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Dr Andy Markham Company Director

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**Royal
Geographical
Society**
with IBG

Advancing geography
and geographical learning



Job title: Company Director

Organisation: Hydrobiology

Location: Australia, Singapore, Papua New Guinea

What do you do as part of your role?

My duties as a Company Director include oversight and management of a company of 20 people in three International Offices. I am responsible for finance, HR, business development and company growth – this takes up approximately 60% of my time. I also have work duties as a consultant (geomorphology and hydrology) which involves leading and directing projects, providing critical review and high-level advice on environmental risk management for clients.

Alongside this, I am a Chartered Geographer Assessor for the RGS-IBG, a member of the Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy (CPEnv and Consultants Society Committee Member), and a committee member (Professional Accreditation) for the Australia and New Zealand Geomorphology Group.

How did you get to where you are now?

I graduated from University of East Anglia in 1985 with a BSc Hons in Environmental Science. I then did a PhD at Queen Mary College London in Fluvial Geomorphology. My first job was as a consultant in London working in the field of Transport Informatics. I then worked as Senior Hydrologist for Ok Tedi Mining in Papua New Guinea between 1990 and 1995, after which I moved to Australia to work as a consultant as a Geomorphologist for a River Management company and then as an Environmental Scientist for a larger engineering/environmental consultancy, and then as a sole trader. I co-founded Hydrobiology (consultants) in 2001.

Was there anything particularly useful that helped you get into this role?

A PhD was quite beneficial and, in my case, has led to a successful commercial career away from research.

What skills and characteristics do you need for this role, apart from geographical knowledge?

Consulting is a challenging profession which requires technical expertise, the ability to deliver projects to client expectations, manage projects profitably, promote the business and also empower and motivate staff.

What is the most interesting or enjoyable project you've worked on and why?

The most enjoyable project I worked on was baseline fieldwork at Frieda River in Papua New Guinea, due to the spectacular geographic environment. But we have a lot of interesting technical work too with projects this year in Brazil, Laos, Papua New Guinea and Singapore.

What might you be doing in five years' time?

Retiring hopefully, and being in a position to



mentor early career professional consultants, as well as being able to cherry-pick work on a part time basis

What advice would you give to someone wanting to go into this career?

Consulting is a rewarding but challenging career path requiring a range of skills. You have to be quite well organised, and be able to work and report efficiently.

There are good opportunities for a diverse range of projects and work experience but you have to be interested in the subject matter as it can involve long hours and fieldwork.

I would advise talking to other consultants before committing - but don't be afraid to try it.