
Case Study: From PA to Project Manager

After studying for a Business and e-Commerce degree, Puja Rai didn't have any real burning ambition to become a PA. In fact, she was thinking about getting into marketing and so took a sales job as a recruitment consultant at Reed to 'get a foot in the door' and start earning.

She pretty quickly realised that sales wasn't really her passion so when an opening came up to be a PA for the Strategic Development Director of Reed Managed Services, she jumped at the chance. Not only was the business side of things up her street but also the variety of work in what was quite a small team was great, spanning everything from marketing projects to report writing and supporting the business development team to the stereotypical tasks associated with being a PA, such as call screening and generally being her boss' right hand lady.

"It was definitely a good move for me to become a PA although it was completely daunting to start with and a huge learning curve. I literally became a human sponge in my first couple of weeks. I have really developed my organisational, communication and networking skills, so much so that my new role as project manager seems like a completely natural progression" said Puja.

She continued, "My typical day would begin with checking my emails and Martin's, then sorting out his priorities and schedule. While he wasn't in meetings, I'd screen his calls for him. I always got a little thrill when something highly confidential came my way and I felt he trusted me to deal with it. While he was out and about, I'd get on with get my project work. This was incredibly varied - one day I'd be organising a conference, the next writing a report on bird flu or finding out what Reed frontline staff think of their corporate clothing. Martin likes facts and summaries so I had to be quite disciplined about any project reports I gave him – great training for my current role."

"Some of the things I had to do couldn't really be put into a job description. For example, I even know what hat Martin's wife wore for a wedding as I had to courier it to her! It is all worth it when he buys you your favourite perfume for Christmas though."

"What advice would I give to anyone contemplating becoming a PA? You will need the patience of a saint! Seriously, it is really important that you have something in common with the person or people you are looking after or else things can go badly wrong. I know much more about golf now than I ever did before because Martin is mad about it. I also got to know him well enough for him to trust me with choosing his suits if he ran out of time".

Puja concluded "I have no regrets about leaving behind the sales role and becoming a PA as it has got me where I am today. Dealing with Martin was quite a responsibility, something that helps me now when so many people rely on me cracking the whip to make things happen. I also developed my negotiation skills. It may seem like a cliché but being a PA really has been a springboard for me".

Catherine Maskell, Brand Manager Commercial at Reed Employment, commented "Puja's progression shows that you can develop many transferable skills and that, in this sense, it is an excellent first job. At Reed Employment, we offer PA roles at all levels, so if you decide that you love being a PA and don't want to change roles, you can still progress your career."



Notes to Editors

Reed Employment is the UK's leading independent specialist provider of administrative, clerical and support staff. Assisting jobseekers and Employers for over 40 years, a combination of a national network of over 150 branches and the industry-leading website, reed.co.uk which receives over 1 million job applications per month, mean that Reed Employment has the widest selection of skilled candidates and job opportunities available in the UK.

www.reedpressooffice.co.uk