Connor Ryan Wall Street Trek Alumni Interview

I interviewed Liam Killingstad who graduated from CWRU in 2018 and went on the Wall Street Trek in 2016. Liam recently began a new position at a Venture Capital fund that invests in sports tech. Prior to his new position at the VC fund, he had worked as an investment banker at Goldman Sachs. He said he found the Trek to be very helpful. While on the Trek in NYC, he set up a few one on one meetings with firms he was interested in. He said creating some personal connections while on the Trek was instrumental in him ending up at Goldman Sachs.

Prior to securing his internship at GS, Liam had internships at Maryland Capital Advisors and Ceretel Inc. Both of these internships he said he knew someone who worked there, so he wasn’t stressed about the interview process as he knew he was going to get the position. When preparing for IB interviews he said he spent countless hours preparing. He also said he spent around $500 on additional vault guides and other materials to help prepare. Same Tedesco was a good friend of Liam’s, and they spent a lot of time doing mock interviews together. Another thing he said that would be very helpful as practice for the interview process would be to build financial models from scratch. Liam only applied to GS and Morgan Stanley, he was offered positions at both and accepted the GS offer.

In regards to networking, Liam said that he reached out to as many Case alumni as he could, while also contacting people he thought would be useful contacts. Given the fact that he is from Germany, he also contacted people from his hometown/neighboring areas who may have known his parents. He ended up finding a few good contacts doing this.

When commenting on his time at GS, Liam said he was consistently putting in around 100 hours a week for almost the first two years he was there. He said that his hours scaled back a bit once he got promoted to Associate. In that position, he was able to delegate some of his work to the Analysts below him so that he could spend more time designing pitch decks. He said that as an Analyst and Associate he would be given so much work because the Vice Presidents were scared of what was going to be turned into the Managing Directors. Around the time he left, Liam said that he knew he was ready to try something different at this point in his career. However, when he had started at GS, he had full intentions to stay longer term, he just didn’t know how demanding the job was until he was fully immersed in it.

Some advice he gave me at this stage was to do free work for people when possible. He said that cold outreach is terrible and people respond much quicker once you have built a personal connection. Also, doing stuff for people will allow you a chance to potentially show someone your skillset. Liam said that getting a really good banking job would definitely be something he would do over again. Regardless of the downside of the very long hours and large workload in the banking industry, the benefits are greater as you are paid very well and have great exit opportunities due to the resume boost and knowledge that it gives you.

Liam’s story of the day he had his final internship interview with GS may be the craziest thing I have heard. In short, his flight was delayed until the day of the interview, he had coffee spilled on his suit, the airline lost his bag, his hotel got cancelled, his shoe fell apart, and finally he was hit by a cab on his way to the building. He said the secret to getting a job at GS is to get hit by a car. Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed my conversation with Liam. He told me to reach out with any questions I may have in the future and he would be happy to help. I look forward to meeting with him again.