

Ryan Patterson's

The 7 Secrets to Creating Harvard Business School Applications that Get You In !

A Free eCourse

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Lesson #5

"Why Applicants that Would be Great MBA Students Often Get Rejected by Harvard Business School"

In the last lesson, we learned how to handle your weaknesses and actually use them to improve your application.

In this lesson, we'll be discussing why applicants that would be great MBA students often get rejected by the Harvard Business School.

You'll learn why this happens and what it means for your application – whether you think you'd be a great MBA student or not.

To understand this issue, you need to understand the unique way Harvard Business School operates.

You probably already know that Harvard relies exclusively on the Case Study Method as its primary teaching method.

What **you may now know is that there really are no professors (in the traditional sense) at Harvard Business School.** Sure there are people with the job title called "professor".

But they are NOT instructors in the traditional sense. Instead, they are facilitators.

If you ever get the chance to sit in on a HBS class, you will know EXACTLY what I mean. (If you haven't, I highly recommend it).

Unlike most class rooms, you will notice how the "**professor**" asks all the **questions** in class... and the "students" give each other the answers.

If you're used to the more traditional "lecture" approach, you will undoubtedly notice the difference.

At Harvard, MBA students teach each other.

The success of this format depends largely on the motivation and discipline of all the students in the class. Each individual student carries with them the responsibility to prepare everyday for the day's case study.

If someone doesn't hold up his or her end of the bargain, it's pretty obvious to everyone pretty quickly. If multiple people don't prepare, the classroom session is incredibly awkward.

Every professor's nightmare is that they ask the class question after question and they get **NO RESPONSE**.

It's like watching an actor on stage forget his lines... and just stand there in **DEAD SILENCE** for an hour.

I've seen this on a few occasions (usually the night after a big campus-wide party) and let me tell you it is UGLY.

You feel so **BAD** for the professor who's standing up leading a session with nobody participating. All you want to do is crawl out of the room as quickly as possible.

When a Harvard Business School student habitually doesn't prepare for class... or prepares but chooses not to participate, it hurts the classroom dynamic.

When this happens, it takes away from the learning experience of all the other students. That's a problem Harvard takes very seriously.

Not surprisingly, **Harvard avoids applicants who do not work well in this format.**

Harvard Business School isn't looking for students.

They're really looking for student-teachers!

Often these talented applicants would be great MBA students (in the traditional sense), but for one reason or another they aren't great teachers.

Because of the unique format and the reliance Harvard places on students teaching each other, great applicants that are lousy teachers often get rejected in the admissions process.

So what does this mean to you as an applicant?

Because many applicants are unaware of the importance of the Class Room Format, they may unintentionally communicate something in their application that suggests an incompatibility with the Harvard classroom format.

This is a big mistake.

It's a great tragedy when an applicant who actually is a good student-teacher gets rejected because she didn't communicate this trait effectively in her application. In other words, she **gets rejected because of a mis-communication** rather than something missing in her profile.

Don't let this be you.

When the Harvard Business School declines a great applicant who didn't happen to create a great application, everybody loses

The applicant loses by not getting into Harvard. Harvard Business School loses out from not having a great admit. Other students lose out on not having a great resource in the class. The Harvard Business School alumni network loses out on a stellar alum.

So how do you convince Harvard that you're a great student-teacher?

It is critical for you **to convey implicitly that you understand what it means to be an Harvard Business School student...** it actually means you're going to be a teacher!

You have to convey that you're **able, willing and excited** to play that role. You must subtly hint to them that you know your responsibilities and obligations in the Harvard Class Room Format, and that you are up for the job.

You need to demonstrate your understanding of the classroom environment by the way that you talk about yourself and your candidacy.

It's more of an implicit communication than an explicit one. You simply drop a comment here or there showing how you're going to teach your peers, as well as what you yourself can learn from it.

The best way to do this is to site examples of how you've already been a student-teacher in your career.

Do this and whoever reads your application will be able to easily visualize your likely behavior in the HBS classroom. Make sure you make it easy for them to see you as someone actively participating in the class.

Think of all the situations where you engaged in the same behavior as you would in the HBS classroom. Use these experiences as examples in your essay.

This is key. **Don't convince Harvard that you're going to be a great student-teacher, DEMONSTRATE to them that you ALREADY are.**

In the next lesson, we will discuss a recent shift Harvard's application criteria. You'll learn why Harvard Business School is working harder than ever to eliminate certain kinds of applicants from the admissions process.

You'll learn the specifics of the new criteria and how to ensure you're not mistakenly mis-categorized in the undesired category.

Stay tuned.

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