

A Day in the life of...



Financial Services



Product Owner

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MY ALARM GOES OFF...

Around 7.30am. I get myself ready and then cycle the 20 minutes to the office near Liverpool Street in London. After a quick shower, I normally get to my desk around 8.30am. I have a slice of toast and cup of tea for breakfast in the kitchen before getting started for the day. Since I work for a technology company, the dress code is pretty relaxed so I'm normally in jeans and a jumper, although if my day involves client meetings, I'll wear something smart!

I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR...

As a product owner, it is my role to specify the new features and product enhancements that the developers in my team will then build into the platform. My role involves understanding what our end users need, defining exactly what we need to build out in the system to meet that need, and translating that into requirements that the developers can then build. Sometimes the detail that I need to define will include actuarial calculations and test cases or I might be creating mock-ups for the user interface with our UX designers.

I GOT MY JOB...

After university, I applied for lots of jobs and secured one working at an actuarial consultancy just outside of London. In retrospect, I think I would have benefited from doing a placement of some sort during university to show I was interested in finance roles and had some experience in an office! After a few years working for the actuarial consultancy and making good progress with my professional exams, I was looking for something new. I found the role at my current firm, who develop actuarial software used by pension consultancies, pension plans and asset managers.

AT SCHOOL I STUDIED...

For A-level I studied Maths and the three Sciences as I wanted to keep all my options open and was not very sure what I wanted to do. I studied Mathematics in

University of Edinburgh as it was my best subject, but I still was not sure what I wanted to do! I had come across the role of being an actuary when researching careers at school but didn't really know what the day to day entailed but knew it was a possible option for me to explore with strong maths skills.

MY TYPICAL DAY...

My day starts with checking my emails to catch up on anything that has happened overnight. We have a lot of users (and an office) in US and because we are a technology company, things happen out of hours. Each

morning we have a 15min virtual team 'standup' to catch up on our work and priorities. The team is me (the product owner), four developers, a tester and a scrum master so the standup works well for keeping everyone in the loop. Then I get cracking on my work. I might be signing off on some new functionality the team has completed, or working on fleshing out the requirements for some upcoming development work, or doing a detailed excel spec with some actuarial calculations that will get built into code. The role is very varied and there's always lots to keep me busy!

THE KEY SKILLS I USE IN MY JOB...

Communication is a massive part of my role, and there are lots of different stakeholders that I will be communicating with. These include translating business requirements of users into software enhancements that the developers need to code up, presenting new functionality and the work that has been done by my team to the office, gathering information from users, and communicating with users on how to leverage the system for their needs. Analytical thinking

is also key! There is lots of thinking required in my job, it might be trying to work out where something has gone wrong or thinking through different use cases for functionality to make sure what we develop helps add as much value as possible.

THE BEST PART OF MY JOB IS...

The work is always varied and constantly changing! Once we have done one new development, we will be moving on to something different so there's definitely no danger of my role being repetitive. It is definitely challenging which I enjoy, and we're working to constantly improve and evolve our product so there is a real sense of building something! I also enjoy working as part of a team. We have different roles within the team, but everyone is working together to meet our team goals each sprint. My company's culture is also great and there is always a social or drinks to get involved in.

THE WORST PART OF MY JOB IS...

The toughest part of my job is making sure that we always produce high quality pieces of new functionality, especially when we have a tight contractual deadline that we are working against! It is a very complex system, and we have lots of users and clients who use the system in different ways. We try to make sure we put in place lots of measures and internal testing to help ensure high quality as we never want our end users finding a software bug or finding an error in a calculation!

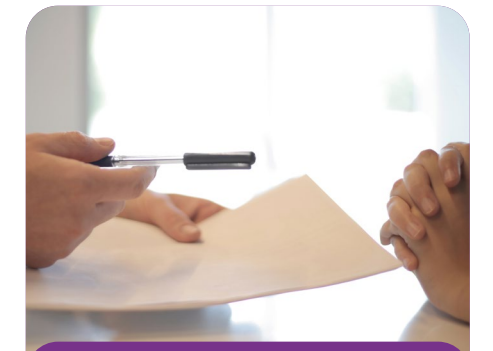
MY ROLE MODEL GROWING UP WAS...

I don't think I really had a career role model growing up, it was only really after leaving university that

I realised the range of jobs that were on offer, and through my career I have met lots of inspiring people that I look up to. I knew I would not be satisfied with a job that meant doing the same thing year after year so I was really happy to discover how many types of careers are on offer, a lot more than my careers advisor told me about!

AFTER WORK...

After work, depending on what day of the week it is, I might play netball in Highbury Fields, or meet up with some friends for drinks and dinner, or go to a gig. There is always lots happening in London! I try to make sure I keep an evening a week free, so I get some time to chill at home also.



MY PLAN B...

After university, my career started as more like a typical actuarial consultant. I'm really glad I moved into a technology role in a relatively young company where it feels like we are all working collectively to build a great product and trying to be innovative and agile to what the market needs. I am glad I studied to be an Actuary and I think going through the exams definitely does help build out skills and analytical thinking that help with my current role!

