

ELBA

A Day in the life of...

Nicole Askwith Williams Associate Product Manager, ALD Automotive



MY ALARM GOES OFF...

My day starts around 5:30am! I cycle to work and try to fit in a gym session and swim too. I like to get my cycle and workout done before my work day starts, so that my exercise is out the way. I am at my desk between 7:30-8:30am. I am quite lucky that the dress code where I work is pretty relaxed, so smart/casual clothes are acceptable..

I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR...

As a Product Manager it is my responsibility to look after certain products and services that my business provides. A Product Manager is a really important part of the business as you bring together the customer point of view, the business logistics, and what technology is going to be used to build the service. I get to work with everyone in the company, from all levels, so stakeholder management is a big part of the role. One day I could be in meetings with Directors, Developers or Legal and Compliance. The next day I could be working with Designers creating some pages

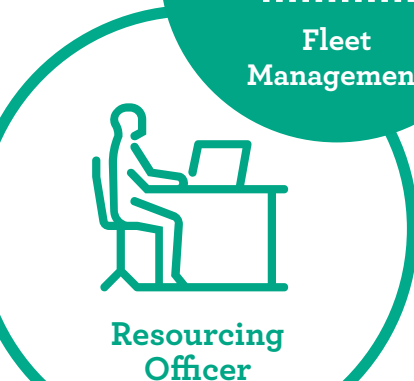
to go on a website. It's all about understanding what the customer wants and balancing that with what the business wants.

I GOT MY JOB...

I went to university and studied Product Design, which covered lots of different areas of a product lifecycle. I also made sure that I did a year in industry as part of my degree and this is where I discovered Product Management. Before this though, I always tried to get work experience in my school and university holidays. I managed to get a couple of design intern places, and would always find retail jobs so that I was constantly around people and working on my personal skills.

AT SCHOOL I STUDIED...

My GCSE's were: Maths, English Lang, English Literature, Chemistry, Physics, Biology, IT, RE, French, Art, Graphics, Japanese and Geography. For A levels I chose to study Chemistry, Japanese and Product Design.



Resourcing
Officer



Fleet
Management

I have always been a creative person so I knew that I would go down a more creative route. However, I also wanted to make sure that I chose a good range of subjects to show what I was capable of. When applying for universities, I applied for both Product Design and Japanese courses, but then settled on Product. I have recently picked languages back up, now being a little older and re-teaching myself.

MY TYPICAL DAY...

I am at my desk to from 7:30-8:30am depending on my exercise! Planning out my day is vital, so I always start by checking all my emails and what meetings I have, blocking out time in my diary for the tasks I am going to complete that day. Each day is different, as I

work with people from different teams across the business. It also depends on whether I am looking after something brand new, or an existing product or service. Is the product solving a customer problem? Are people using it correctly? How much money is it making the business? What are other companies doing? How can we improve this product? Are there any risks? These are all questions I ask myself on a regular basis, to make sure I am doing the best job I can as a Product Manager.

THE KEY SKILLS I USE IN MY JOB...

As I work with so many people, being approachable and personable is really important. Being organised is also a big help, as I have to work to deadlines which can be a bit stressful. The product team are often the main individuals to come up with new and exciting ideas for the business, so being enthusiastic and wanting to learn is beneficial. I also have to present and speak to groups of people a lot, so working on public speaking is helpful too.

All the skills needed to be a good Product Manager are learnable, so as long as you are open minded and can be coachable there will never be a problem!

THE BEST PART OF MY JOB IS...

I love people. So the fact that I can work with a variety of people from all areas of the business is the best part of my job. Alongside this, I love being able to create solutions to problems. Getting underneath the real problems that a customer faces in their day to day life, and trying to understand how I can help that person, is another reason why I love my job.

THE WORST PART OF MY JOB IS...

As I am the main contact for certain products, there can be a lot of pressure from people to fix things and get it right. However, as long as I keep my cool and constantly check that what I am doing is right for the customer, it all works out in the end!

MY ROLE MODEL GROWING UP WAS...

I have always been pretty active so different athletes were an inspiration to me as they have such discipline in something that they love.

I am still pretty young; I am only 25! So people are still inspiring me every single day. I think the main thing is that it's ok if you have a bad day, or are not feeling great sometimes. Everyone has down days, and trust me, I have days where I haven't got a clue what I am doing! But, it's how you turn those bad days into something good, and let it motivate you to be even more productive the next day. Find something that you enjoy, and gives you happiness, and you'll excel at it!

AFTER WORK...

I cycle home after work and also try to fit in a swim. I used to swim competitively before I went to university and it is still my absolute favourite thing to do in the world. Once I am home, I

eat my dinner straight away – I am always starving when I get in! As I do so much exercise I need a really nutritious meal, usually something with fish or meat along with lots of veg and some rice or pasta.

I also like to read in the evening. I am super interested in psychology and the brain, so I often read books on the mind and why people do the things they do. I do also love a bit of reality TV, so I will watch an episode of something rubbish before I go to bed! Because I am up so early, I am usually asleep by about 10.



MY PLAN B...

I think I definitely would have pursued languages and studied Japanese. I find the language and the culture fascinating. Over the last few years, I have also become a qualified makeup artist, and do this outside of work. So who knows - I could have found that path sooner as well!

