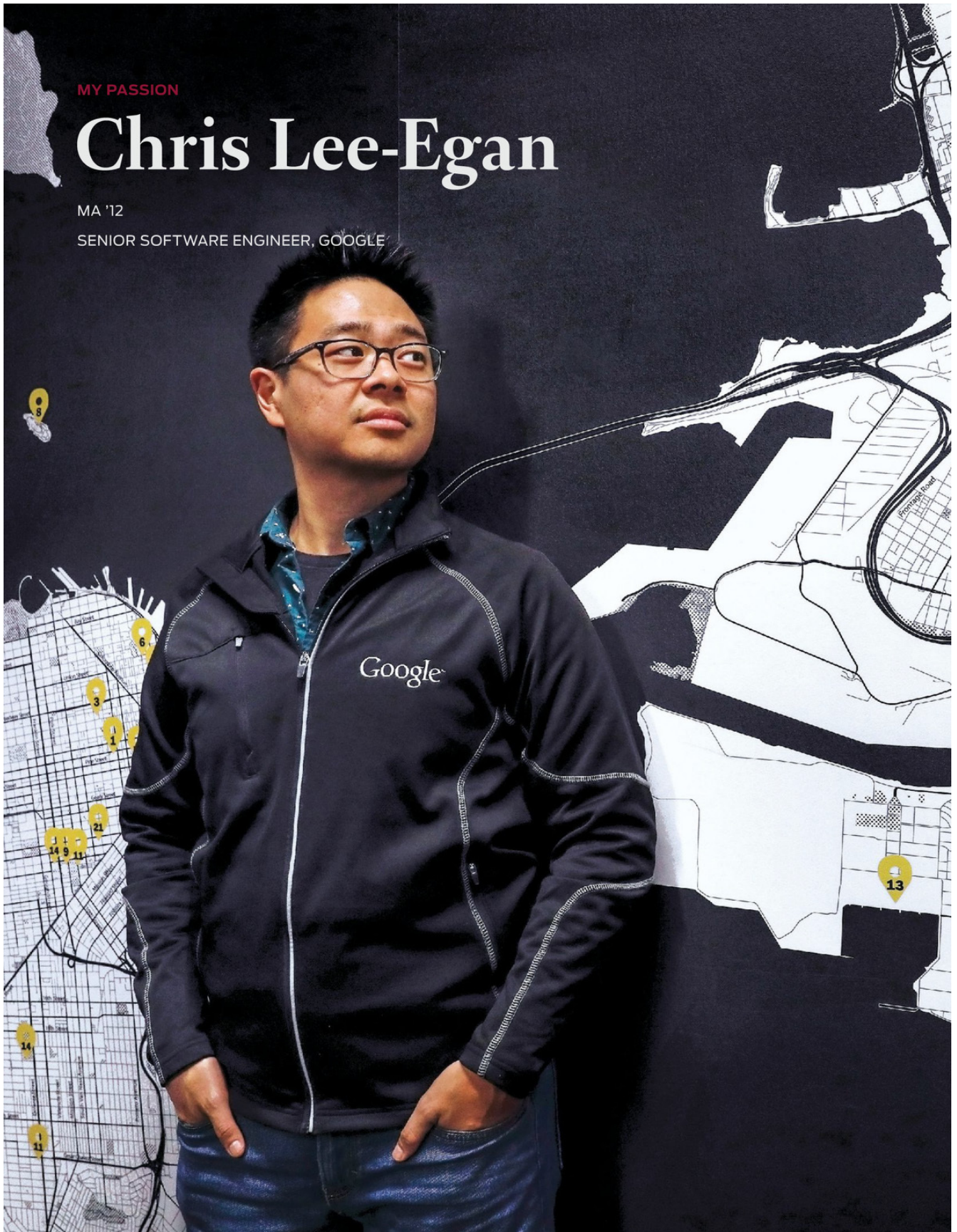


MY PASSION

Chris Lee-Egan

MA '12

SENIOR SOFTWARE ENGINEER, GOOGLE





GO FORTH

AND SET THE WORLD ON FIRE

Google-mapping a path to success

IF YOU DON'T THINK a degree in sociology is a ticket to one of the most coveted jobs in the tech industry, talk to Chris Lee-Egan. Growing up, Lee-Egan had a familiarity with coding—in high school he would create games on his graphing calculator when he got bored—but he also had a penchant for pondering big problems. “Things like urban environments, poverty, improving mass transit, and infrastructure always interested me, so I wanted to study the most complex system we have: society.”

Now a senior software engineer at Google, working on Google Maps and other global projects, Lee-Egan uses his sociological training regularly. “At Loyola we focused a lot on mixed methods and statistics, looking at broad surveys and also smaller case studies to get ground truths,” he said. “Now I do a lot of tooling and data analysis, and have to make sense of a fire hose of data coming in. The sociological methods help me sort useful information from noise, and structure the data so it matches with what is actually happening out there in the world.”

With the increasing recognition that solving societal problems will require breaking down the silos that separate traditional disciplines, Lee-Egan argues that the ability to bring fresh ideas to the tech sector is far more than just a professional asset. “In my opinion, tech needs more people with diverse backgrounds.”

While there is a certain aura about working at Google—its campus is legendary for the extracurricular perks—you won't find Lee-Egan on the climbing wall often. “Most of the time I'll be at my desk for hours, squinting at data on a screen,” he laughed. “I'll hit these problems and just sit there until I fix them.” —Chris Quirk

CHRIS' TIPS FOR BREAKING IN TO THE TECH INDUSTRY:

1. DON'T BE AFRAID TO BRANCH OUT AND TO PURSUE STUDIES OUTSIDE OF TECHNOLOGY.

2. YOUR PROFESSORS AND TEACHERS ARE AN AMAZING RESOURCE, SO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THEM. THEY CAN MENTOR YOU AND LEAD YOU TO OPPORTUNITIES THAT YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW EXIST.

3. NURTURE AND MAINTAIN YOUR PEER RELATIONSHIPS. FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES ARE THE BEST WAY TO GET YOUR FOOT IN THE DOOR OF ANY TECH COMPANY, BIG OR SMALL. THE TECH WORLD LIVES ON REFERRALS.

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