

Kristian Hawkes Assistant Auditor



Tell us a little bit about yourself.

Two years ago, I graduated with a degree in Business Studies. Having spent six months applying for entry-level Accountancy positions, I discovered Internal Audit.

Looking back on my past two years at SWAP, I've been given the opportunity to get involved in so many different projects, on top of audit work. What's more is that no two audits are ever the same, it's a very dynamic job and we are given lot of responsibility early on.

Naturally over time, you come to know your clients very well and will build relationships with virtually everyone in the organisation-so much more enjoyable than the cubicle-based jobs I've held in the past. What's more is that my work contributes directly to the Clients' Strategy, as they change to adapt to the risks we identify.

Otherwise, I'm only 24 but I've travelled extensively and enjoy experiencing different cultures. I also have a Black Belt in Karate and recently took up Mixed Martial Arts (Cage Fighting), which I thoroughly enjoy.

I'm also in the midst of my training to be become a Certified Internal Auditor.

What makes you have a good day at work?

Audit's still new and exciting for me, so most days I leave feeling I've learned something. It only has to be small, but how many people can honestly say they achieve this every day?

Really though, the best days for me are when I feel like I've helped someone. As Internal Auditors, we are completely independent of the organisations' management structure and spend time working with staff in all different areas of the organisations we serve. This provides us with a uniquely holistic understanding of the organisation and allows us to 'connect the dots', linking an issue one team is facing with a solution another team can offer. I also find that, once you build trust with clients, they'll find their own ways of using us. For

example, they might ask us to conduct an audit in an area they are concerned about; to get a second opinion. They may ask us to do some benchmarking with SWAP's Partners; to identify areas in which they could improve. It's these aspects of the job that make me feel valuable.

What's the best thing about working at SWAP?

It's culture. While it's a highly consummate, credible and ambitious organisation, I feel I'm treated as an equal. I'm provided with opportunities to express my ideas and contribute to the strategic direction of the company, regardless of my position and age. Everyone's very optimistic and future-oriented and I feel that I'm valued. It's a challenging, but exciting time to be working with Public Sector organisations and seeing them through a difficult period of austerity.

What's the most unusual thing you've ever eaten?

Horse (intentionally!), Ostrich, Kangaroo, Hakarl (rotten fish-Icelandic delicacy).

What's the most daring thing you've ever done?

Of what I'm willing to disclose, I nearly crashed into Tiff Needell doing 140mph in a Ferrari once-that was exciting.

If you could share a meal with any 4 individuals, living or dead, who would they be?

Jimi Hendrix, Che Guevara, Ricky Gervais and Warren Buffett (I heard he charges a lot for his time, so if you're paying...).