Andy Rumfitt
Senior Director & Head of Business Cases and Funding

Job title: Senior Director & Head of Business Cases and Funding

Organisation: Turley

Location: London, UK

How did you get to where you are now?
I completed an undergraduate degree at Cambridge University where my focus and passion was on urban and economic geography. I then completed an MPhil in Environmental Planning at Reading University where I focussed on strategic and regional planning. At the same time I was working as a part time graduate consultant at PA Cambridge Economic Consultants, which employed a number of staff who focussed on spatial economic issues such as the effectiveness of regional policy geography. Much of the consultancy work was geographical in nature (e.g. tourism impact studies in the Yorkshire Dales, regeneration strategy for Merthyr Tydfil). And finally, I have always loved the outdoors, appreciated nature in all its forms and been active in hill walking, running, skiing and cycling in many locations (e.g. Wales, Scotland, Iceland, the French and Italian Alps, the Rockies in Colorado, the Pyrenees and Picos Europa, Australia, New Zealand).

Was there anything particularly useful that helped you get into this role?
I was very lucky to work with some very inspiring applied economists and land economists at Cambridge Economic Consultants in the firm's early days. I didn't realise at the time but this was an "apprenticeship" in all but name. Lesson: get any practical experience you can.

What skills and characteristics do you need for this role, apart from geographical knowledge?
The key skills and characteristics needed for this role include:

- Strategy development - develop short and long term vision and strategy for economic development consultancy services in specific geographical and client markets.

- Leadership development – from a strategic perspective, identify the skills and capabilities that need to be developed in the short and long term to ensure sustainable performance of the economic development team and specific team members.

- Be an expert - act as a subject matter expert and technical verifier across function, markets and/or geography.

- Business development - ability to create and lead strategic partnerships and long - term fee earning relationships with major economic development clients

- Market development - ability to combine an understanding of market needs and constraints and the organisation's capabilities to develop new and innovative solutions (e.g. digital tools).

- Project management - ability to maximise resources and review the planning and reporting of progress by project managers.

- Problem solving - ability to identify problems and opportunities and analyse information to develop, evaluate and implement solutions across the team and Urban Advisory.

- Leadership - able to lead change effectively, to demonstrate personal composure and be adaptable and flexible in ambiguous and/or fast changing circumstances.

How does geography feature in your work/ what difference does it make?
Since 1992 I have undertaken a range of private sector consultancy roles and public sector roles in local and regional economic development and regional transport operators. Almost all of these involved the application of geographical concepts to support public investments and public policy development, implementation and evaluations. Over 25 years, my professional geographical focus has

been on:

- Spatial and economic analysis of local, regional and national economies in the UK and overseas using primary and secondary research.

- Development, implementation and evaluation of policies and programmes to reduce spatial and social inequalities (e.g. local and regional economic development and transport strategies, skills, regeneration and business support initiatives)

- Social, economic, equality and health impacts of major public and transport investments (e.g. impact assessments).

- Bringing forward large scale transport infrastructure projects in the UK (e.g. High Speed 1 and 2, Crossrail 1 and 2).

What advice would you give to someone wanting to go into this career?
Get a good balanced education at GCSE and A Level, ensuring that you have subjects that link to the natural and built environment. Be comfortable with analysing data and drawing conclusions. Try to focus on what you are passionate about as that see you through the long term.

Why did you choose geography?
Geography enables you to consider spatially some of the biggest challenges affecting the world today. It also opens up many career and travel opportunities and you'll still be interested many years in the future.

What mathematical skills do you use as part of this role/previous roles you've had?
We analyse and map economic data so we need to understand ONS and other data sources on industrial sectors, occupations, labour markets, deprivation, land values, property and unemployment in different geographies. As part of this work we have to be able to stitch together time series data and also identify and explain any anomalies. We also produce and analyse business cases (with various cashflows) and that requires an understanding of geometric progressions and discount rates. When we model development impacts for a large number of sites there is a need to be able to plan and structure largish datafiles, sometimes beyond the capacity of Excel. We have produced standard models of geographical data for different areas and we import bulk volumes of data so we can quickly compare indicators for different areas.

Why should students consider studying maths/economics to complement their study of Geography?
While we don't build large scale econometric models, an understanding of data analysis and manipulation supports the analytical work we do. Economics is especially useful with geography as much of what we do is actually economic geography about firms and people operating in various markets. Having a solid understanding of economic theory (e.g. all parts of demand and supply) is very useful at national and regional levels, complements spatial theory and is used for assessing wider impacts of transport and other infrastructure (e.g. multipliers, input-output analysis, static and dynamic agglomeration effects).

Jobs in this role/sector can attract salaries in the range of £96,000+.

* This interview was updated in 2021 and was correct at the time of publication. Please note that the featured individual may no longer be in role, but the profile has been kept for career pathway and informational purposes.