



Clemson Entrepreneur of the Week

Sam Cates

Co-Founder, Positive Sum
B.S Financial Management, 2009

What role do you play in the entrepreneurial ecosystem?

I recently co-founded a venture capital firm called Positive Sum, focused on early stage technology start-ups. I also run daybreak which incubates companies and advises people that are just getting started. Whether investing or advising, I help people build businesses with the potential to grow very large, very fast.

What are some of your best memories of your time at Clemson?

My first Clemson football game was incredible, the 2005 Texas A&M game in Death Valley where Jad Dean kicked 6 field goals. Being from out of state, I had no idea what I was in for.

I also met my wife at Clemson, and those first few years of being together on campus were really special.

What were some key inflection points in your career after you left Clemson?

First, Dr. Jack Wolf and Dr. John Alexander helped me secure an interview with GE's Financial Management Program a few weeks into my first finance class. I never would have imagined that his invitation would lead to more than 10 years and a wide range of experiences all within the company.

Moving to California and transitioning into an investing role with GE Ventures was a really big shift, from operating roles in GE's industrial businesses. It gave me the chance to learn from some incredible people with backgrounds leading institutional venture firms. They taught me so much about venture investing and the way the tech industry worked.

At the end of winding down GE Ventures in 2019, I had the chance to take some time to explore new opportunities. It was a weird year to be trying to figure out what was next, but I was incredibly fortunate for the opportunity to start building Positive Sum.

What are your personal and professional dreams?

Personally,

I want to start a new program for Special Olympics to support their “unified sports” MLS partnership. DC United was a great supporter of our program there, and I want to see more clubs lean into the opportunity.

Professionally,

Positive Sum is just getting started, and I want to build a firm that supports some of the most important companies of the next 20 years.

What would you recommend students do to maximize their remaining time at Clemson?

Try to do something unique, that makes you stand out to the kind of people and organizations you want to work with. Doing well in classes is a minimum. Internships, side projects, and networking really set you apart after that.

What else should we know about you?

I spend way too much time on Twitter @samcates



The Spiro Institute for Entrepreneurial Leadership promotes and fosters Entrepreneurship & Innovation across Clemson University.

Through our research, teaching, and service activities, we impact approximately 2,000 faculty, staff, students, and alumni every year.

To learn more, reply to this email or [click here](#)

For daily and weekly updates, follow @clemsonspiro

**Spiro Institute for Entrepreneurial Leadership | 716.998.6000
PO Box 1001, Clemson SC 29631 | [Website](#)**



Spiro Institute - Clemson Venture Accelerator | PO Box 1001, Clemson, SC 29631

[Unsubscribe {recipient's email}](#)

[Update Profile](#) | [About our service provider](#)

Sent by jmhanno@clemson.edu powered by