Matt Chua

CSOM MBA Class of 2016

Product Manager-Harken Health

***Tell us a little bit about your background***

I’m a native Minnesotan, graduate of Mounds View High School.

The “one” experience that shaped me: spending nearly three years continuously traveling around the world. My wife and I bought one-way tickets to Vietnam with no itinerary, and hopes seize every opportunity to experience the world. We ended up traveling for nearly three years, all 7 continents, 350+ cities in 38 countries as varied as Australia, North Korea and Egypt. We got as local as we could in countries, experiencing and enduring everything we could. You can see where we went and our photos at www.livingif.com.

***What was your professional career like before Carlson?***

As I was nearing graduation with an Economics degree from the University of Minnesota the former director of Carlson Ventures Enterprise told me to go out and get as broad base of knowledge as possible, then get an MBA or start to specialize. I followed the advice into a Venture Capital firm, then Bank of America’s Private Equity Fund of Funds, onto working in startups, my last being Blue Zones where I helped the founder form the Blue Zones Project partnership with Healthways. This was the last role I held before setting off to travel.

***Why did you choose to go to business school? Why Carlson?***

Straight-up, I needed a bridge from 3+ years off back into the working world. I had planned to go back, sooner than I did, but the world was calling. Even if we hadn’t taken off, I would have sought an MBA because I feel it prepares you for whatever it is you do in life, there is nothing from business to government to your personal life that business skills won’t help with.

I chose Carlson because in the end I wanted to work in Minnesota and be near family that I hadn’t seen in years. We took the opportunity to welcome our first child, Wilder Chua, into the world when I was in my second year.

***Can you describe you time at Carlson, specifically your first year? How did you approach recruiting and UnitedHealth (Harken Health is a subsidiary and shares recruiting functions)? Any recommendations?***

First year…that was a blur, so much to do, so much material to absorb…*and* I needed to find an internship…geez. I approached first year with an open mind to what I would do when I finished, taking the opportunity to explore career options in school rather than focus on any one thing. I went to almost every career prep session, company lunch, and event to learn about what I could do. Crossing things off the list was arguably more important than opening doors.

Working at UnitedHealth is great, getting in is rough as we are set up to “just-in-time” hire rather than on the recruiting calendar. My internship was probably the last to be posted for on-campus recruiting and the last to hire. I found out I got the internship over Spring Break. The lesson for recruiting at UnitedHealth is the same for all recruiting: be patient.

I didn’t come to Carlson looking to work in Healthcare or UnitedHealth, but I couldn’t be happier with the outcome. It was because I was open to try something new that I found the best team I’ve ever worked for at Harken Health.

***Describe why you accepted the full time offer from Harken Health and what you hope to do in the future.***

First and foremost, it was the people. Each day the people on my team and broader team of 100+ make me laugh, smile, and enjoy working there. I always thought this was important, but didn’t realize how much better it makes life overall, both in and out of work. Oh, yeah, I also find trying to revolutionize health insurance by humanizing our care and experience is awesome.

In the future I hope to take the marketing lessons I learned in Carlson Brand Enterprises and from great professors like Professors Vohs and Griskevicius to just name two in order to develop customer-centric health plans that help improve lives and the healthcare experience.



