



How to Become Batman

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Steve's Story: Googler 13

By STEVE SCHIMMEL

I WAS BORN IN 1972 to a poverty-level family in suburban Chicago. During the first few years of my life, I shared a 600 sq ft, 1-bedroom cottage with my parents, older sister, and dog. As a kid, I grew up helping my dad kill roaches and trap rats in his 1-man pest control business.

Inspired by my architect grandfather who dabbled in the stock market, I started playing the market when I was 15 years old. In 1994 at age 21, I graduated Magna Cum Laude & Dean's List from Babson College, an undergraduate business college outside of Boston. Shortly thereafter, I moved to San Francisco to find the stark reality of an uninterested job market. After a period of trivial and unsuccessful undertakings, I took to the streets out of desperation to "make something happen." My thought at the time was: "if my resume falls on the floor, nobody will bother to pick it up."

It was September, 1995. I had been in San Francisco just over a year and had nothing to show for it. I remember walking around the streets of San Francisco and seeing two individuals who made a profound impression on me. One was a panhandler who simply sat on a corner and directly asked for money. The other was a man standing on a milk crate wearing a sandwich board that said "Repent! The end of the world is coming." I was in a state of mind where I was open to anything. The things that struck me were that the first man had gotten to a point where his ego had been worn away and he was willing to simply and directly ask for what he wanted without beating around the bush. The second man believed so strongly in his convictions that he was willing to physically wear his message and present it to the world. By the end of the week, I had created a sandwich

board expelling the virtues of my skills. One morning, I put on my best thrift store suit and boarded the 5am bus to the financial district with my sandwich board under my arm. I stood outside the Bank of America world headquarters, put the two-sided sign over my head and began passing out resumes. I was there for 12 hours. I passed out resumes as people rolled into work, when they went out for lunch, and as they left for home. This was one of the most humbling moments of my life. I stood out, exposed, bluntly asking for help and displaying my convictions. The response was amazing and really helped renew my faith in people. In the back of my head, I think I was expecting people to throw tomatoes at me (which my friend in New York said would have happened on Wall Street). Instead, many people took my resume and talked to me. A news crew even came.