

ELBA

A Day in the life of...



Tharu Senanyake Universal Banker, HSBC

MY ALARM GOES OFF...

I wake up at seven in the morning. I know this is late compared to some people, but this is mainly because I have a toddler who does not sleep through the night! I also go to sleep very late after doing my daily housework, as I hate leaving things for the next day. After I wake up, I make the morning milk for my baby and have my breakfast which is usually cereal. I get the baby ready for nursey and put my uniform on with a little make-up and off we go. I walk with my son to his nursery, which is luckily only a few blocks away to make it easier. I say good-bye to him and get on the bus to the bank where I work.

I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR...

I am responsible for serving customers who have made appointments throughout the day and walk-in customers when required. This mainly involves opening new accounts, lending money and handling complaints along with helping the customer with their everyday banking needs. I do some observations which involves peer coaching and training to improve others. I also work

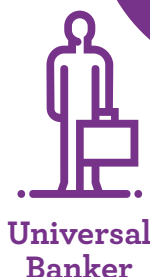
as a digital change advocate, promoting the bank's digital proposition to customers and colleagues. My focus is to give exceptional customer service while achieving my key performance targets.

I GOT MY JOB...

I started my career working for a UK bank in Sri Lanka, where I did most of my education. I was good at my job but realised a master's degree would widen my opportunities and progress my career, so I took a break and completed a master's in business management. Whilst studying, I joined an airline as cabin crew so that I could earn money to support my studies. Even though it was physically tiring, it was the best job I have ever done, and I sharpened my public relations and customer service skills. I had a change of personal circumstances and had to leave my fabulous job as a flight attendant to move to the UK and live with my husband. I took a career break for two years as I was the main carer for a family member who was suffering from a terminal illness. I then joined a High Commission



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in London and worked directly with an ambassador as a research assistant for the political and media desks. I thoroughly enjoyed the job but realised it was not something I wanted to do long term. I re-joined the UK bank I worked for in Sri Lanka by applying through the website and now work for the UK branch network.

AT SCHOOL I STUDIED...

I studied all the standard subjects for GCSE with English literature as an additional subject as I was passionate about the subject and passed with flying colours. For Advanced level I initially studied mathematics without a reason - I think I was a confused student who did not know which stream to follow and had no guidance. One of the subjects was chemistry which I failed, so the next year I completely changed

and took up Accounts Economics & Business Studies which I passed with flying colours. I must say that I gained most of my competencies not by studying but by working my way through my career.

MY TYPICAL DAY...

At the start of the day we have a team meeting to check in and share any updates. At nine sharp the bank is open for general customers. The morning tasks are to prepare for customer appointments and make confirmation or welcome calls to check in and understand what they are coming in for. Lunch is typically a sandwich with some fruits. The afternoon involves finishing paperwork for the appointments, welcome calls for appointments the next day, and some coaching/ training/ feedback sessions. I also write customer stories for the rest of the team to learn best practice. I log most of the things I do in a smart tracking system on the go, as this is important for my one to one discussions and performance reviews at the end of the year.

THE KEY SKILLS I USE IN MY JOB...

Communication is the main skill needed to do my job. I also need

to be flexible, collaborative and dependable. I need to have the passion for working with people and I need to be good in problem solving. I should have the capacity to diplomatically work with difficult personality types in a fast-paced demanding environment as I work for the Europe's busiest branch in my bank network. I should be able to quickly learn and clearly communicate regulatory guidelines to individuals or wider groups. I need to be knowledgeable about financial products and services, which I learn about through training and on the job. I need to understand the policies and procedures within the Branch Network, which I have learnt more about over time and have helped change the procedures to simplify the way the branch works. I also need to be proficient in Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Outlook and Excel etc., which I have developed over time by working on the programmes.

THE BEST PART OF MY JOB IS...

The best part of my job is the people I work with. Apart from that, the feeling after helping a customer with an issue they are facing is always good.

THE WORST PART OF MY JOB IS...

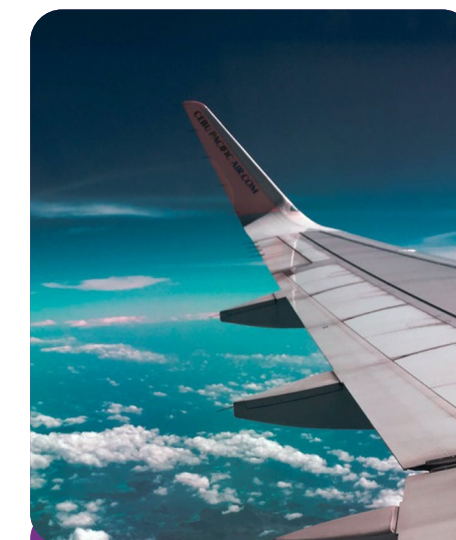
The toughest part of my job is handling the customer profile in a city centre branch, as they tend to be impatient due to high wait times. The best way to deal with that is to be patient and not to take anything personally, as well as using active listening.

MY ROLE MODEL GROWING UP WAS...

As a young adult, my father inspired me as he was an entrepreneur who worked very hard and had good working ethics.

AFTER WORK...

I finish work around 5pm and head home, picking up my 3-year-old son on the way. On the way back we will have a nice little conversation about how his day has been. As soon as we get home I prepare dinner, which is usually some sort of a pasta with veggies along with either salmon or chicken. The three of us will have dinner as a family and then my husband or I will wash the baby and put him down to sleep. I will sort out the laundry, load the dishwasher and arrange clothes for the next day. I love watching something on Netflix while sipping a glass of wine. Some days we play Uno as a family too. I love having some me time at the end of the day which makes me go to bed late - which is not the ideal thing to do having a busy day ahead!



MY PLAN B...

If it had not been for moving to UK and joining the bank I would still be with the airline industry and flying around like a bird. However, I have an interest in becoming an independent business consultant one day, as I have worked in different industries and I might be more productive to society that way.

