

A Day in the life of...

Alex Finch Director, JLL

MY ALARM GOES OFF...

I've recently moved out of London, so my alarm now goes off around 5.45am ready for my longer commute to the office (luckily I don't have to do this every day!). I walk to the train station and have a long train ride followed by a few stops on the underground to the head office in the West End. We now have a 'dress for your day' policy so no strict rules around suits but I tend to wear a dress or smart trousers as most days I meet with clients.

I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR...

My typical role is to advise residential developers (our clients) on how to optimise a piece of land or a development that hasn't yet been built, looking at the design of the apartments, layouts, level of specification, communal facilities and pricing. We then develop a sales and marketing strategy so that when our client is ready, we can launch the development to the market, normally off-plan, so we can start selling before the homes are ready to live in. It can take several years to see a project through from start to finish so you have to build good relationships with clients, marketing companies and colleagues.

I GOT MY JOB...

I studied Land Economy at Cambridge University as an undergraduate. This degree gave me The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) accreditation to enable me to start a property graduate role without having to do a master's degree and to then train to become a qualified Chartered Surveyor. When doing my A-levels I was interested in a career in property so this degree suited as it gave me the accreditation but also flexibility if I had decided to pursue a different career. After my second year at university I did an internship at King Sturge, after meeting them at a careers fair, and then was accepted on to their graduate scheme. Seven years later the company merged with JLL so I've effectively been with the same company since I graduated.

AT SCHOOL I STUDIED...

My GCSEs were fairly standard with the sciences, maths, English, geography, German, DT and music. I just chose subjects that I enjoyed as at that stage I wasn't sure on a career choice. For A-levels I studied Maths,



Director



Real Estate

Economics and Geography. I enjoyed maths and geography from my GCSEs and whilst Economics was a new subject to me I was interested in business and it gave me a rounded choice, with flexibility over which degree to choose, as I developed my thoughts on careers. These subjects did end up relating to my degree and to some extent my job.

MY TYPICAL DAY...

I'm at my desk for 8.30am. Once a week we have a full team meeting to chat through new projects, how the market is doing, and any new intel or trends. It is a good chance for everyone to get up to speed! My day involves client meetings, normally focussed on specific projects. Once we start selling, these evolve to a weekly sales and marketing meeting, where we discuss our latest strategy and the sales in hand. We sell to both the UK and international markets, so

my morning normally involves catching up with colleagues in Asia before they finish for their day.

Pricing an entire development can involve an excel schedule with hundreds of apartments listed. For that I normally need to lock myself away in a breakout room so that I can concentrate as our office is open plan. Lunch is either a quick bite to eat locally in Soho with colleagues or a client to catch up on work, or there is plenty of choice from local cafes or shops for a takeaway sandwich or salad back in the office. We have a lovely break out space for employees to sit away from your desk if you can spare the time, and an internal coffee shop!

THE KEY SKILLS I USE IN MY JOB...

I use a variety of skills in my job. Learning the technical knowledge to qualify as a surveyor was important but since then it has been about building skills of communication, collaboration and learning from market experience. The advice we give to developers is often based on experiences from other clients or projects that we learn over time. A good base knowledge of excel also helps when working with schedules and analysing the data. Over time

my client relationship skills have improved as their trust in you develops and you gain confidence in your own advice.

THE BEST PART OF MY JOB IS...

I really like the variety that training to be a surveyor offered, as you didn't have to choose your specialism straight away. I chose to specialise in residential development, but I still have a real variety to my day job. I love dealing with tangible assets - at the end of the day there is always a piece of land or building that forms the basis of our work and most of the time you can go and see it! JLL has a fantastic work culture and has been hugely accommodating as I have progressed through the business, had two children, moved out of London and gone part time. I appreciate the flexibility that they have offered.

THE WORST PART OF MY JOB IS...

As a graduate surveyor I had to visit and inspect sewage works in East Anglia - not my most glamorous time but luckily that was a long time ago now! Nowadays, there is little I don't enjoy about my role but if anything, dealing with colleagues in different time zones and being client facing, it is probably the pressure you feel to be contactable 24/7 and not to let anyone down. Having a good team around you though helps and I now know I can rely on colleagues to assist if I'm not in the office or am on holiday.

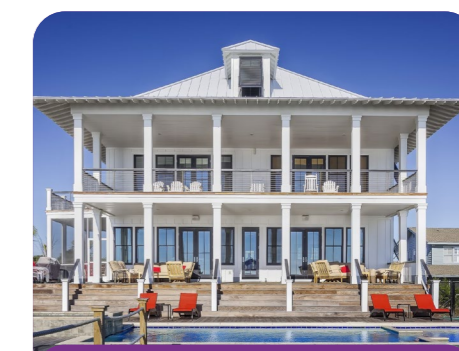
MY ROLE MODEL GROWING UP WAS...

I wouldn't say I ever had a single role model, but my parents and teachers always believed in me and encouraged me to challenge myself and succeed. I probably wouldn't have

applied to Cambridge University without them telling me it could be a possibility. My parents both worked (although neither in property) and I think this gave me a good work ethic as well as motivation to go out into the world and make something for myself.

AFTER WORK...

After my day in our London office I commute home by train. I either finish those last few e-mails or read a novel on my Kindle, which I haven't done much since I had my children. It is good to have some downtime on the commute and switch off for a bit. Once home it is a fun-filled hour seeing the boys, reading stories and getting them to bed. I enjoy cooking so normally try to cook a meal for me and my husband to enjoy at the kitchen table before diving onto the sofa at 9pm for an hour of TV!



MY PLAN B...

I had always thought I might follow in my Mum's footsteps and become a primary school teacher but after a recent spell of home-schooling I've realised perhaps I would not be patient enough and it was just as well I didn't!! My dream job now would be presenting 'Location Location' as I love understanding people's requirements, searching for homes and finding the perfect fit or the wild card!

