A global view

James Pateman is in a role that you wouldn’t usually expect of someone who only graduated in 2010. As Global Finance Lead for a $90m Global IT Transition and Transformation programme with IBM UK, his role means that he’s the financial conduit between IBM Corporation and their clients. He’s open about the fact that he’s reached this position four to seven years ahead of his peers due to his mindset and hard work.

‘I’m here because I have always been realistic about my experience and my abilities. I keep an open mind, a positive outlook and it was a lot of hard graft and dedication to my client’s success which secured me this position.’

In his role, James manages a team of 15 – 20 individuals in a ‘follow-the-sun’ operation, covering over 100 countries, ranging from Argentina to Vietnam. A regular day for James is always extremely varied, beginning at around 7am catching up with teams in Sydney and Singapore and ending around 7pm, speaking with the Americas.

‘Each country has unique legal and statutory requirements. Typically I’m handling escalations and more complex commercial issues, as we strive to ensure that IBM and their clients can execute a 21st century IT outsourcing contract, which can financially operate and report at all levels of the business.’

Rising through IBM

James’ first step on the ladder was to apply for his industrial placement at IBM, and everything links back to that decision. Including that placement year, he’s worked at IBM for six years, in a range of external and internally-facing roles.

Studying a joint honours degree certainly helped his career path. ‘I use the skills and principles I picked up in my degree every day. My role is about enabling management teams, in an applied IT environment, which is a perfect fit between my Joint Honours subjects of Management Science and Digital Media Technology.’

Advice and future plans

James is a firm believer in always learning from new experiences and challenges. ‘You only stop learning when you close your mind to new ideas. Some of the most valuable experiences I’ve had since completing my studies came from places I would never have expected.’

In his current position, James is focused on the people he works with. ‘I love looking after my team and I’m driven by seeing challenging projects succeed.’ In the longer term, he is working to complete his CIMA studies, as his ideal role would combine both budgetary and people responsibility.

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