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When Rick Welday stumbles into something accidentally, he seems to know how to make the most of it.

As a junior in high school, Welday's family had just recently moved to Texas from Michigan. Welday happened to be free one day when his dad encouraged him to visit the Baylor campus.

"I liked the kids, I liked the campus, and I liked the professors," Welday said. "It was refreshing to consider a school that prioritized Christian values. And I'm not sure I would have considered Baylor without making that trip with my dad that day."

Once enrolled, Welday immersed himself in the Baylor culture. He was a member of the Student Foundation, Sigma Chi fraternity, excelled in his classes, and made lifelong friendships.

But it was just before graduating, with a double major in Finance and Management, that another accidental stumble changed his life.

Because he had imagined a career in financial services, he was excited to learn that a large banking firm was coming to campus. He got up very early to be sure to get in line by 5 a.m. But at 7 a.m., someone from the placement office came out and made the announcement there had been a mistake, and Southwestern Bell was the actual company interviewing that day.

"I started walking away, but my girlfriend [now his wife] grabbed my arm and said, 'Don't waste the time you spent.' I told her I was not going to work for the phone company," he said. "But she convinced me that I should interview anyway, just for practice."

Twenty-three years later, Welday still works for "the phone company," but as the senior vice president of network care for AT&T Services.

During those years, Welday has seen a tremendous amount of change.

"The mobile Internet is the fastest-moving and most powerful wave of our lifetime," he said. "You almost have to go back to the internal combustion engine to find anything that has had such a profound impact on how we live, work and socialize. For most of us, the mobile Internet has become so natural that it's an

THE ACCIDENTAL EMPLOYEE

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ingrained part of our lives and something we only notice when it's not there."

Welday recalls that when the iPhone first launched on the AT&T network in 2007, Facebook was just getting started, the Kindle was still months away, Android phones didn't exist, and unlimited streaming video from Netflix was still a year in the making.

Now, he notes, tablets are on track to surpass laptops, e-books are outselling adult fiction hardcovers, and more than 30 billion mobile apps were downloaded worldwide last year alone.

"So, mobile Internet technology has changed every aspect of my life and work: how I communicate with my family, how I share experience, and how I work. Bottom line, I am more connected, engaged and productive, thanks to the power of the mobile Internet," he said.

Welday also believes that more change is on the horizon.

High-bandwidth applications, combined with the cloud as remote content storage, create endless possibilities.

"Think about what that means," Welday said. "All the content that is important to you can be integrated and synced on all of your devices, including your smartphone, your tablet, your PC, your TV, and even your car and home."

And Welday loves it. "I thrive on change," he said. "But whatever I do, I'm focused on what it is we're supposed to accomplish and what our customers want us to be doing. And that's something that came from Baylor: we are to care, be impactful and strive for excellence. That applies to the business world and everywhere else."