

Essay 2

A significant amount of the learning takes place through students sharing both inside and outside the classroom. Describe how your overall experience, both personally and professionally, will benefit your classmates. (Please respond fully and concisely using 1.5 line spacing. Please avoid using a font size smaller than 10-point. Please limit your response to two pages).

I have gotten my first job when I was 12, cleaning up the territory of the summer camp in the Russian countryside and chopping wood for grill. At the age of 18, I was a Network Engineer in a tiny IT company in the town of [no name], boasting a personal office in a former storage room without windows. At 23 I was an honors graduate in Nuclear and Elementary Particles Physics at one of the best [no name] higher education institutions – [no name]. At 25 I became the System Architect (position analogous to Technical Project Manager), carrying out projects in IT infrastructure all over [no name] for Open Technologies company. At present, at 29, I am a Business Architect responsible for building business for the [no name] branch of [no name], the international IT-service company with almost 20,000 employees worldwide. What I have learned on my way from mopping paths to leading millions-of-dollars-worth projects to building hundreds-millions-of-euros-worth business in IT sphere I am ready to share with my future classmates at the Global Executive MBA program at [no name].

Solving the insoluble problems

The first important insight I intend to share with my class at [no name] is my experience of solving the seemingly insoluble problems which is something I quite often had to do over the course of the last 5 years. Of course, when one faces the difficult situation, there never is a ready solution to the problem. However, thanks to learning through other people's experience, one can better imagine a range of possible solutions and risks involved. That is exactly what I would like to offer my classmates by contributing our academic projects and in-class discussions with my experience of often being an urgent-aid remedy for my employers.

For instance, in 2011 the situation took place when I had to save my company's reputation. I was sent to [no name] to try and rescue the project our company's [no name] division had been working on for 1.5 years without showing the client company any tangible result. Meanwhile, the client was the second largest gas station owner in [no name], who wanted the whole IT infrastructure re-developed. The company already invested several million Euros into this project and as my [no name] colleagues were not ready to show the client anything, the legal war was brewing. After diving head over heels into the project documentation, I detected the main problem. The project leaders were unable to coordinate efforts of two vendors with developer of data-collecting software. Instead of trying to change each of these three products simultaneously (like my [no name] colleagues proposed), I offered my solution. I figured there was no need to introduce any major software changes on the software level; the main thing was to coordinate efforts of vendors. My idea was supported by vendors, enabling the client to conduct project roll-out on more than 300 gas stations in time. I managed to find a solution to the problem on a 1.5-years-long project over the course of 1.5 days.

Doing business in [no name]

The second thing I would like to share with the [no name] GE class is my extensive experience of doing business in [no name] – and not just some business, but the one dealing with innovative

technologies and IT solutions: a field not very familiar, say, for an average [no name] plant owner. Being a key negotiator for the most expensive and crucial projects our company conducts in [no name], I have learned what it means not just to sell client the idea, but to make him sell that idea to himself. It is often that I have to deal with customers sending us technological requests that are in complete discord with what they actually need for their business. In cases like that my job often is to persuade a person, asking, metaphorically speaking, for a spaceship, to buy a vacuum cleaner, because the vacuum cleaner is the best solution for the person's company. I am sure that my great practical experience in this sphere will be of help for any of my classmates working or intending to work with Russian companies. Besides, the strategic moves I would like to show and tell about others can be of good use in any complicated business situation.

A good example of trickiness of the business negotiations in [no name] would be the 2008 situation, when the company [no name], where I was a System Architect, received an urgent RFP from [no name], one of the top-3 players in the [no name] energo-generating market. This could be several-million-dollars-worth deal, but the RFP was extremely unclear – so in order to clarify it I took a flight to the town of [no name] for a personal meeting with potential client. That day I spent 4.5 hours at the white board. 1.5 hours went to find a common standpoint with our company's engineers in [no name]. Another 1.5 hours I spent to conduct a presentation for client's representatives, explaining my vision and answering questions, before clients started reacting favorably, realizing that I was really trying to solve their problems. It was a great risk, as I was offering a solution not to their confusing RFP, but to their actual needs. The last 1.5 hours I spent answering clients' inquiries and going over the main points to strengthen the impression. In the end, TGK-10 did choose my proposal among others. 4.5 hours of my negotiations that day determined the next 2 years my team and I spent working on that particular project.

Broadening personal horizons to grow professionally

The third thing I would be eager to share with my future classmates is the importance of combining active out-of-work life with professional activities. Over the course of the years I have spent leading teams, recruiting and coaching people, I have confirmed for myself that a person without any interests, hobbies or passions beside career sphere never performs as well at work, as a similarly qualified professional with wider interests. The out-of-work activities help to broaden one's outlook, through them one learns to approach things creatively and to think out of the box. All of it surely helps a person in professional life as well. I would gladly share what I have learned and experienced – for instance, through such unlikely combination of my hobbies as music and aikido training.

Activities listed above serve me as additional sources of energy for recharging my spiritual batteries, and they also give me ideas to be used in business. For instance, music, being one of my biggest life-long passions, has taught me, how important each element in a complex system is. I have been playing piano since I was a schoolboy, and I know how complicated a musical score can be. Imagine a score for a symphony, written for an orchestra involving dozens of musicians - even a single false note can spoil the whole grand composition. Or else, a couple of years, visiting a friend of mine, who is an organ-player in [no name], I finally had a chance to do my best and try to play a little blues melody on organ. I was amazed to physically feel how many complicated elements of the instrument work together to produce the sound in strict accordance with each other. In my opinion, it is just the way one can cope with complex business challenges: by combining all the carefully thought-out little details according to one main principle. As for the aikido trainings, which I now undertake at least four times a week, they broadened my vision of business competition. In aikido one aims to use the rival's strength against himself, so that the

more emotionally rival acts, the more vulnerable he becomes. It is by preserving a cool-headed attitude that one can achieve goals in aikido – and same goes for business.