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

I grew up in western suburbs of Minneapolis and as graduation from High School neared I knew that I wanted to pursue something technical, as labs sounded much better than writing papers. I attended the University of Wisconsin in Madison where I originally enrolled in biomedical engineering. I had seen program at some point that talked about the future of robotic prostheses which had intrigued me, and this course of study also allowed the option of medicine if I found the courage to pursue it. I realized during the career fair my freshman year that my peers with more traditional engineering majors could apply just about anywhere, so wanting to keep my employer options as open as possible I switched to mechanical engineering while using electives to pursue the pre-medicine track.

While I found school interesting, nothing helped me to figure out the features I wanted to have in my “big kid” job more than the hands-on experiences I had. I participated in student projects where we would modify adaptive devices for individuals with very specific needs. On one such project I was on a team that built a motorized wheelchair for a child with pretty severe cerebral palsy. His condition didn’t allow him to operate a powered chair by the joysticks they typically came with, so we had to create a new type of steering mechanism for him to use. From these types of projects, I felt first-hand what it is like to make someone’s life better through medical assistance and that I did not need to be physician to do so.

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

I spent three summers at General Mills and one semester each at Boston Scientific and General Electric Healthcare during undergrad. They were in technical roles ranging from operations, packaging engineering and product development and I got great exposure to how businesses are run but more importantly, how different functions interact with one another within a technical organization. Throughout these internships I realized that while the specific technical challenges were interesting to solve, I was always interested in the reasoning behind pursuing a certain course over another. Often, some analysis had concluded that the benefit of a solution didn’t justify the costs involved. It was frustrating when I found myself in situations where I didn’t agree with management’s decision even though I knew that both due diligence and pragmatism were employed in choosing these courses of action. I wanted to be a part of that process and not just someone executing the strategy. As graduation neared, I knew that I wanted to pursue general management within a technical company. I had met several mentors that pointed out that while I had technical experience, I would need to find ways to gain better business acumen.

Most of the employers that I had rapport with encouraged me work as an engineer for a few years, pursue an MBA, and then apply to work in a business manager function. However, I did not really feel like going that route and wondered if there were any way to get into such a role right away. I looked for ways to pivot away from technical roles to jobs that offered more exposure to management responsibilities, while still allowing me to leverage my background, and joined GE Healthcare in their Commercial Leadership Program. This rotational program was a very unique opportunity that offered technical or clinical people to chance to pursue technical sales and marketing roles. While with GE, I managed different sales territories in Missouri, Michigan, and finally both Pennsylvania and New York as a cardiology diagnostic imaging account manager, selling primarily cath-lab systems, CT and MR scanners, and the IT infrastructure to support them.

While learning how to manage my own budget while delivering on sales expectations, this job also gave me incredible insight into the healthcare industry. The items I represented could easily cost a million plus dollars per installation, and ideally I would be trying to outfit a site with multiple systems at a time. Since this was capital equipment, the sales process wasn’t just about convincing physicians that GE’s systems were the best fit, it also involved working in the c-suite just as much, helping them plan and justify multimillion dollar investments. I gained a lot of exposure to the various players within a hospital system and the types of pressures and concerns they each dealt with. Between the cardiologists, diagnostic and cath lab managers, nurses, technologists, and various CxOs, it never was the case that all parties wanted to green light my proposals. Navigating these scenarios and negotiating with the different parties made this job fun and challenging.

After GE, I gave running my own business a try and started a company with my brother that manufactures and sells nutraceutical products (foods with health claims) originally targeting natural supplement stores. The first couple of years were slow and progress was largely through trial and error. Eventually we landed some larger contracts with Sprouts and their competition, Whole Foods, and were able to reach a steady state which continues today. With this experience I got to design and launch a novel product into a very dynamic category and allowed me to test myself more than I had previously. But I realized that I missed working within a larger organization and team, and as crazy as it sounds, missed having a boss. I say that, because every time I was faced with a difficult decision, there wasn’t someone nearby with whom to bounce ideas off of that had more practical experience than I did. I felt that if I needed grow professionally, I needed to return to a larger, established organization.

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

Pretty early into my career I knew I wanted to get an MBA. While I learned a lot of practical knowledge through my experiences, I still wanted a formal education in some of the basics that I never had exposure to like finance, accounting, and marketing. I wanted to use my MBA to help find a functional role that was more strategic. I also believed that an MBA would allow me to re-enter the job search dating pool, allowing me efficient access to many companies simultaneously and roles that would otherwise be very difficult to seek out as a professional hire.

When researching MBA programs I started looking at things in reverse, that is I had a few target companies in mind and figured out where they recruited from. That narrowed things quite a bit, in a few cases I was even able to figure out typical hire counts by school for these companies. I realized that regardless of the size of the MBA program, the number of hires stayed relatively the same. So the smaller cohort at Carlson was very advantageous for the companies I was hoping to interview with. I was also very intrigued by the experiential learning opportunities offered through the various enterprises since these types of exposures have always helped me to better understand what type of work I would like the best. Finally, amongst the options I was finally deciding between, the goal to be to Minnesota for both career and family it made it the best fit personally.

**Can you describe you time at Carlson, specifically your first year? How did you approach recruiting and Medtronic? Any recommendations?**

The first semester of school is crazy. The course load is demanding, recruiting starts almost immediately, all while you are trying to remember how to be a student. Try your best to stay on top of things, but you’re going to have to make a few tradeoffs between career searching, academics, and social life, both personal and professional. Remember that if your goal is to land a good job, prioritize the things you think will help. It really helps to pick a few target companies to work hard in getting to know better. While it is true that recruiting is competitive amongst your peers, don’t approach it that way. The best practice and inside tips I got were from discussions with my friends at Carlson.

Medtronic was one of my target companies from the beginning so along with the other hiring companies I was interested in, I tried to meet with a few current employees to understand the company culture and types of work an MBA might expect. I found these conversations very helpful for gauging if a particular organization would be a place that I would want to work at as well as providing good talking points in an interview setting.

I did not do anything overly creative to get noticed by Medtronic, but I did remain very sincere throughout the entire process about what things I liked about the company, the LDRP opportunity, and why I felt the role would be an ideal fit for both myself and Medtronic. It was important to them that people articulate a personal connection to their industry, and the same is true with any employer.

If you can figure out what the potential worries might be about hiring an MBA, make sure to address that. All companies worry about retention of good employees, so if your serious that an employer is a top choice, be honest about it.

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

While in sales, I chatted almost daily with reps from pharma and device manufacturers and had developed strong impressions about their company values and ways of doing business. I would also hear opinions of different companies from cardiologists and hospital administrators that I had strong relationships with. Medtronic always had high praise and respect.

Medtronic’s Leadership Development Rotational Program (LDRP) was one of the most intriguing opportunities overall. From my time with GE, I knew the value of rotational development programs and how well they fit with how I like to grow professionally. In fact, I only seriously pursued companies that had a well-defined and respected development program during my career search. Specific to the LDRP role, there is a chance for an international role for one of your rotations, and working overseas is something that I’ve always wanted to do, so that was a huge plus.

Medtronic also fits many of the things I’ve already mentioned as being important to me, potential for positive social impact, technical organization, and based in my hometown. It was fortunate that a company I respected, an industry I found interesting, and a great development program all were present in this job.

There are many exciting changes happening in Healthcare right now. One trend seems to be for companies to venture into other areas of the industry they traditionally didn’t do business in, whether its providers looking to become payers or manufacturers considering to become providers. I’d like to be part of figuring out how that would work, or if it even makes sense. If the current push toward value based care continues, these types of integrations are interesting to consider as a means to reduce costs while improving patient care, and I hope to be a part of that discussion in some way.