However, another significant experience was a train travel I took in solo into the West of China. Going into lesser-known areas and travelling along with Chinese families in their trips was an eye opener. There, I met ordinary Chinese people, with their great pride for past glories and current achievements but mostly with an unquenchable curiosity and good-willed eagerness toward the West. This time, I understood how much China, with all its might, should not be considered with suspicious eyes but instead welcomed and guided into the club of the great nations of this world.

Word count: 149