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Think Ahead



CASE STUDY: Alex Black

From an apprentice to a head of department in an SMP

Alex Black joined Ad Valorem at 17 after deciding he would rather enter the world of work than continue at college.

'I never really enjoyed structured education – joining Ad Valorem and being able to study in my own time was perfect because I could do it when I wanted'.

Alex says he benefited from the nurturing, almost family atmosphere in the practice and by the time he was 21 he was not only qualified but working as a client manager with a portfolio of 100 clients and is now head of the Research and Development department.

'I love to pioneer things, and making the most of opportunities and chances that I don't think I'd have got in a lot of other places,' he says. ■



CASE STUDY: Himanshu Srivastava, Corporate Catalyst Pvt, Ltd, India

SMP driving social mobility

Himanshu Srivastava heads the Business Advisory services at Corporate Catalyst India (CCI) and looks after inbound investment and corporate restructuring.

As well as being among the top five Indian consulting firms, CCI is a fully fledged accountancy firm with offices across the country and clients ranging from multinationals to small local firms and start-ups.

The firm does a lot of work pro bono, particularly helping their clients to evaluate their CSR spending or helping NGOs with devising their compliance regime, besides encouraging social and environmental causes through fund raising.

'We are very conscious of regulation as the social sector is evolving and growing', says Srivastava. 'I am very excited that these organisations are becoming more transparent and responsible'.

Government regulation requires that each year larger companies must set aside a figure equivalent to 2%

of their average net profits made during the three immediately preceding financial years, to spend on the current year's CSR activities, and CCI guides its clients about how best to structure this, and also helps clients who are proactively trying to reduce their environmental impact or are keen to have a positive social footprint.

The firm is also very keen to promote inclusivity and to offer secure employment to disadvantaged and underprivileged people. Often, these are individuals from modest backgrounds who have either not graduated or had to take a break from education.

'We encourage them to complete their education, and if we are able to, we will absorb them internally and help them to develop professionally'.

'These individuals make very remarkable progress and a few have really excelled, as accountants, lawyers, [and] corporate executives' says Himanshu. 'There is no obligation for them to stay on or to have any emotional baggage: we encourage them to move on and it is always very heartwarming to see them excel'. ■

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