

ELBA

A Day in the life of...



Nigel Dolman

Compliance Officer Controls Reviews, Société Générale

MY ALARM GOES OFF...

My contracted working hours are 9am to 5pm, but I work better in the morning, so I tend to get up about 6:15am. I live in Essex, therefore, commute to Canary Wharf by train. The journey into work takes about an hour, and it gives some time for me to relax on the way into work or to wind down on the way home. From time to time I do use these journeys for reading reports or topics related to my job. Normal office attire is a suit for men but with no tie. This routine is sometimes broken up by a “dress down” day on a Friday, which means casual smart clothes but definitely no jeans or trainers!

I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR...

I work in the Compliance function of an Investment Bank. The investment bank trades in stocks, bonds, commodities, and Foreign Exchange, as well providing help to companies that need to raise money. The rules, principles, and best practice around this are very extensive, and at times very complex. Our Review team, act like a mini Audit function,

looking at whether the bank has interpreted these rules correctly. There is a risk that if these rules are not followed the bank could suffer financial as well as reputational risk to its business. To help mitigate these risks our team tests the procedures, policies, and controls that a specific business area has put in place. This takes the form of a review where we issue recommendations that the business has to implement.

I GOT MY JOB...

I left school when I was 17 and have been working in London since 1984. The main qualifications that I left with were GCSE's. Compliance as a job has only really existed in the last 20 years or so, prior to that I worked in various Operations departments of Investment banks that helped process, and settle the trades, as well as the finance department. I got my current Compliance position through a specialist recruitment agent, but banks are now often posting their job vacancies directly onto their own websites, or sites such as LinkedIn.



Financial Services



Business Auditor

AT SCHOOL I STUDIED...

At GCSE -Maths, Statistics, English Language, English Literature, Economics, Geography, and Geology. At the time for most office jobs you have to pass at least 5 GCSE's with good grades in Maths and English. Given my close proximity to London I thought there was a chance that I might end up with a career there, so this is why I focussed heavily on those. Being honest I had absolutely no talent or interest in some of the more practical subjects offered such as woodwork, metalwork, cookery, or art, so it was an easier choice than other people might have. The reports that we write have to be a to a

high standard of English, and an understanding of Economics is a good basis for a career in the financial industry, so both of those qualifications did help to some extent. I've since done Compliance qualifications, which were useful when I first went into that part of my career.

MY TYPICAL DAY...

I start around 8am. A typical day could involve reading through some rules and regulation for a review that I am about to start. We have a limited time to conduct these reviews so it is important if you are looking at a big topic to work out the time it will take, and if necessary, concentrate on certain areas, and leaving other areas for a separate review. The afternoon may be discussing a “near-completed” review with a business area and seeing if they agree with my recommendations or not. In between, my lunch would be a sandwich either brought from home or from a shop nearby, and if the weather is fine, a walk outside. We get an hour for lunch, and I always try to be off the desk for that period. Some people do eat lunch at their desk and carry on working but I find that counterproductive, and a break helps me focus on what I need to do in the afternoon.

THE KEY SKILLS I USE IN MY JOB...

I have to be well prepared, and be credible in front of the business units that I review. I am not expected to be an expert in everything, but I need to be able to ask the right questions. I think that over time my planning skills have improved, and some success and failures have often simply been down to how well I have planned to do a task at the outset. Building good relationships is vital, therefore, I have to be able to get on with people. I improved this over time by simply being polite and saying “thank you” to people who have helped me on a task. I had a manager who often thanked me for tasks that I did for him, and I appreciated that at the time. It made me realise that I should be doing that to others on a more regular basis.

THE BEST PART OF MY JOB IS...

The work is very varied, and no two reviews are ever quite the same. The reviews take about three months to complete, so even if you haven't liked one particular topic during that time, at least you know there will be a new one just around the corner. I have worked in various different roles within compliance, so there is plenty of choice of area to move into either internally or externally. I have made lifelong friends from the industry, some who I still keep in touch with from when I first started over 30 years ago. The work culture at my firm is very good, and generally the majority of people are easy to get along with.

THE WORST PART OF MY JOB IS...

Dealing with conflict. Regulation is not just rules based, and even now there is a lot of business practices that are open to interpretation. It is

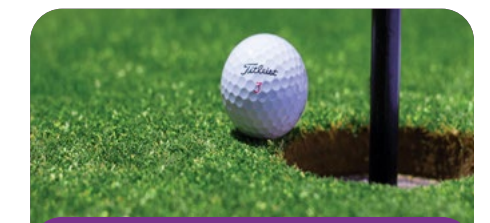
important to be able to deal with this by speaking up and raising concerns to your colleagues if needed. Departments that you are giving recommendations to also get them from other areas of the bank, so it can be difficult to agree timelines, or assign ratings to a review, that may reflect badly on them. This is best dealt with by having a strong conviction in what you are proposing, and that department needs to realise that you have your own job to do, and your own deadlines to meet.

MY ROLE MODEL GROWING UP WAS...

My parents. They always gave sound advice based on their own work experience. They were quite pragmatic in their approach to things, and I think I took some of my better personality traits from them.

AFTER WORK...

If near the end of the week I may have a quick drink with colleagues, before making my way home. My wife usually cooks dinner at home to be enjoyed by my family, and then some TV to end the day. This might also include watching my youngest child play cricket or taking him to training sessions for football. Every week on a Thursday night, myself and a few dads meet up in the evening for a game of darts and cards at a local social club.



MY PLAN B...

I was a very keen golfer when at school and would like to have possibly been a Head Greenkeeper, at a prestigious course!

