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# My time at Totum: Learning the tricks of the trade

Supporting the young with work experience is an important part of attracting great talent into our line of business. Our guest writer, 16-year-old Lucas Penn, shares his thoughts on his time spent at Totum ? a fun few days for us all, and a real opportunity for us old hands to embrace fresh insights.

Recently I spent three days of work experience shadowing one of Totum?s directors. Among many tasks, I found myself preparing reports on law firms, searching for potential candidates and attending mock job interviews. In that time I truly learnt more about the working world and London as a whole than I could ever have hoped.

When the day came, I left my peaceful hamlet in South Wales, full of excitement and nerves. The only knowledge I had of working in the City came from *The Wolf of Wall Street*. So I expected to find myself in an office of 200 people running around and shouting. I anticipated trying to fit in with the madness. However, I did not come across Leonardo DiCaprio. In fact, after a stuffy 28-degree tube journey, I found myself in a calm room at Totum, surrounded by a group of relaxed and friendly people.

## Down to business

I started off by preparing a report on several law firms who were all attending a Blackbridge client trip to Athens. This was extremely useful for me as I was able to gain knowledge about the firms and how they are perceived by the market. I also learned about Totum?s relationship with these firms through looking at their previous working history.

I was then given a job description for a Learning and Development Administrator, which I was told to read over in preparation for a mock job interview, which would take place the next day. I had to fabricate a character who had experience in this line of work and who had all the right skills for the job ? I didn?t even know the job existed before seeing the job description! The whole process including the interview was very helpful and enjoyable.

Over the last two days of my time with Totum, I spent lots of time on my brand new LinkedIn account, searching for possible candidates for several different roles as well as sending LinkedIn requests to my family and friends. I avoided adding my school teachers to this list although it was fascinating to see how many of them were suggested as contacts once I had entered my school in the profile. It was this that really gave me an understanding of how it all starts when recruitment companies look for potential candidates.

I was also given the chance to look through a few candidates? CVs in order to construct one of my own. This was very useful for structuring my own CV, which I hope will evolve positively over time.

## Lessons learnt

Over my three days at Totum I was able to gain insights into not only recruitment but also all the jobs that Totum puts candidates forward for. I have learned about the functions of HR, finance, marketing and learning and development to name but a few. I have also learnt that it is these roles that give law firms their support structure.

My time in London also taught me about the City. Whether it was my baptism with fire in the form of getting on the tube on the first day or the calm boat rides home on the still waters of the Thames, I felt like I was right there, in the thick of it.

I may not have bumped into Hollywood superstars, but my time at Totum was an overwhelming success and a truly eye-opening experience.

I would just like to say a massive thank you to everyone at Totum for making my time there so incredibly enjoyable.

*With thanks to Lucas for writing this piece and for making a great contribution to life at Totum, summer 2016.*

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