

Brian

Thanks for getting in touch and here finally is my career summary. Please feel free to edit it as appropriate...

I don't know who reads these career histories, but if you point undergrads in this direction, then I guess you can use me as a prime example of someone who unfortunately spent his student life playing too hard and not working hard enough and therefore didn't meet my possible potential.

I don't have a postgrad qualification to show, or large pension fund, or second home on a desert island, nor have lived in exotic locations abroad (although I don't hold any malice against people who have.)

I did a geology degree because I loved geology and not for a career option, but sometime late 2nd year at Portsmouth I fell out of love with geology and year 3 became a struggle for me. Mike Chaplin was right - I didn't respect the course or myself at the time...

I joined Exlog in Sept 84 with Nige Bramwell & Hugo Lawrence after having to practically beg for the job having only a class 3 degree. After failing the medical due to a heart murmur, by the time I was passed fit enough for the insurance to work, all the best postings were taken and I ended up in the Dutch North Sea drilling top hole slots through the same stratigraphy for 18 months. (I must be the only mudlogger who never saw any oil in the whole time I worked on rigs!) After a stint in Denmark, I along with most of the workforce were laid off in 1986 due to the collapse in oil price.

I spent summer 1986 delivering soft drinks in York for a relative who had a Ben Shaws franchise, then rejoined Exlog in September 1986 as the oil price rose and exploration began again.

However they now had too much work for the number of employees. First I was sent to a Dutch rig as a wellsite geologist - the oil company were not impressed on discovering they had a mudlogger who hadn't seen work for 8 months masquerading as their geologist. However I managed to supervise the catching and processing of an important core sample (actually doing quite a good job of it) before being turfed off the rig.

Next I was sent to Oman (essentially before it was opened up to the western world) to a rig 600 miles from civilisation in the desert.

Me and my oppo were given a rigscan computer unit to rig up and run - all from the manual - despite the fact neither of us has seen one before. After begging for someone with rigscan experience, a week later my oppo was relieved by a trainee on his first posting who hadn't even seen a geological sample before - being an English graduate!! We started drilling with a blank computer screen and the Japanese Oil company screaming at us. After 3 weeks my relief didn't show and it was another 2 weeks before I finally got away from the nightmare.

After a number of postings to Turkey rigging up and running an ex Corelab unit (again more equipment that was totally foreign to me,) on a rig that had an armed guard due to being up against the borders of Iraq I had had enough and got a job with Steetley Construction Materials in 1987 on their graduate training scheme. The deal was that graduates were to spend a few months in each section of the business - Concrete, Quarrying, Brick & Tile, Administration, and then choose which one to work in. I was naturally attracted to quarrying but unfortunately whilst i was working my notice in Turkey with Exlog the scheme was cancelled and i came home to find myself stuck in the Readymix Concrete division at the bottom as a technician. I must have been the most overqualified technician they ever had, most of my peers struggling with o levels! After a year i was promoted to plant supervisor - batching and running the Bradford concrete plant, in a lovely position sandwiched between the back to back terraces and a slaughterhouse. In 1989 they were taken over by Redland, and with no opportunities for promotion, i joined Huddersfield Readymix as their concrete pump rep covering Yorks/Lancs. In 10 years at Huddersfield i helped build the business up from 1 to 5 lorry mounted concrete pumps, as well as doing just about every job in the place. In 1999 i was made redundant and joined Pioneer Concrete as plant manager for 2 plants at York & Bridlington. Hanson bought them out in 2000 and i left after a few months of being treated like dirt. I joined Groundforce (part of Vibroplant) as technical sales rep for the north east. With an area stretching from Sheffield to Berwick On Tweed i did 40K miles in 9 months as they hadnt had a rep in the area for 18 months previous. After they took over rival Mechplant, with too many staff i was one of the ones made redundant in the subsequent reorganisation in 2001. I worked to help restore a large victorian townhouse in Leeds for 6 months before joining Tecroc, a supplier of specialist grouts & cements, as their northern depot manager. In 2004 they decided to update their production facilities in Warwickshire and closed down the satellite depots and i was made redundant again. After working for Bison precast products for 3 months in their Leeds factory i left due to the 16 hour shifts, and frightening lack of health & safety. The workforce were mostly Poles & Macedonians who did things like crashing one overhead crane into another broken down one in the factory, whilst we were working underneath! In 2005 i invested in a friends small concrete plant/builders merchant, becoming a director. I soon realised my 3 fellow investors were draining the company of resources whilst my experience was used to make it more profitable. In 2007 i began to feel ill, was diagnosed with high blood pressure, stress, and slight depression, and was made redundant by my fellow directors whilst i was

taking 2 weeks off sick! I spent 2007 fighting the bandits in the courts and via ACAS, finally getting most of my investment back in december 2007. Since then i have decided to work for myself as a handyman/gardener as i dont trust any one with my employment.(4 redundancies in 7 years must be some kind of record.)

You will be pleased to know that I have rediscovered my love of geology through rereading my old text books and discovering authors such as Richard Fortey & Steven Jay Gould. I have spent many hours on the beaches of Yorkshire and holidays in Dorset fossilling and rock collecting with my kids.

I had the time of my life at Portsmouth and value the friends and times i had there.

Hope that's not too long...! glad to see your still knocking around.. will have to visit portsmouth someday...  
cheers Brian

Andy Sumpton (class of 84)