Josh Sopeth

I grew up in the south suburbs of Minneapolis and after high school I knew I wanted to get away from home, so I enrolled at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. I graduated from the Wisconsin School of Business with a double major in finance and real estate. Following graduation, I accepted a position as an Implementation Consultant at Epic. That was my first introduction into the healthcare industry and I spent the next 4 years travelling to hospitals across the country to help them setup their electronic medical record (EMR) systems.

As an undergraduate business student, an MBA was always a goal for me. As I began looking at business schools, there were two criteria that I used to weigh my decision. First, I wanted a program that had great job placement, because that’s the end point and the culmination of an MBA. Second, I wanted the business school to have some kind of healthcare industry connection. Carlson easily fit both those criteria. It also didn’t hurt to come back home and make amends to my parents for jumping the border to Wisconsin (my parents met at the University of Minnesota 40 years ago).

In coming into Carlson and after my experience at Epic, I knew that I wanted to remain in the healthcare industry. The impact you can make in the industry is incredible and I knew that was all the motivation I needed. I almost solely interviewed for healthcare companies. Many of the companies I interviewed asked me about why I wanted to work in the industry, which gave me a chance to demonstrate the passion I gained at Epic. My advice for anyone going into healthcare is to know why and be able to articulate it clearly. After many interviews, I ended up interning with Accenture’s healthcare practice in San Francisco. I knew by going into consulting that I’d have the chance to try different types of work and that sounded like just what I needed while trying to discover the perfect long-term career.

The summer at Accenture was outstanding, I got an opportunity to own my project and demonstrate my abilities as a consultant. The key to being successful in your internship is taking ownership of something, and then just knocking it out of the park. If do that, you can demonstrate that you’re accountable, capable and trustworthy, which is what every employer wants. I also recommend taking advantage of all the social activities with other interns, that’s the best way to continue building your professional network outside of Carlson.

After returning to Carlson for my second year, I decided to go through full-time recruiting with a limited number of companies. I had an offer from Accenture, but I wanted to explore what else was out there. Unless you’re interning in your dream job and it was everything you thought it was, I highly recommend that everyone go through recruiting second year. It’s not like internship recruiting where everything is new; you’re able to more meticulously gather all the information you’re seeking and you have one more working experience under your belt.

After going through all the interviews and weighing my options, I looked at two things – the opportunity to make an impact and the fit with my long-term career goals. After much soul searching and deliberation, I signed with Accenture to become part of their digital healthcare team. I knew as a consultant that I wouldn’t have the same frontline impact that you see for someone working in industry, but I knew that I would have the opportunity to bring that impact to more people. But, what really sealed the deal with Accenture was its fit with my long-term career goals.

I’m very thankful today that I didn’t end up in a finance or real estate job following undergrad, landing at Epic and getting introduced into the healthcare industry was the best thing that’s happened to me. And as I look at healthcare in the U.S., I feel as though we are reaching a tipping point. Costs can only be controlled to a point, so increasing productivity will be critical. Digital healthcare solutions represent the best way to increase productivity. To me, that’s the best long-term career opportunity and the best way to make a positive impact on the healthcare industry.

My ultimate goal is to start my own digital health company. That was a scary plan two years ago, but now with my Carlson experience and network in hand, that’s not such a daunting proposition.