

MSOD Admissions Committee  
Pepperdine University

Hitting the winning home run in the little league all-star game, earning a full-ride academic scholarship to college, and being Apple's first Lead Genius in Hong Kong all made me proud. This pride from individual achievement has become unnecessary as I've grown though and the accomplishments haven't fulfilled my ambitions. I now know it's insufficiently rewarding for me to be good; I need all the people I work with to be proud as they collaborate every day to get something important accomplished.

As a college drop-out, I found structure and purpose in the workplace that I was unable to discover in the academic world before I had a career to tie my studies to. I've been with Apple Retail nearly 15 years since then and I'm inspired to develop employees from every walk of life, including the most modest beginnings, and to help them discover the ability to thrive in any organization. My professional accomplishments are constrained when not fueled by theories and practices from a broader world though. I will always work hard, but if I don't know how to connect my efforts to greater collective achievements I fail to make a difference.

Humanity can accomplish both immense and tiny-but-important achievements when we come together for a shared mission. Working harmoniously and effectively is an intense challenge though, made only more difficult as more people become involved. Larger missions and the emergent psychological complexities of the many humans required to pursue them underline the need for effective organizational techniques. If we're going to conquer global warming, sell everyone great smartphones, and settle Mars we need to get great at operating effective organizations at every level.

The stakes are too high for me to slowly learn how to influence and structure positive change through my experimentation. When I returned to complete my undergraduate degree after experiencing the professional world I found new inspiration from taking specific courses in sociology, psychology, and management to learn about effective leadership and human dynamics. I took each new learning to work the next day and found ways to apply it in my real world. The last class I took to finally complete my undergraduate degree was a seminar in Positive Psychology led by Professor Christopher Mruk. This class was informed by the facts of individual psychology, truly pulled together techniques from management and leadership theory, and funneled all towards the ambition of a better world for people anywhere they come together. This is the opportunity I see.

Pepperdine has the only program that I have found that will give me the chance to understand and practice the ideas that can help humans succeed in any organizational form, truly see how these concepts will interact with a diverse set of global organizations, and all-the-while pour more into the career that still inspires and challenges me every day. I am deeply excited by the chance to participate in this program and take from it the tools to help people collectively achieve.