

ELBA

# A Day in the life of...



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## MY ALARM GOES OFF...

Typically I'll get up around 7am, walk to work in Canary Wharf – I am lucky to be living nearby on the Isle of Dogs in East London. The team I work with doesn't have a set start time to be in the office by, this is usually driven by the types of tasks and meetings we have each day and team members' personal situation like dropping children off at school or longer commutes. Between 8-9am we generally have full house, ready to see what the day brings.

## I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR...

My role is in operational risk management, in the Risk Division, looking to identify and help prevent risk from any mistakes, issues or errors. These can range from human errors to system glitches, breakdowns in processes or occasionally external factors like the COVID-19 pandemic. I work with traders, quantitative analysts, IT developers and compliance experts to make sure our systems and processes aren't too risky, and we have good controls in place to notify colleagues if

something were to go wrong – a computer server crashing, or a trader accidentally entering an order of 10 million, instead of say 10 shares.

## I GOT MY JOB...

The road to my current job wasn't a straight one like a motorway, more a bendy country road. At university (back in my home country) I studied economics and started working as a management trainee with Tesco. I held various retail jobs, including an area representative for Procter & Gamble (maker of detergent, nappies and toothpaste) before spotting an advert in a business magazine looking for English speakers with a maths or economics background to join a bank. That was 2008, and I had 3 different banking jobs since then. A recruiter approached me on LinkedIn for my current role.

## AT SCHOOL I STUDIED...

I went to school in Eastern Europe and the school system is slightly different there. Back in

my school we had a final exam at age 18, with 5 mandatory subjects of History, Maths, Literature, and two foreign languages. It was possible to choose additional subjects and take exams in those, mostly for students who needed exam results for specialised university classes e.g. biology for medicine, physics for engineering.

## MY TYPICAL DAY...

Every morning I plan my day based on my calendar. The type of role I do is not very structured, people will approach me with problems that I help solve while also making sure I attend meetings where we review proposed IT changes, discuss

risk themes and patterns across the firm. It helps to be organized so I can find time to review any incidents that happened in my area, and prepare reports of key risk themes and trends to be aware of. I often speak to teams in Hong Kong, India, Switzerland and the USA to share best practices.

## THE KEY SKILLS I USE IN MY JOB...

The two skills I use most in this job were skills I developed in previous jobs, and not necessarily technical knowledge I picked up during my studies. The first one is having an inquisitive and curious mind, this helps me uncover problems in our processes and help identify good controls and solutions to prevent them from happening again. The second skill is listening, which may sound simple but often hard to do as you're already thinking what you will respond to someone who is talking to you, while they are talking. It's important to take time to listen. Life long learning is definitely a concept I believe in.

## THE BEST PART OF MY JOB IS...

The most interesting part of my job is also the most challenging: keeping up to date with technology changes in our fast

paced world and thinking about where things might not work as expected. I really enjoy working with our business units and develop new solutions for our clients while making sure these are done in a safe and controlled way. We can't have a new banking app crash on its first day, or the bank's connection to the stock exchange cut off by a broadband network outage! It's rewarding to work with experts from all departments to prevent issues from happening.

## THE WORST PART OF MY JOB IS...

The toughest part is the uncertainty around us. There is no step by step guide to avoiding human errors or IT issues in the workplace. It's difficult to anticipate everything, and have a plan and a solution for every possible thing that could go wrong, think of an office with thousands of employees and computers, hundreds of pieces of software all working together. My approach to dealing with this uncertainty is to ask for help, advice and information from people who know better. Don't be afraid to ask for advice, most people will happily share their work experience with you.

## MY ROLE MODEL GROWING UP WAS...

Even when I was little, I always admired the kids around me who could do something I couldn't: get to the next level in computer games, play a musical instrument, climb the highest trees, do a Rubik's cube in seconds. Same with adults, I looked at all the fascinating things they could do like drive a car, cook a 3-course meal, design and build a house, heal aches and pains and fix broken bones, fly a plane, direct a movie and so on. Inspiration is all around us, and everyone you observe and learn from will play a role

in shaping who you aspire to become.

## AFTER WORK...

After work I either meet up with friends or family and grab a bite to eat, or I head home along the Thames path, the walk is a nice way to draw a line between work time and home time. My evenings are usually spent by catching up on personal mails and messages - I have friends and family all around the world so keeping in touch and getting their time zones right is a fun activity. Depending on how I feel I might read a book or magazine, stream a show or movie to watch, do some exercise and look after my pets. I am usually in bed by 11pm as much as I'd love to stay up longer!



## MY PLAN B...

As I always loved animals and spent most of my childhood chasing after them - be it the neighbour's cat or cows on a farm during summer holidays - it would have made sense for me to become a vet or a veterinary nurse. Unfortunately, I'm not very good with the sight of blood and even have a tendency to faint. It was best for all the animals and myself that I didn't pursue a medical career. If I won the lottery tomorrow, I would probably switch jobs and work for an animal shelter or city farm and spend all my time surrounded by new two and four legged friends!

