

A day in the life of...

Name:	Lee Robson
Age:	20
Office:	Reading
Service Area:	Business Services
Qualifications:	AS Level Geography & A Levels in Maths, PE and Media
Why did you choose accountancy?	When I started sixth form I didn't have a clue what I wanted to do. I decided early on that I didn't want to go to university and would start a career straight away. Accountancy is one of the few professions where you can do that.
Is it what you expected and why?	I had no knowledge of the profession beforehand, so I didn't know what to expect. I had an idea I'd be dealing with lots of numbers and spreadsheets, but there's more to it than that. We spend a great deal of time looking into and researching our clients' companies to ensure we're giving them the best advice, so the job is far from one-dimensional.
Why did you choose Target (mid-tier firm) instead of the Big Four?	They offered me the job first! No, in all seriousness, with the Big Four it's hard to have your own identity. With a smaller firm you can get the support and training – it feels like you're part of the team.
What makes working for Target different to other accountancy firms?	As well as being an accountant, you're learning to be an all round business adviser. Trainees are encouraged to have contact with clients early on, so there are a number of companies I get to deal with on a day-to-day basis.
What's been your most interesting work to date?	Being a keen golfer, it's been interesting to work with a golf club client of ours. I'm getting to look into the financial aspects of the business, which is something I've never had the chance to consider before.
Describe a typical day?	I get into the office at 8am and leave just after 5pm, but to be honest there's not a typical day – they're all quite different. We're a fairly busy department, so I can be doing anything from dealing with a cheque run query, to preparing a full Iset of company accounts. I'm also taking my AAT qualification at the moment, which means I'm given day release. The studying is organised yearly into two, three month teaching blocks and I get to spend around 15-20 days in college over these periods.
What's the support and guidance like?	The support and guidance has been really good. There are lots of other trainees in the offices, so it's always easy to ask for help. The way the training is organised means that you get to work with everyone in the department as soon as you start. This means that you're getting everyone's expertise, which encourages you to learn more, as well as making things more sociable.

What's the social life like?

Target are a very sociable team – there are monthly nights out, as well as a Friday lunch which most people go to. Everyone's been really friendly, so it's not been hard to get to know people. The work / life balance is also very good, so I have time to do sport and spend time with my friends outside of work as well.

Where would you like to be in ten years time career-wise?

Once I'm qualified, I would like to progress up the company into a more senior role. It's hard to say what I'll want to specialize in eventually, as I've only been in the business services department so far, but I'm quite keen to get into audit, or tax.

What top three tips would you give to other student recruits?

1. Don't be put off by not having a degree – starting from college can be quicker than the ACA route and it can be an advantage as you'll have more experience than the people who are joining straight out of university.
2. Do your research – there are plenty of resources you can use to find out more about a career in accountancy, such as the recruitment section on the AAT website. There are also plenty of careers fairs you can go to and work experience placements.
3. Make sure you prepare for all your interviews and read up on the companies you're applying for. The interviewers will want to see you're keen and have an interest in their particular firm, so it pays to do your homework.

“As a school leaver joining Target just over a year ago, Lee's confidence in dealing with clients and his colleagues alike has improved exponentially and exceeded my expectations for someone of his experience.”

Tanya Leyshon, Head of Business Services, Reading