

Student's Name

Professor's Name

Course Name/Code

Date

Graduate School Essay Example: MBA Application

I managed my first budget at 23. It was \$140,000, it belonged to a workforce development nonprofit in Baltimore, and I had no idea what I was doing. I had a background in sociology, a commitment to the organization's mission, and a spreadsheet inherited from my predecessor that I did not fully understand. I figured it out the way people figure things out when the alternative is a payroll shortfall.

Over the next four years I moved from program coordinator to operations director at the same organization, building out a data infrastructure that allowed us to track participant outcomes across a three-year window: employment, wage growth, and benefits eligibility. We used that data to make program design decisions rather than rely on anecdote. We improved 18-month employment retention by 22 percent over three years. I know why: we changed which participants we enrolled in which program tracks, and we changed the timing of our employer relationship building. The data told us what to change. The management told me what I did not know how to do well.

I am applying to [School]'s MBA program to develop the strategic and financial management skills I have been building around gaps rather than foundations. The program's concentration in social enterprise and the nonprofit management curriculum are the specific draw. After the MBA, I intend to return to the workforce development sector in a leadership role with the capacity to structure the financial models and organizational systems that social-impact organizations need in order to survive at scale.