

MBA ESSAY : BEFORE

Describe a time when you successfully transformed an idea into action. How did your leadership and interpersonal skills contribute to this experience, and how will this experience impact your contribution as a team member at the XXXX School?

When I joined China Undergraduate Student Association, it was just established, because there were a few undergraduate Chinese student before 2007. I took an initiative and leading role to create a sophisticated and efficient fund raising team model in the young organization.

The biggest problem that the organization faced was fund. The organization's mission was to help, protect and entertain Chinese student while they were far away from home. At the same time, the organization act as an intermediary for people in XXXX University to know Chinese culture and China itself. Of course, all sort of these activities required money. We only had one source of fund from Office of International Student and Scholars at the time. The fund was way too few. When I was assigned to be the team leader of the fund raising team, I had eight team members. At the time, they all acted on themselves to raise fund. The eight individuals all had different ways to solicit for fund. This situation caused chaos, because of the lack of communication and standard procedure. Sometimes, team members went to same stores to propose the same rejected proposal. As a result, some fund-raising targets were really irritated. The all eight members have different proficiencies of English and personalities. Also, it's hard for eight individual to cooperate and communicate with each other efficient and effectively.

I recalled SBU-Strategic Business Unit I read about as I tried to solve this problem. This SBU method divides a whole organization into smaller divisions to act on their own and carry out individual tasks. Though the organization was not like a giant international company, I found this method could be the solution to the problem. I selected three people with most out-going personality first as leaders. Then I conducted interviews with the eight members and divided the eight members into three groups with consideration of their personality and English proficiency. After the groups were formed, I give them different tasks to finish. I assigned one group to look for additional sources of fund and as a result they came back with fund from Chinese Embassy. I assigned the other two teams to be responsible for different territories, so they would not approach the same target multiple times.

After I assigned tasks, I initiated a meeting with all the members and talked about the strategy we should use to raise fund. I introduced knowledge and experience I had.

For example, I talked about some sales-man techniques I learned in my psychology class such as reject and retreat strategy and commitment strategy. I told team members to always prepare two sets of proposals, and start with the bolder one. If they accept the proposal, we gain more benefits. If not, then we propose the second one. This would increase the successful rate of the second proposal. Another strategy is to try to let target say he/she is willing to support our group before negotiating specific terms. This would make the target more likely to agree with our terms. Finally I emphasized more of our team members did not explicitly offer what we can provide to our supporters. I understood the things always come at a price. If we let people know what we can provide especially the huge potential customer pool we have, they will more likely to support us. Furthermore, I asked the leaders to write down what they had tried to raise fund and what the reaction was. With this information, we could modify and standardize our process. For example, we learned that a letter signed by the president of the organization is a very good proof of the validity of our organization. Hence people felt more willing to support us. In addition, I asked them to bring back any proposal people provide, so we can discuss during meeting.

As the result, our financial condition was much better improved. Though we do not have more than we need, we had enough to cover all the activities such as China Spring Festival Gala, XXXX State University International Affair, and picking up new students at airport.

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