

Case Study

CIMA

Nestlé

Jonathan Power, 21, Reporting Accountant at Nestlé, Croydon



Jonathan Power had planned to go to Leeds University after leaving school but everything changed! A week after his A-levels finished he saw a job advert in the local paper in Cumbria: trainee management accountant with Nestlé. He'd always been interested in numbers and business and so applied for the job. Competing against university graduates for the job, Jonathan was offered the post, accepted and

began his CIMA training right away. Jonathan comments that '*CIMA is more than just numbers and profit and loss accounts and balance sheets...it's about looking at the numbers and doing something about them. Of course I do the number-crunching but I also work closely with the commercial teams to look at new ideas and give value-added input from a financial perspective.*'

Nestlé in the United Kingdom employs approximately 7,000 people and includes a portfolio of leading branded food and beverage products including, Nescafé, KitKat, Ski, Carnation and Herta. Nestlé's first sales in the UK started in 1868, just a year after the company was founded. Nestlé opened its first UK factory in 1901. Croydon, Surrey is home of Nestlé UK Ltd's head office and the confectionary plant at York is the largest Nestlé factory in the world covering 142 acres.

Is the job what you expected it to be?

It's much better. I've had a lot more experience than I anticipated. I've worked in three factories and now I'm at headquarters in Croydon. The job is great and I've been promoted to financial analyst. In addition, I've also been seconded to help implement the new global SAP computer systems. Nestlé has really supported me as I've been studying and they really pushed me to get through the syllabus as quickly as possible. Of course, a pay increase provided some incentive too!

Do you ever regret not taking the more relaxed route through university?

At times, I wondered what I was doing studying on a Saturday whilst I was working full-time in the week. I'd hear from friends at university and the fun they were having, and it was difficult to not feel I was missing out a little bit. But I'd made a decision and I've certainly got no regrets now. I knew what I wanted to do and I'm in a much better position than they are, since I don't

have any student debts to worry about. I've also finished CIMA and I work for a successful multi-national.

What gives you the most job satisfaction?

The challenge – I'm not doing the same thing day in, day out. My team is always trying to have an impact on the business. At the factory where I first joined Nestlé we would try to drive efficiency improvements and cost reductions. We aimed to make a real difference rather than just chugging through the numbers. We had a real drive towards stretching objectives and this saw results.

Are there any perks of working for Nestlé – do you get free sweets?

At the food business unit we deal mostly with milk products and pasta so it's mainly Carnation milk – not quite as appealing! We get free samples when a new chocolate bar is launched, but I haven't really got a sweet tooth.

Jonathan, 21, was the youngest person in the United Kingdom to achieve the status of 'Passed Finalist' following the November 2004 examinations diet.

As he has now completed three years of practical experience, he has been duly elected an Associate of the Institute.