

Financial  
ServicesHead of Non-financial  
Risk Oversight

## Catherine Levy

### Head of Non-Financial Risk Oversight, Compliance, HSBC

#### MY ALARM GOES OFF...

I work flexibly, 2 days at home and 3 days in the office to help me manage the fatigue I have as a result of my chronic Arthritis. On the work from home days my alarm goes off at 7am (instead of 6am) to start work by 7.45am. I have breakfast with my husband (porridge and peanut butter/jam) and strong coffee, instead of at my desk. I put on a smart dress/ or coordinate separates in a strong colour, to present a professional but individual image, as wherever I am I'll be on Zoom meetings and I want people to instantly recognise me. On office days I take the tube/DLR to Canary Wharf, leaving home by 6.45am to get to my desk between 8-8.30am.

#### I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR...

I am the "face" of Non-Financial Risk "NFR". This means I am responsible for ensuring that the Function (Global, Regional, and Country teams) use and maintain the Banks' Non-financial risk framework, which covers all Businesses/Operations/Systems/Technology used in managing and controlling Financial Crime, Anti-Bribery & Corruption, Fraud and Regulatory Compliance (financial regulations for how we deal with customers and Markets). In plain English this means

my job involves:

- Making sure policies are written clearly and describe Business controls for Compliance risks.
- Setting an annual oversight plan for the activities the teams need to do and work with Operational risk to review them against this.
- Setting and reviewing key performance indicators utilising data.
- Supporting NFR design and delivery of any changes to the NFR Framework

#### I GOT MY JOB...

I was asked to undertake the Compliance-wide role having implemented the requirements for NFR for Regulatory Compliance. My route into Compliance is unusual but helps me enormously in making things "real" for the Businesses. I entered Banking through a school leavers scheme. I completed my Institute of Banking exams, then a Financial Services Degree, the CISI IAC and then Diploma and am now Chartered Fellow of CISI and a Compliance Forum Committee member. I spent 15 years in front line business facing roles, Investment and Mortgage Advice, managed portfolios of clients, moved to a US Bank and then moved into Product Manager role, setting

up an Investment Business. As a result I was offered a role as a Compliance Manager. I have since held a range of roles from front line Compliance Manager to Compliance Internal Auditor, Compliance Assurance Head and then into a role supporting the design of a new Operational Risk framework and implementing it for the Regulatory Compliance function across HSBC and its Businesses. I have recently moved into my current Compliance wide role.

#### AT SCHOOL I STUDIED...

O'level Maths, English Language, English Literature, History, RE, Chemistry, French, Biology. BTEC in Business and Financial Services, Institute of Bankers Diploma. As I joined the school leavers scheme at 16 I didn't study for A'level but instead with support from the Bank I worked and completed a vocational BTEC qualification as it was relevant to my role and then went on to complete various professional qualifications as well as a

Financial Services Degree. I chose my "O'Levels" as subjects I really enjoyed and they have proved to be a very useful foundation for my career. Financial Services requires a really strong grasp of language (English exams), numeracy, an enquiring mind, strong communications skills and an ability to research and a vast amount of new skills.

#### MY TYPICAL DAY...

Typically I am at my desk by 7.45am. The first thing I do is check my calendar for the meetings I have for the day to ensure I am prepared. I then check my emails for anything urgent and plan what I want to try to achieve by the end of the day if all goes to plan. A lot of my day is taken with meetings, which include formal governance meetings providing input and making decisions related to how the NFR framework is being improved, and what changes that will mean for the businesses. My day also involves providing advice to colleagues in other countries, running working groups, answering questions from my team and checking they are delivering their work, and answering questions from Operational Risk, the Compliance Leadership etc. I also write papers for the Executive and review reports and papers prepared by colleagues, as well as other information connected to my role and the NFR. Morning meetings tend to be with Asia Middle East North Africa/Europe and afternoon meetings can be Europe, US, Canada and Latin America.

#### THE KEY SKILLS I USE IN MY JOB...

- Communication skills – verbal and written. I developed this through the different roles I have held as well as various training courses.
- Compliance knowledge – gained through qualifications and

experience within roles.

- Business knowledge – I have a very strong knowledge of the processes that the businesses operate from having undertaken many different business roles as well as from learning more about businesses from auditing them/undertaking assurance reviews.

#### THE BEST PART OF MY JOB IS...

- Engaging with colleagues both within Compliance and the business, providing them advice about how to use and comply with the NFR and helping them to solve problems they have encountered.
- Supporting design improvements for the NFR to make it work more effectively, improve the processes for the Bank and our customers and help manage risk.
- Working with my team – we learn from each other all of the time, they challenge my thinking, come up with other ideas, and they are very tech savvy!

#### THE WORST PART OF MY JOB IS...

Running out of time and sometimes having to go with something that is "good enough", but I usually find a way to get to "even better if" over time and keep making improvements. Working with colleagues who are deliberately difficult, really don't care about what they are doing, or have very poor behaviours towards others.

#### MY ROLE MODEL GROWING UP WAS...

Elizabeth I and Catherine of Aragon (I am a real history fan). Both incredibly strong women who made their mark in a really difficult environment dominated by men in a very turbulent period of history. I read a LOT of historical novels as well as factual history, when I was growing up.

I really admire their resilience in the face of adversity, their grasp of politics and how to manage their way through some incredibly difficult challenges but still kept true to their own values. They also used clothing as a way of making statements to the outside world about who they were which was incredibly important at the time. Image is something that is often overlooked but people make a judgement based on appearance within 7 seconds of meeting someone!

#### AFTER WORK...

If I'm in the office I tend not to get home until 8.30pm – 9pm, so the evening is dinner with my husband, a quick hour of TV (I love a good crime drama, historical drama or comedy and I am a Sewing Bee addict) then bed. I always squeeze in reading a few pages of the latest novel I'm reading and I read on my tube journey as well. When I'm working from home, I go for a walk with my husband in the local area, have dinner and occasionally we will have a quick game of cards. I will also spend 20 minutes doing my physiotherapy exercises (I suffer from chronic arthritis). Dinner will be chicken/fish and vegetables (cooked by my husband) and as a little treat a small piece of homemade cake (I'm the baker) in front of the TV.

#### MY PLAN B...

I am very creative in my personal life and was always (still am) very interested in fashion design. I would therefore have opted for a creative career, or alternatively as I have a passionate interest in history a career connected to Museum Curatorship or conservatorship?