

# ICSA Member case studies



## Daniel Rose

Associate, Research and strategy team at Black Sun Plc

### What is your current role?

I currently work in the research and strategy team at corporate communications consultancy, Black Sun Plc.

### What are the main responsibilities of your job?

We work with a range of FTSE 100 and 250 companies producing annual reports, CR reports, digital communications and other investor material. My role is primarily focused on providing advice to our clients in terms of the content and structure of their corporate reporting, both from a compliance and a best practice standpoint.

In addition, my job also involves the production of a number of research publications which track trends in corporate reporting and disclosure helping to further frame and inform the advice we give to our clients. Therefore, while my role does not directly encompass the company secretarial function, the key facets of the job – for example, Companies Act compliance and annual report content – are core duties of a company secretary.

### What is a typical working day for you?

The working day depends largely on the corporate calendar with the 'reporting season' being dominated by client work and consultancy projects, and the summer months focused on delivering industry research publications and working on new business presentations. A typical day encompasses tasks such as responding to client queries, research into FTSE 100 corporate reporting trends, reviewing industry news and legislative developments, writing a monthly e-newsletter for clients, new business proposals and contributing to house marketing material.

### What is your educational/training background?

I hold an MSc in Management and BA in Ancient History and History both from the University of Leicester. Thus far, I have completed four of the six IQS modules with ICSA.

### What skills and qualities are required for your role?

The job requires a real interest in business and the workings of companies, particularly as many corporate communications which we read tend to have quite a technical or compliance focus. In addition, as the requirements for disclosure continue to evolve, a solid knowledge of the legislative and regulatory environment is essential. Outside of these core skills, it is also necessary to think outside the box in order to develop innovative solutions which fit the demands of our clients.

### Which elements of your role do you most enjoy?

Being able to contribute to a 'physical' output, be it an annual report, a corporate website or a piece of research.

### Which elements of your role do you least enjoy?

Reading some of the less inspiring annual reports in the FTSE 350!

### How do you see your career developing?

I've never set a particularly rigid career path for myself and my intention in studying with ICSA was to ensure I had options. I certainly think the qualification has given me plenty of potential routes and, hopefully, I am testament to the fact that the company secretarial qualification isn't just applicable to those in practice, but is also useful in many other job roles which require quite a broad grounding in different areas of business.

### What advice would you offer to a graduate or a current student studying the scheme?

First, don't underestimate the breadth of each syllabus, most of the modules require you to know a little bit about a wide variety of different areas. Second, work backwards from the exam papers – look at the way that questions are asked and the kind of things which have come up in the past, this will help to give you a better idea of what the end product of your revision needs to be. ■