

ELBA

A Day in the life of...



Financial
Services



Investment
Analyst

Christopher Reece Investment Analyst, Citigroup

MY ALARM GOES OFF...

I like to try and exercise in the morning, so my alarm goes off a little earlier than it probably needs to. By 6:30am I'm out of the house and running to the gym across the road from work where, more often than not, I fail to do any additional exercise and head straight to the showers. I'm dressed and at my desk by around 8:00am, in time to read the financial news, answer emails, and prepare for the day; all ahead of the bank's regular morning meeting at 8:30am.

I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR...

In a nutshell, my role involves advising my bank's wealthiest clients on their investments, helping to ensure they are financially able to meet their needs and wants. Though that may sound simple enough, every client is unique and their 'wants' and 'needs' are hugely subjective. Whether a client is looking to build a portfolio of investments to support them through a comfortable retirement or seeking

returns to buy their next business, we balance appropriate investment advice with an understanding of their circumstances and the risks involved in their investment activities.

I GOT MY JOB...

I studied Politics at the University of York and moved through a number of roles in the insurance industry before working in investments and capital markets. I graduated into a job as an insurance broker, a position where socialising in and around Lloyd's of London was the key skill. After a couple of years, looking for a more quantitative role (that was also easier on my liver), I talked my way into an actuarial job. From here I made a conscious choice to pursue a banking position and enrolled in a series of financial exams outside of my company. These ultimately led to a role as an investment consultant at our sister organisation, and finally my current job at Citi.

AT SCHOOL I STUDIED...

My GCSEs were typical as I had little idea of what I wanted to do at that stage. I took German over French (I regret not paying more attention as my career to date has shown that being bilingual is a huge bonus). I took history and geography over RE, and also opted to learn IT (which back then was still a skill which needed teaching). I did fine; in a selective grammar school in a good area I was middle of the road. This is not the end of the world.

By the time A Levels arrived people were telling me I should consider a career as an architect so I took DT, Fine Art (despite having not studied it at GCSE (if you ask and can justify your decisions most people tend to be flexible and understanding)) Politics and History. I did badly and took a gap year; worked in a bar and ran a hat company. This is also not the end of the world.

MY TYPICAL DAY...

The day starts with the 8:30am morning meeting where we hear about moves in Asian markets overnight and share information and across the business. After this it's back to my desk to analyse existing client investments and recommend changes. I'm up and down across the floor speaking to colleagues who trade and manage money for our UHNW (Ultra-High Net Worth clients). These are typically individuals or families worth £25 million or more. I attend meetings with Private Bankers, discussing 'pitches' to win new clients. Lunch is usually a sandwich and a bag of crisps from Waitrose across the street. Fridays may include a detour via 'The Parlour' (our local pub) with colleagues or friends working nearby.

THE KEY SKILLS I USE IN MY JOB...

Beyond any numerical ability, I increasingly find that strong people skills are the most valuable trait in my industry. Whilst knowing a little about finance will definitely help in the first instance, the on-going management of your career (I suspect in whatever field you choose) will force you to interact with, and rely on colleagues. This can be hard. I've worked for very clever individuals and very dedicated individuals but more than anything, what they had in common was the ability to manage and work with those around them.

THE BEST PART OF MY JOB IS...

Meeting clients, though not without its stresses and sleepless nights, remains a thrill. Still more so when they engage with your advice and act on your recommendations. Beyond this, the culture of my team is exciting. Working with around 45 like-

minded analysts across the globe (we regularly speak with colleagues in Hong Kong, Singapore, New York, and Dubai) forces you to push yourself to stand out from the crowd and up your game to meet the bar set by your peers.

THE WORST PART OF MY JOB IS...

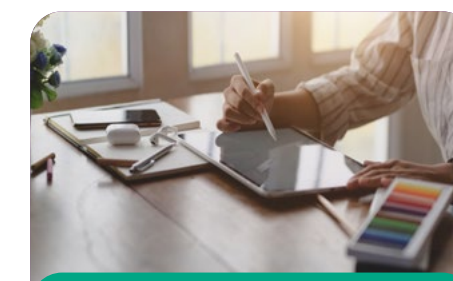
The role can place high demands on your time, particularly if you let it. Still relatively new to the position I'm learning to manage this aspect of the job and understand that the world won't stop turning if I wait and respond to an email in the morning. Associated with this is the challenge of knowing when work is 'good enough'. Simply put we are a commercial enterprise and the quality of advice we give to our clients can withstand the occasional typo or poorly formatted document. That's not to say these things don't matter – they absolutely do – only that everything superfluous we choose to spend time on pulls time from other areas we could have added value for our clients. As a former boss used to say, 'if you want it to sound pretty go work in academia'.

MY ROLE MODEL GROWING UP WAS...

Tottenham weren't a very good football team in my youth (we're talking 1995-2005) so the specific focus of my support on any individual was limited. Instead I remember the excitement of the TopGear theme tune on Sunday nights (this was in the olden days when Jeremy Clarkson hosted). Beyond the cars, the epic road trips and journeys abroad were the most exciting part of the week and a world away from my small house in Shropshire. I guess if I had to force a connection, at some point some part of me must have decided that, in order to see these places and have these experiences, I'd have to work hard in an industry that paid well.

AFTER WORK...

I'm very fortunate to live near the office so don't have to worry about last trains or missed connections. As a result I typically enjoy stepping away from my desk around 1800 to grab dinner at a restaurant or pub near work before heading back to clear out my emails and catch-up on projects with fewer interruptions. Here no day is really 'typical' and I may choose to work late or instead head home. Weekends involve long runs along the river (to mitigate the mid-week pub dinners) and plans with friends.



MY PLAN B...

Though I was told to be an architect during my secondary education I don't ever remember seriously considering it as a career. The same can be said for my politics degree which, whilst interesting, never translated into any specific job in my head. I guess I still don't entirely know what I want to pursue as 'Plan A', never mind 'Plan B'. What I will say is that my current role allows me to spend most of my time with people much smarter than myself, whilst also equipping me with core STEM skills which will help me in any role down the road. In my experience careers are fungible and your teens and twenties should be spent acquiring skills, experiences and confidence to add value wherever you ultimately decide to work.