



THERE ARE FEW ROLES IN FINANCE THAT WILL GIVE YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE AS SIGNIFICANT AN IMPACT ON YOUR COMPANY AS THAT OF A TREASURER, SAYS MATT MATTHEOU OF PURE RECRUITMENT.

WHY CHOOSE TREASURY?

A question which by the very nature of my job as a recruitment consultant I am often asked is: "Why choose treasury?" Those who ask me this are in the process of evaluating their next career move and have previous treasury exposure, while others have a more nebulous understanding of what it involves.

For a bright, commercially focused and ambitious individual, the variety of experience which corporate treasury offers, when compared to the other finance-related professions, makes it an intellectually stimulating and demanding area to work in.

When working in treasury you will develop a thorough understanding of the opportunities (and limitations!) which the capital markets and money markets offer to an organisation to help it fund its activities and manage risk successfully. You will also be in the position to effectively deploy your own technical treasury skills to help realise your company's inherent business potential and assist in achieving the company's strategic goals.

For many treasury professionals, working in an environment where both the markets and the external economy impact on their company, and knowing the decisions that they make – some of them in an instant – can significantly affect the organisation, is as rewarding as it is daunting. Few other roles will give you the opportunity to have such a significant impact on your company.

Relationship management is another area where an individual can make a material difference. By utilising and developing your communication skills with external counterparties (the banks, ratings agencies and other financial institutions) but also internally (i.e. the board as well as business/divisional management), you can ensure that your point is put across, and, depending how effective you are, implemented. The 'buzz' of seeing your ideas implemented and opinions listened to is immensely satisfying.

Now we have established that treasury is a fast moving and commercially

challenging area to work, another question I am frequently asked is: "Where will it take me?" For those who would like to use their experience in treasury as a stepping stone to the role of financial director (FD), the encouraging news is that over the past few years there has been a steady flow of group treasurers making the transition to FD. When looking for an FD, many FTSE organisations will look for candidates who have either held main board positions or have experience of dealing with external advisors (i.e. financial institutions) – treasurers can certainly tick this box.

NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR. Another move available to senior treasury professionals and which in the post-Higgs era may well become more commonplace, is for treasurers to become non-executive directors. Bearing in mind the experience and knowledge which they have accumulated, it would seem a logical move and it will be interesting to see how many treasurers pursue this option in the near future.

TREASURY CONSULTANCY. The economic upturn has made this an attractive option for many. Those who have made the move from industry and commerce have found it challenging and rewarding. Typically, most of the major consultancies look for individuals with blue chip exposure and strong academic and interpersonal ability. From talking to those who have made the transition, there are many advantages in taking the consultancy route. One of them is the sheer variety of the client base you will be advising. One minute you could be talking to multinational corporations, the next you'll be dealing with private equity houses. In addition, you will have the opportunity of seeing first hand the various complexities and challenges which different treasury departments encounter.

When combined with the fact that you will constantly be updating your technical skills and keeping abreast of best practices, it is no surprise that a few years in consultancy is a popular option for many.

THE CHOICE IS YOURS. Finally, even if you decide that a career in treasury is not for you, your options are not as limited as you might think. The breadth which the treasury qualifications cover and the skills and experience you will attain are those which most organisations demand of their future business leaders and you will find other doors open to you in the banking and commercial worlds.

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