

Title: **Case Study**  
**Construction & the Built Environment**  
**in Wiltshire & Swindon**

**Marc Roberts** is a 25-year-old quantity surveyor working for Beard, a large building company in Swindon. He manages the financial and commercial side of construction projects, often handling budgets of millions of pounds.

Working with a project manager, his job includes making sure the building work is running efficiently, dealing with sub-contractors, maintaining the firm's financial accounts and ensuring it is paid on time for the work. He is involved in building projects ranging from multi-million pound office blocks to refurbishing stately homes.

Marc joined the firm at 16 after taking his GCSEs at St Joseph's Catholic College in Swindon. He became interested in becoming a quantity surveyor after doing Year 10 work experience with a local building company.

He joined Beard as an apprentice after responding to a job advert in his local newspaper. As soon as he joined he was earning £7,000 a year and his company paid for him to train at college on day release.

Marc says beginning at 16 gave him a real head start in his chosen career. "If I had stayed on to do my 'A' Levels and joined at a later stage, I would have lost two years' salary," he says. "I knew what I wanted to do – I couldn't see the point in hanging around at college and starting two years later."

During his first four years in the job, he studied for one day a week at Swindon College taking a BTEC National Certificate in Building Studies. He went on to take a Higher National Certificate at Gloucestershire College of Arts and Technology (now called Gloucestershire College).

At first his job involved a lot of shadowing of experienced employees and doing basic

administration to learn the ropes. But by the age of 20 he was already managing building projects, earning £20,000 a year and driving a company car.

However, Marc still had to take his full professional qualification. He went on to take a BSc honours degree at the University of the West of England – studying for one day a week while doing his job for the remaining four.

He says juggling work responsibilities while studying for a degree was the toughest time of his career so far – but it has been worth it.

His company paid for him to go to university – and now he is fully qualified and earning a full professional salary.

If he chooses to, he could go on to take a Masters degree or further professional qualifications to improve his job prospects. In a few years time he hopes to gain promotion to the post of senior surveyor, and from there to commercial manager with overall responsibility for a team of surveyors. Potentially he could become a director of the company.

You need certain qualities to do Marc's job. "You have to be strong-willed to avoid getting pushed around by sub-contractors" he says. "And you have to have good communication skills. You have to be able to get on with anyone, from an employer to the labourers on site."

What does he like about the job? "You make up your own timetable of what you're going to do and when you're going to do it. For a lot of it you have quite a free rein. And I like the responsibility. Between you and the project manager, you're responsible for running that building site."