



The Insurance
Institute of Leeds
Chartered Insurance Institute



Jonathan's Story: Willis Towers Watson (Apprenticeship Aon)

I began my insurance career as an apprentice at the age of 18 having consciously decided that university wasn't for me. My best way of learning during my school years had always been through practical application rather than being sat in a classroom. Therefore I realised that the best route for me was to kick start my career through an apprenticeship.

The apprenticeship program that I joined at Aon was extremely structured and geared towards giving me the best opportunities in the workplace. Our first interaction was a two week intensive induction course with fellow year group apprentices. We learnt basic office etiquette as well as how to make an impact and the behaviours required to make a successful career in insurance. During the second week we began our introduction to insurance giving important learning points and basic knowledge to equip us for work in our respective offices around the country.

In the office you are treated as a normal employee and given opportunities to learn and understand how the insurance renewal process works. I was given opportunities to work with numerous colleagues that allowed me to gain a wide understanding and take positives from each method of working. As your experience grows, so does your responsibilities with different tasks and more client interaction afforded based on your competency. Interacting and dealing with client demands and needs is something that can't be taught in a university lecture room. Learning on the job is the best way to advance this type of knowledge and experience.

Whilst an apprenticeship includes on the job learning, there is also opportunity to study and gain professional qualifications while working. We had a specialist training company who taught us course content and supported us through insurance exams. Although this is like university in that you study and learn still, it's significantly cheaper seen as exams are paid for by the company and there are no tuition fees! In the run up to exams we were also given study days to aid our studies.

My apprenticeship has projected my career further than I could have expected. Being an apprentice in a company gets you noticed, both by your colleague but also senior management. There is a lot of interest from senior managers in making sure that their apprentices are progressing and wanting you to be a success. Having a successful apprentice can only be a positive for managers as well as yourself. As well as looking after around 8 large commercial clients, I'm currently the Chairperson of the CII Emerging Insurance Professional Group in Leeds.

What isn't always promoted enough about apprenticeships are the opportunities they can present. As more companies are beginning to offer apprenticeships, industry & trade bodies alike are creating competitions and events specifically tailored towards apprentices. Within insurance the CII have Young Professional groups around the country that put on events for people under 35 years old. Likewise BIBA have Young Broker Ambassadors with similar aims. In addition there are numerous opportunities to participate in competitions with other insurance professionals. These can help to boost your profile both within your company and in the industry. I'm currently on the CII New Generation Programme whereby we are joined in specific segments, mine being Broking with other similar New Gen professionals to complete a yearlong project. We have had opportunities to meet industry regulators, visit parliament and attend an upcoming dinner along the way.

Emerging Insurance Professionals

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