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## **Russian immigrant discovers love of data analysis**

Boston Business Journal - by [Chris Auclair](#) Special to the Journal

Michael Denisenko had lingering doubts as to whether he was the business school type. Denisenko, who views himself as laid-back and more focused on his passions than money, was worried he would not fit in with his peers.

"I consider myself an atypical business major," he said.

But the 29-year-old MBA candidate at Boston College also had a life that was anything but ordinary.

Denisenko grew up in Moscow, at a time when the city was still behind the Iron Curtain. When the curtain collapsed, the economic and political upheaval that ensued prompted his family to emigrate from Moscow to the United States in 1992. Eventually the family settled in Brookline.

Denisenko graduated from Tufts University in 2000 with a bachelor's degree in economics. He originally intended to study international relations, but found economics more appealing because it "governs the way the world runs."

After Tufts, he worked at Boston-based investment bank Adams Harkness Inc. -- now Canaccord Adams Inc. -- as a research and marketing coordinator until he was laid off after the dot-com boom went bust.

"In retrospect, it was the best thing that happened to me," he said.

He moved on and took a job as director of marketing and sales at Statistical Innovations Inc., a small, Belmont-based data analysis firm. Denisenko said this is where he learned vital career skills, since he was often given opportunities to help with statistical research projects. He said data analysis might not sound like the most appetizing skill to learn, but he sees it as exciting.

"It is fascinating to uncover relationships and patterns in data," he said. "A lot of companies do not know how to do this."



Denisenko left Statistical Innovations in 2006 to pursue his MBA at BC's Carroll School of Management. He said he was drawn to the close environment filled and like-minded students.

Denisenko's background in data analysis enjoyable helped him snag an internship last summer with at Google Analytics at the company's headquarters in Mountain View, Calif.

He said he loved working for the statistical research division of the Web services giant because of the brand visibility and the perks offered. He also enjoyed their flat corporate hierarchy, which put him only a few tiers away from the CEO, even as an intern.

He plans to work for Google in New York after he graduates in May, a move he says is the first step in his life plan.

"It is my dream to be an independent consultant and determine how much and where I work," he said.

What kind of work does he have in mind?

Denisenko used to play soccer every day in Russia, where it is one of the country's most popular sports. He wants to market the sport to the United States -- where it enjoys just a fraction of the popularity it has overseas -- and make it a prominent sport like baseball or basketball.

"I am a fan not only of the game, but also of the business," he said.

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