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Alumni: Sam Tedesco. Investment Banking Analyst @ Piper Sandler Companies

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Sam Tedesco

For my alumni interview report, I chose Sam Tedesco who attended the trek program during his junior year and graduated from Case Western in 2018 with a B.S. in Accounting. He currently works as an investment banking analyst at Piper Sandler and expects to join the private equity field in the near future.

Sam's journey into the investment banking industry intrigues me as we both share an accounting background and he did not pursue banking early on during college. His path was more unexpected and a result of effective networking. As a freshman, Sam was initially an undecided major struggling to decide a path to pursue: engineering or business. He ultimately chose a business pathway and decided to pursue an accounting degree. But since finance classes were unavailable until the sophomore year, he figured accounting would provide technical knowledge early on and also allow him to go down a route (Big 4) early during college.

During his internship with PwC, however, his responsibilities were primarily checking the boxes of things to do. Any time he suggested an innovative method to complete the task, his manager would respond with "Just do it as we did the last time." Work wasn't stimulating to him and he soon realized he wouldn't learn anything more than what he already knew if he continued down the Big 4 path. From his internship experience, he realized how overrated the Big 4 are and eventually shifted his focus to the financial services industry.

To help with his endeavors, Sam decided to pursue the Wall Street trek program. Getting accepted into the program at Case Western and participating in the preparatory classes were incredibly useful to Sam. He took initiative prior to the trek by calling people and building his network, but the trek also provided him with extensive knowledge about what exactly the roles are within the industry and about the industry itself. Additionally, the opportunity to meet professionals one-on-one was crucial to his growth and in making relationships.

Through making connections and being himself, Sam eventually landed an investment banking internship and his future job at Piper Sandler. And contrary to the responsibilities and work environment at PwC, investment banking affords immediate exposure to stimulating work straight out of college. He's learned how to effectively communicate with teammates to evaluate companies and worked with top management of firms to support their business operations. His key advice to prospective investment bankers is to continue working hard and reaching out to people.

Another key piece of advice Sam shared is to be open to any opportunities and don't be picky about working for a particular company. Sophomore internships will generally not be attractive and don't worry too much about it.