Leland

MBA Recommender Prep Doc

Hey there!

We're excited to share our **Recommender Prep Document** with you. It's based on years of experience helping applicants earn spots at top MBA programs. This document, of course, is just the tip of the iceberg. At Leland, we're committed to offering quality content and world-class coaching, and at a price that fits your budget.

The vast majority of admits at top MBA programs pay for an admissions consultant, but we know it's hard to find the right person. At Leland, we want to make sure that *everyone has access to coaching* at a price that works for them.

To that end, we guarantee that **we can find you a world-class coach that fits your budget, background, and goals within 48 hours.** No one else in the world can do that.

So, let's get started. You can **sign up for Leland here** and **schedule a free strategy session** so we can match you with the right coach.

Let's get you into your dream school!

- John and the Leland Team

Recommender Prep Template

[Recommender's Name],

Thanks again for all your help and support in this application process. I really appreciate your willingness to make time for this in your busy schedule. I wanted to create this document to (1) provide more info on the current recommendation process, (2) offer some ideas for content, and (3) make this as easy and straightforward as possible.

Below, you'll find the following information:

- Deadlines of the schools I'm applying to
- Notes about the content that goes into letters of recommendation
- Suggestions for the specific questions you'll encounter

In the end, your authenticity and perspective will be the most important aspect of a strong letter, but I figured providing you with some direction would be helpful.

Thank you again for taking the time to write this recommendation. I'll check in with you closer to the deadline, but please let me know if any questions arise in the meantime!

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

Process

I am applying to six schools. Below is the submission date for each school:

- Stanford – [Deadline]
- Booth – [Deadline]
- Kellogg (Northwestern) – [Deadline]
- Columbia – [Deadline]
- HBS – [Deadline]
- Fuqua (Duke) – [Deadline]

Recommendations are submitted via each school's online application system. I'll send your name and email to each school and they will send you an email with a link to the recommendation form. Each school requires that you answer their specific questions. That said, most of the questions are similar between schools so you will be able to use the same content across recommendations.

Content

In general, business schools are looking for creative intelligence, leadership, teamwork skills, vision/innovation, and a demonstrated record of success in their candidates. Further, great recommendations highlight the soft skills of candidates that show potential for senior management and leadership positions in future careers.

To that end, I have created a list of attributes that I plan to highlight in my essays, which you could reinforce as my recommender. Obviously, this is a personal view of my strengths; please feel free to amend or adjust any of these examples and, of course, add personal insights to the recommendation.

In each recommendation, you can expect a few short questions about our relationship, an overall leadership assessment, etc. but the two main questions will be something like the following:
1. How does the applicant's performance compare to other well-qualified individuals in similar roles?
2. Describe the most important piece of constructive feedback you have given the applicant. Please detail the circumstances and the applicant's response.
3. Some school-specific questions for Wharton and Kellogg (more below)

Question #1: Candidate Performance and Strengths Question
- Characteristic: brief description and examples (from experience with recommender)
- (Repeat for each of your 3-4 strengths)

Question #2: Constructive Feedback and Response Question
- Brief description of an area of opportunity and how you responded to hearing that feedback.

Question #3: School-specific questions
- *Wharton:* Please provide example(s) that illustrate why you believe this candidate will find success in the Wharton MBA classroom. (Word count: 300)
    - Ideas and examples
- *Kellogg:* Kellogg has a diverse student body and values students who are inclusive and encouraging of others with differing perspectives and backgrounds. Please tell us about a time when you witnessed the candidate living these values. (300 words)
    - Ideas and examples

Thank you again for taking the time to write this recommendation and support me in this process. I'll check in with you closer to the deadline, but please let me know if any questions arise in the meantime.

- Jake

Recommender Prep Example (do not copy)

Adeline,

Thank you so much for your help and support in this application process for business school. I really appreciate your willingness to make time for this in your busy schedule. I wanted to create this document to (1) explain the recommendation process (although I know you are probably familiar with it), (2) offer some ideas for content, and (3) make this as easy and straightforward as possible for you.

In the end, your authenticity and perspective will be the most important aspect of a strong letter, but I figured providing you with some direction would be helpful. Let me know if you have any other questions!

Process
I am applying to the MBA programs at Harvard and Stanford. Though these schools are incredibly competitive, I'm planning on applying for Round 1, which will give me a better chance of admission.

Below is the submission date for each school:
- Harvard – Sep 6, 202X
- Stanford – Sep 12, 202X

Recommendations are submitted via each school's online application system. I've sent your names and emails to each school and hopefully they have sent you an email explaining the process with a link to the recommendation form. Each school requires that you answer their specific questions. That said, most of the questions are similar between schools so as we bounce ideas off each other, we can ultimately use similar content for both recommendations.

Content
In general, business schools are looking for creative intelligence, leadership, teamwork skills, vision/innovation, and a demonstrated record of success in their candidates. Further, great recommendations highlight the soft skills of candidates that show potential for senior management and leadership positions in future careers.

To that end, I have created a list of attributes that I plan to highlight in my essays, which you could reinforce as my recommender. Obviously, this is a personal view of my strengths; please feel free to amend or adjust any of these examples and, of course, add personal insights to the recommendation.

You can expect a few short questions about our relationship, an overall leadership assessment, etc. but the two main questions will be something like the following:
1. *How does the applicant's performance compare to that of other well-qualified individuals in similar roles?*
2. *Describe the most important piece of constructive feedback you have given the applicant. Please detail the circumstances and the applicant's response.*

Question #1: Candidate Performance and Strengths Question
I'll leave most of this up to you, as you have a clear line of sight into how my strengths fare relative to my peers. However, I've included some of the qualities and examples we talked about during our one-on-ones. Here are some ideas:

- **Vision and Initiative: Taking initiative to identify meaningful ways to add value in a fast-moving environment**
    - o Example: The Seoul Olympic Update. Finding a way to get to know the Seoul Olympic Team, using previous experience in Korea to discover and create a vision for how our team at HQ could add value to the teams on the ground, and working with several key stakeholders to develop the Seoul Olympic Safety update that was sent to 150+ Lyft employees to help them understand threats/risks during an incredibly important event, with immense growth in a relatively new country for Lyft operations.
- **Problem-Solving/Implementation: Identifying creative solutions to challenging problems and implementing those solutions while being flexible/adaptable**
    - Example: Working with the Lyft team and the CSRs to identify areas of improvement for driver screenings, support procedures, etc., and then working with T&S and other stakeholders to implement solutions. Developing a driver tagging process to understand repeated incidents and using ratings to improve onboarding. Learning the nuts and bolts of how the Lyft business worked, gave me the confidence to develop and implement solutions with more autonomy and precision.
    - Example: Identifying an opportunity to roll out data collection to Africa so that drivers/riders would be able to experience new safety features. Working with the telematics team and the Africa RSMs to create an implementation timeline and identify the best way to approach the variables in place. Operating independently with key stakeholders to ensure the pilot program and implementation were effective.
- **Leadership and Teamwork: Ability to be a positive leader and strong teammate**
    - Example: Everest implementation. Working to build relationships with each RSM so that I could better understand their priorities and needs. By the end of the internship, I had held one-on-ones with Jack, Rachel, Tony, Allison, and Jeff and worked with them on several projects. This teamwork laid the foundation for smooth and effective rollouts of products, and made implementing Everest much easier than it had initially been.
- **Relationships: Building strong relationships through a positive attitude and a genuine interest in people**
    - Example: Might be interesting to touch on me being the first undergraduate intern you decided to take for the team. I'm sure you were wondering how that would end up, but I hope you feel like it went well. Throughout the summer I worked hard to get to know everyone on our T&S team and work on projects with various teammates. Those relationships are very important to me and really influenced the success of the projects I worked on. Overall, I received really positive feedback from members of the team and you extended the offer to come back to the team at a level that MBA students usually enter at. Might be an interesting note to include, but totally up to you.

Question #2: Constructive Feedback and Response Question
Considering all of the great feedback you gave me while I was at Lyft, I don't think this question should be too difficult. This section can often carry more weight than any other section because it can be framed as somewhat of a 'success story' based on how I respond to feedback. Here are two main pieces of feedback you gave me that I tried to work on during the second half of my internship:
- **Principled Confrontation** – You encouraged me to not be afraid to stand strong for the ideas I believe in, even if I disagree with someone senior to me. This is one of my favorite aspects of Lyft's culture and something I really worked on in the latter half of my internship and something I still think about often. I think it was ultimately tested when building out the Seoul Olympic Update. Managing feedback from

teammates, requirements from legal, and resources available on our team taught me to stand strong, manage expectations, inspire help and creativity from those around me, and make sure we had a strong product in time for the Olympics.
- **Project/Time Management** – In a fast-paced environment like Lyft, there are so many projects that could be taken on. You encouraged me to manage those priorities and make sure that I focused on what mattered most and said no to things I wouldn't have time or resources for. This was a key focus of mine towards the end of my internship as more projects called for my attention.

List of Main Projects During Time at Lyft
- Seoul Olympic Update
- Rolling out IMU data collection for Africa to initiate Everest and other key safety features
- Rolling out Everest globally and managing RSM expectations and feedback
- Lyft Driver Safety Analysis
- Phab submission process

Well, that's it! I hope that was helpful, and as I said before, your perspective and authenticity are most important to a successful letter, so thank you for taking the time to write it. You were such an excellent manager, mentor, and friend and I really appreciate your help. Let me know if you have any other questions.

- Rohan