

Alumni in the Spotlight

Name: Alexandra Farrow

Job Title: Restructuring Senior Associate

Company: PwC

Year that I left Copley: 2012



What was your dream job when you were 10?

Not sure I had a dream job specifically. I thought a lot about becoming a teacher or potentially a banker but it's safe to say I didn't have a clear picture of where I wanted to go!

What did you do when you left Copley?

- Went to Ashton Sixth Form to study Maths, Further Maths, English Literature, English Language and Business Studies
- Then went to the University of Leeds to do a degree in Management
- Spent one summer of University working at a strategy consultancy firm in Shanghai and the other two working at a camp for homeless children in New York
- Stated on a graduate scheme with PwC in 2017 and have since qualified as a chartered accountant

What do you do day-to-day in your job?

Advising businesses is primarily what I do but also running businesses that go into an Insolvency process. I also work on accelerated sales processes for struggling businesses in the hopes of saving the business and as many jobs as possible. Sometimes my job means I need to make people redundant (which is definitely the hardest part) but most of the time I'm reviewing cash flow forecasts/longer term forecasts of businesses and assessing their longer-term viability and should the result be that their isn't a future for them then I might start contingency planning and designing a restructure of the business.

What skills and attributes do you need to do your job well?

I interact a lot with Bankers and Lawyers, so relationship skills are key. Similarly, when having difficult conversations with the directors of struggling businesses, generally empathy is important but also an ability to assert our position and opinions as often we're acting on behalf of the bank.

I'd say both English and Maths need to be a strength for my job. The ACA qualification is intense and required pretty much 3 years of studying in the offices on Evenings and Weekends. I'm now also studying for the certificate in insolvency, so the learning goes on and perseverance is important. Doing the ACA meant doing 15 exams whilst also working pretty long hours, so resilience was key here too.

What is your favourite part of your job?

When the work we do aids in jobs being saved. I also really enjoy the networking side of the job. In normal times it's a lot of business lunches/ dinners with bankers and lawyers and I'm very sociable so I've always enjoyed that! PwC also support me to volunteer so up until the pandemic I'd take disabled children on holiday for a week a year – which I loved as it meant a week of just focusing on a child that really needed me, rather than a laptop, lots of travel and business jargon.

What is your favourite memory of Copley?

Hard to pinpoint one but going on German exchange and swimming in lakes in the suburbs of Munich was amazing. Also, just generally all the things to get involved in – I really loved Art classes (and miss them now!) and playing Netball. Getting Head girl and completing my Gold DofE were also highlights!