

Day in the Life of David Hankins, Quantity Surveyor



What work do you do for Systech?

I am a Chartered Quantity Surveyor and I also provide commercial management consultancy services.

What is your typical day?

I would say there is no "typical day". One day might be involved in giving contractual advice on the feasibility of making a claim in terms of principle and quantum; the next day might be valuing compensation events or negotiating a claim or final account.

What are the interesting aspects of your work?

As you can see from the above, one of the interesting aspects is the sheer variety of work we can be asked to undertake; another would be meeting with and understanding new clients, analysing the problems to be resolved and the possible outcome.

What are the challenges?

One of the challenges is the ability to quickly comprehend the issues and source all available supporting documents to meet the client's expectations. If, as is sometimes the case, the problem has existed for a while before Systech's appointment, the absence of good documentary evidence or early warning notices can prove challenging. Sometimes key staff that have good knowledge have moved on to new jobs and it is difficult to find corroboration.

What training and support has Systech given you?

Training is provided by an ongoing programme of in-house seminars on appropriate and current topics. There are also periodic papers on recent court judgements, arbitrations and adjudications under the general title of key lessons published to the Claims Group. Support is always available. There is a great deal of

knowledge and experience in the consultants community within Systech – programmers, claims specialists, lawyers and solicitors – all willing and able to discuss matters as they arise. There is also a great deal of information on the Systech intranet that is open to all.

What words of advice would you offer someone thinking of working for Systech?

As with any career move it is sensible to take stock of the skills, qualifications and experience you can bring to Systech and match these with the opportunities Systech can offer. Whilst academic and professional qualifications are valued by Systech so too is professional experience.

What social activities have you been involved in?

Systech has two major social functions each year to which everyone is invited and well worth attending. These provide a good

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opportunity to meet up with colleagues, your mentor and a chance to put a “face to a name”. There are also sports meetings for those willing and able to partake, and spectators are always welcome to support their Systech team.

What is the culture like?

The culture is hardworking, friendly and supportive. There is a range of ages, skill sets and backgrounds bound together by a common cause of meeting the client’s brief. The nature of the business is such that much of your time is spent in the client’s offices, but it is always good to return to Systech and catch up with news and events.

How has working for Systech helped you achieve your career goals?

In the sense that being commissioned to some of the leading construction companies in the country, adopting their business systems and work ethos is always a rewarding experience and fulfils career expectations.

What has been your greatest achievement working for Systech?

There is a saying that “Self-praise is no praise”, however I take great pleasure in the fact that one major contractor has engaged me for five separate commissions in less than four years. I like to think that repeat business is indicative of a satisfied client and reflects well on Systech.

Tell us about a project where you have learnt a key lesson?

One key lesson that was apparent on more than a single project is that the party to a construction contract who keeps the best paperwork and gives the required notices in a timely fashion is the more likely to have a satisfactory financial outcome.

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