

HE JUST DOES IT

HOW BRIAN FLUCHT ('98) HELPS DRIVE CORPORATE AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AT NIKE

Brian Flucht ('98) began his education at Northwestern in the fall of 1994 with a biomedical engineering major and visions of becoming a doctor. Four years later, Flucht graduated from McCormick with a degree in materials science and engineering, trading the pursuit of a medical career for a job with the National Security Agency (NSA).

"I did some very cool things at the NSA," says Flucht, and adds, "but unfortunately nothing I can discuss."

One aspect of his tenure at the NSA that Flucht does freely discuss is the versatility of his engineering degree. "I began to see how my training as an engineer could be used in so many other ways," he says.

This realization took the southern California native down a once-unforeseen path: first to an MBA, then on to venture capital, and finally into Nike's global headquarters near Portland, Oregon, where he now serves as director of global corporate business development.

When Flucht first arrived at Nike, one of the world's most iconic and forward-thinking brands, he joined the company's Sustainable Business and Innovation Lab, which discovered and supported pioneering innovations, particularly with outside vendors. A couple of years later, he was asked to join Nike's new global corporate business development team, where he interacts with senior leadership and helps drive strategic partnerships.

"I'm fortunate that I've been able to see how the entire machine works through a unique lens," says Flucht, a fitness devotee who calls himself an authentic Nike brand champion.

Focusing specifically on Nike's direct-to-consumer digital commerce, retail, brand, and consumer technology businesses, Flucht and his teammates serve as the connective tissue between the company's consumer IT and business leadership.

"When you're navigating those two highly distinct worlds, being tech savvy and having an engineering background definitely helps put things in perspective," Flucht says.

The engineering mentality comes into play especially when he encounters a challenging issue around an investment, product innovation, or other business-driving move. Flucht says his academic training as an engineer helps him shed distractions and pursue solutions.

"Because of my education at McCormick, I've learned how to ask the right questions and get to the root of a challenge to find the opportunity," he says. "In a company always looking to be at the forefront, that focus is incredibly important."

DANIEL P. SMITH



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