

A Day in the life of...



Duncan Miller, Construction Site Manager, CField Construction

MY ALARM GOES OFF...

I wake up at about 6am and have everything prepared so I can get out the door by 6:30am. I get changed into my work clothes, which are smart casual (a building site is not the best place to wear your most expensive suits!). I take public transport to the site and usually arrive at around 7:30am. As I work on construction sites, my place of work varies about every 2 years (which is how long a project roughly takes). At the moment I am building a residential development of 120 apartments in West London.

I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR...

My job is to manage the safe construction of the project, on time and on budget and to the right standard of quality. The most important part is to manage the health, safety and wellbeing of everyone on site. Construction sites are hazardous places to work, be it working at height on a scaffold or in an excavation or with electricity. Without proper management accidents can happen and people can get hurt or

even killed. Everyone should go home safe to their family and friends at the end of each day, so all the hazards on site need to be carefully managed.

I GOT MY JOB...

I went to university and studied Civil Engineering. It's a fantastic but challenging course. It teaches you to think logically, practically, and how to solve problems. People I work with also studied Construction Management, Architecture or did apprenticeships in college to learn a particular skill, like carpentry. My first job on site was as an Assistant Site Engineer. Later I became the Site Engineer, then the Assistant Site Manager and now I am a Site Manager. I got my job through a recruitment company who put me in contact with the construction company I now work for.

AT SCHOOL I STUDIED...

I did Maths, Spanish and Philosophy A Levels. I chose those subjects as I wanted to have a

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broad range of learning. Maths was probably the most important subject for me as I had to do it to study Engineering at university. It is hugely valuable in my current role when I have to use it do calculations or budgets. I enjoyed Philosophy as it taught me to how to think critically and consider different arguments. But it is not particularly relevant to my job. I enjoyed learning Spanish but have forgotten most of it now!

MY TYPICAL DAY...

The site officially starts work at 8:00am. The first thing I usually do is induct new starters on site so that they understand key facts about the project, the site and the hazards on site. I then go to the areas on site where work is currently being carried out. I make sure

that everyone there is working safely and that they are correctly following the design. There are often many challenges that come up throughout the day which I try to resolve with the workers on site. I usually have a packed lunch at about 1pm. The day typically finishes at about 5:30pm.

THE KEY SKILLS I USE IN MY JOB...

Planning is probably the key skill for a Site Manager. As a leader on site, you are expected to look ahead and make effective plans so that the build can progress on time and on budget. Similarly, you need to have good organisational skills as you will often be managing interactions between many different types of workers. You also need a good technical understanding of different materials and methods. All these skills are developed with experience. But you also need a good, positive attitude. That you should have on your first day of any job!

THE BEST PART OF MY JOB IS...

The best part of my job is being involved in the production of something physical so that you

can see what you have achieved (and show others!). Buildings stand for decades, if not longer, and so with every project you leave a legacy of how you have changed that local area. I love that my workplace constantly evolves as the project progresses; it can start outside in an empty space and finish in a brand-new building. It is a very challenging job, but it makes finishing projects all the more satisfying. I like the variety of people I work with and the fact that every project is different.

THE WORST PART OF MY JOB IS...

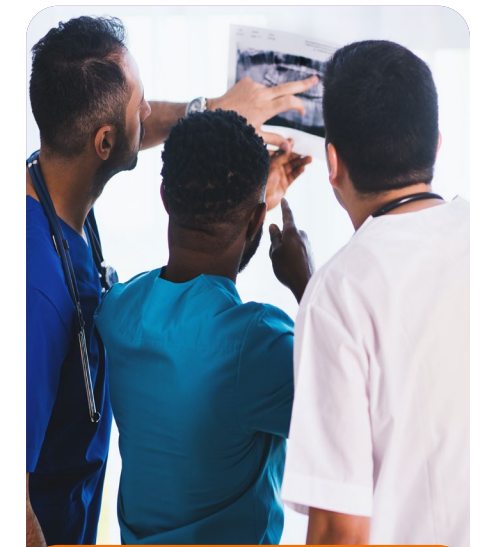
The toughest part of my job is trying to resolve challenges that come up. Some jobs can be complex to build and there are many different factors that can affect the job (e.g. the design, the quality of the worker, the cost) and if one factor is not right, it can impact everything else. Being dependent on many different people can be frustrating and can sometimes lead to arguments. But this is not often, and the best way to avoid this is to always work collaboratively with other people on the project.

MY ROLE MODEL GROWING UP WAS...

You can never tell her, but my older sister was probably my biggest role model growing up! She was three years above me in school and I thought she was pretty cool. She was very free-spirited, smart and funny. I liked the same music she did, wore similar style clothes and generally behaved similarly to her. So I would say I found her quite inspiring! Now I find her annoying, so I guess our relationship went back to front!

AFTER WORK...

After work during the week I like to stay active. I usually take the tube from site to play football once a week and to the gym where I train in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. These allow me to stay fit and to de-stress. I always have dinner with my girlfriend and we always cook vegetarian food. After dinner we usually relax by watching a film or TV show. We try to get to bed for 10pm so that I can get 8 hours of sleep before waking up bright and early, ready for a new day!



MY PLAN B...

I have always been interested in the built environment since I was a young boy playing with building blocks and Lego! So I would say if I wasn't working on a construction site I would probably be in an engineering office working on the design of buildings and infrastructure. But if I wasn't working in construction, I would like to have been a doctor. I think it would be an incredibly rewarding profession as what better job could there be than to help people overcome illness and to feel better!

