

“There are a lot of opportunities all over the world on large scale projects ”



Day in the Life  
Dai Edwards  
Construction Lawyer, South Africa

### **What are you currently working on?**

I am a construction lawyer working for one of the claims teams at the client's head office in Johannesburg.

### **What is your typical day?**

At the moment we are preparing several claims to go to the DAB (Dispute Adjudication Board). I have been involved in the process of preparing the claims, selecting our expert witness, carrying out formal witness statement interviews with key personnel and drafting the witness statements. I also participate in regular meetings with external counsel on various legal issues with regards to the disputes we are working on.

### **What are the interesting aspects of your work?**

I get to meet and interact with a broad range of people on a daily basis including quantity surveyors, lawyers, planners, and engineers. Due to the complexity of the dispute I am working on I have had to learn a lot about welding from a number of different technical experts.

### **What are the challenges?**

The issues we are handling are complex and so the learning curve is quite steep. There is a huge amount of technical information that needs to be absorbed and understood. Working on such a large scale project, there are always fairly demanding deadlines and so sometimes the hours that we work are quite long.

### **What training and support has Systech given you?**

I completed an LLM in Construction Law and Arbitration at Robert Gordon University (RGU) which Systech sponsored me to do. Systech also encouraged me to become a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (FCIArb) and paid for my Professional Skills Course (PSC) which is a requirement to qualify as a Solicitor. Since then I have been to several Chartered Institute of Arbitrators events in South Africa and have also become an International Fellow of the Association of Arbitrators (Southern Africa). When I previously worked in Dubai, I was also encouraged to

network by attending conferences and Society of Construction Law (SCL) events.

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

I would definitely encourage them to apply. There are a lot of opportunities currently available all over the world on large scale projects. Once an applicant applies they will see that most of the people who work for Systech are very bright, engaging, honest and down to earth. From my own perspective, I found it refreshing to talk about the projects that Systech were currently involved with and how I would fit into the team rather than having to answer some manufactured generic question such as naming the biggest “intellectual challenge” that I had faced in the past!

### **What social activities/outside interests have you been involved in?**

At the moment I am planning a wedding. I met my fiancée shortly



Systech team night out



Johannesburg

after arriving in South Africa and we are going to get married towards the end of this year.

However, I have also had the chance to participate in some activities that I actually enjoy! (that's a "joke" if my fiancée reads this...) I have a season ticket for the Lions (Johannesburg Super 15 rugby team) and also play in a weekly 5 a side football game with guys from the office.

There is the opportunity to watch both rugby (Lions and Blue Bulls) and cricket (at the Wanderers Stadium) at the weekend if sport is your thing. The restaurants are also fantastic here with plenty of choice available. For steak, I recommend 'Signature' in Morningside.

I am definitely very grateful to Systech for providing me with the opportunity to move to South Africa, which has allowed me not only to progress professionally by working on some of the biggest construction projects in the world but also to meet my future wife. Leaving Dubai has proved to be a very good move, even if it didn't seem like it at the time!

#### What is the culture like?

The working culture is open and

horizontal. All of the management team and directors are very approachable. You are encouraged to take on as much responsibility as you are comfortable with and to seek out new opportunities. The company promotes a work hard / play hard attitude and so whilst you are expected to work hard, there is plenty of opportunity to enjoy yourself too.

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

I started as a Paralegal in the Dubai office in April 2014 and was awarded a Training Contract after a year. I then started on the project in Johannesburg and qualified as a Solicitor in October 2016.

#### What makes Systech different from the competition?

There is a lot less "red tape" and bureaucracy at Systech than at other companies. If you need to get something done then you will be given access to the person that you need to speak to. You will also be given as much responsibility as you can handle within a short period of time, which means that if you do well then there are a lot of opportunities available.

#### What has been your greatest achievement whilst working for Systech?

My greatest achievement so far has been qualifying as a lawyer. This is followed very closely by not calling in sick after going to a stag do at Oktoberfest!

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

I think you learn different key lessons from every project you work on. However, getting on with the IT guys is always very important as they can save you a lot of hassle with getting your computer systems setup and fully functional.

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