

CASE STUDY: CONNECT CAREERS



Profile: Michael Prendergast
Senior Manager – Fraud & Financial Crime, Connect
Belfast Contact Centre

“Whatever your role, you need to know how to communicate and build relationships. Get that right and the level and breadth of opportunity is immense.”

Moving from Customer Adviser to Senior Management in eight years, Michael Prendergast shows just how far and fast you can progress with Connect. He joined Lloyds Banking Group after working in the hospitality industry, professional training and IT sectors. What began as a stop-gap role following redundancy in January 2005 quickly became a serious career.

A great route to promotion

“I was immediately struck by the meritocratic approach and the modern management style of Lloyds Banking Group,” says Michael. “It was something I could really buy into. Finding an employer whose values echoed my own made all the difference.”

He spent a year as a Customer Adviser. “It’s a great way to kick off your career. Starting at the coalface dealing with customers on the phone gives you skills and insights and that stand you in good stead for your future career. Many of my peers in management have come via the same route.”



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Recognition



LLOYDS
BANKING
GROUP



Financial
Education

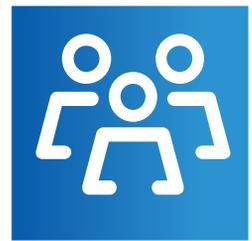
Michael was then seconded to a performance team as an Analyst. A year later, he moved from a local to a central analyst team and was thereafter headhunted internally for a Campaign Control Manager role. A spell in Sales Targeting & Planning followed – a role he held for about two-and-a-half years. He moved to his current role in July 2013, setting up the Fraud operation in Belfast and managing fraud telephony across three sites.

Personal growth

“All my prior moves led fairly naturally from one to the other but the move to Fraud Senior Manager was a significant shift for me. I went from the Retail division to Group Operations and started with an entirely new stakeholder group. It’s been a huge opportunity for personal growth and speaks volumes about the way LBG is committed to internal recruitment and getting the best person for the job.”
How did such a change of direction come about? “I was aware of a project to redevelop redundant desk space in Belfast for the fraud telephony operation. When the Head of Fraud then advertised a senior manager position to build that business, I jumped at the opportunity.”

And how did Michael prepare himself? “It was a new division with new systems and regulations. It was quite different to retail telephony. As well as new knowledge, I needed new skills to build connections with stakeholders and to manage large teams.” He was able to access LBG professional development resources such as the Discover Learning System and the personalised Leadership Reading List. However, he points to self-motivation as a key driver for his success. “My learning style is very self-directed, so I also did my own research and sought mentors to support me and ensure I was in the best possible position to meet the challenges of the role.”

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Support to reach your goals

Michael says there's plenty of support available for ambitious people like him. "You can access the combined knowledge of others to quickly prepare for new challenges and situations, whether it's developing presentations or communicating with colleagues." And, over the years he's benefited from a number of training courses in everything from influencing others to team-building skills.

However, and perhaps surprisingly, Michael says that he has had very positive learning opportunities from unsuccessful internal applications earlier in his career at Lloyds Banking Group. "The post-interview feedback at LBG is very detailed and gives you lots of pointers to review and improve your personal development plan. It's a real catalyst for development and, for colleagues who want to develop a career in the group, a huge advantage."

Skills that open doors

Being able to communicate is crucial to success in LBG, says Michael, which is why starting out as a Customer Adviser can be so helpful. "When you're dealing with a company on our scale, with its broad geographic spread, the ability to communicate effectively with peers, reports and internal stakeholders at all levels is so important. Whatever your role, it's an advantage to know how to listen to what people need and to build relationships. Come with an open mind and a strong work ethic and you'll find the level and breadth of opportunity is immense."

"The experience I gained as a Customer Adviser has led me to a job that's helping to protect our customers – and the wider public – against the increasing threat from cybercrime. It gives me immense satisfaction."