



**Serge Kassardjian**

Profession: **Global Head of Media Apps, Business Development for Android and Google Play**

Location: **New York, New York**



Google is the ideal work environment for Kassardjian, merging his interests as an avid sports fan and entertainment consumer with his passion for technology.

# ENTERTAINMENT REVOLUTION

*How Google's Serge Kassardjian  
is transforming the way we consume  
entertainment and media*

Whether you love music, movies, news or sports, never have there been so many options to indulge your favorite hobby—whenever and wherever you want. Whether it is on a mobile phone, tablet, watch, connected TV or virtual reality headset, technology has created an unprecedented amount of choice and convenience for consumers. Making sense of the constantly changing media and entertainment landscape, however, is not easy. The seemingly infinite array of video streaming services and entertainment apps available today is enough to overwhelm the most tech-savvy consumer. Even industry experts admit they sometimes struggle to keep up with the blistering pace of technological development.

Just ask Google's Serge Kassardjian. As the global head of media apps for Google Play (Android), Kassardjian leads global business development efforts for media companies for Google Play Apps on Android, including entertainment, video, sports, news, virtual reality and cable. At the forefront of emerging technologies, he is responsible for helping companies, including HBO, Disney, Netflix, *The New York Times*, the NFL and the NBA reach audiences around the world through Google technology. "The most challenging part of my job," he says, "is definitely keeping up with the fast pace of technology and making sure our biggest media partners are integrating it and prioritizing what is most important to their business."

Launched more than five years ago, Google Play is the official app store for the Android operating system, where people can download apps to watch movies, sports or TV shows digitally and read news from around the world. Its appeal for media companies lies in its immense global reach. When a company publishes an app or game on Google Play, it becomes available to the over two billion active Android users in more than 190 countries and territories around the world.

It is the ideal work environment for Kassardjian, merging his interests as an avid sports fan and entertainment enthusiast with his passion for technology.

Working at the convergence of media and technology, bringing Hollywood and Silicon Valley together, provides both motivation and satisfaction. "You want both the technology and the media to succeed. When a new show is launched or a sports event is held, it's always exciting to see your technology being utilized with interesting media."

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Kassardjian has enjoyed the thrill of watching a vision on paper turn into a product widely used and discussed. He has helped lead several business development efforts for major product launches, including Google Wallet (now known as Android Pay), Nexus phones and tablets, Android TV and Google's Daydream Virtual Reality headset. As part of his current responsibilities he spends weeks at a time traveling throughout the United States and abroad to help expand Google's partnerships and reach around the globe by working with media companies globally.

Fluent in Armenian and English, and conversational in Spanish, Kassardjian considers himself a citizen of the world. Born in Beirut, and raised in Los Angeles, California, Kassardjian's parents, Sarkis and Grace, always encouraged him to pursue his passions—no matter where he was. "I saw moving as an opportunity to learn, adjust and adapt," he adds. "I got to see a lot of different plac-

es and that has made me a lot more diverse as a person."

At the same time, he was also inspired to succeed by example, especially by a community of friends and family. "My Armenian upbringing made me more of a hustler and a hard worker," he says. "I saw a lot of entrepreneurship around me, and a lot of people focussed on their professional development. That inspired me to do the same and also made me set a very high ethical bar, which has truly helped me along the way."

That ingrained Armenian work ethic revealed itself at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California, where Kassardjian earned his bachelors of science in mechanical engineering and math, graduating as president of his class and chair of the Student Body Senate.

As part of his master's degree in mechanical engineering and design the following year, he was presented with a Lincoln Award for Design Innovation for his work on mechatronics and robotics.

Kassardjian spent the next few years in Silicon Valley, working for Globespan Capital Partners, a venture capital firm, before his passion for sports and entertainment motivated him to switch gears.



He moved to Boston, Massachusetts to pursue an MBA at the Harvard Business School, focusing on the impact of technology on media. The logical next step to put his combined expertise into practice was in New York City, somewhere he had longed to return ever since spending an outstanding summer during his undergrad as an intern with the AGBU New York Summer Internship Program (NYSIP). He moved to New York City to work at Sony Music in Corporate Development as a part of the company's Global Digital Business, working on partnerships with companies such as Spotify and VEVO.

Remembering NYSIP, Kassardjian says fondly: "It was a program that was really valuable to both my career development and personal emotional development." In between meeting Armenians from around the world and learning from their different perspectives, Kassardjian says just working in the city provided a tremendous life lesson. "Living and working in New York day-to-day in an intense environment was an opportunity to demonstrate endurance and an ability to perform my duties under challenging circumstances. It was not only enriching; it really helped me learn a lot."

Kassardjian remains as focused as ever on the challenge of developing high quality mobile apps that traditional companies can rely on to reach a global audience.

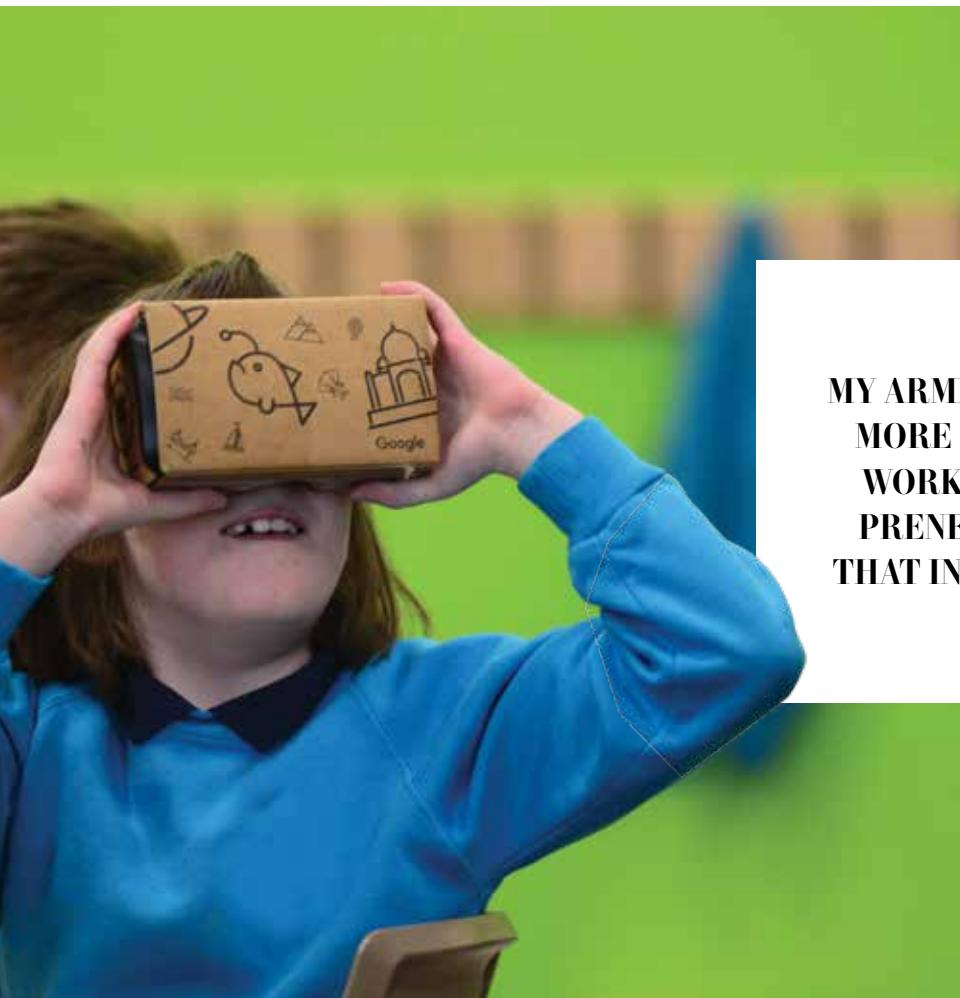
The summer internship program left such an impression that Kassardjian volunteered to give back as a member of the NYSIP committee. As a mentor, he likes to remind interns of the importance of maintaining a professional image on all their social media networks, as potential employers often perform thorough background checks. He also recommends interns make the most of their college alumni networks as a springboard to larger employment opportunities.



For those looking to start a career in technology, Kassardjian stresses the need to build their analytic capabilities and absorb everything they can about the industries they are interested in, but also be an individual. "Continue to show strong leadership, surpass all expectations and be passionate but practical in identifying big markers and ways technology can disrupt them."

Along with his role in NYSIP, Kassardjian continues being actively involved with the AGBU Young Professionals (YP) and various committees. "I feel like it's our responsibility as Armenians to make sure we are providing talented people around us with opportunities. My culture is very important to me and I want to preserve that—being involved in AGBU is a great way to do it."

In the meantime, as the spectrum of tech platforms and services continues to



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expand, Kassardjian remains as focused as ever on the challenge of developing high quality mobile apps that traditional companies can rely on to reach a global audience, and when they do, share in their success. 🌟