

A week in the life of Natalie Henville (Junior Consultant)

Monday

I had a meeting today with a longstanding client of Berkshire's, a Dubai based company who specialise in providing goods and services to MOD among others. They are looking for our assistance on a proposal they are putting together, so have travelled over to the UK for a 2 day storyboard meeting to get our input and advice on their best chances of winning the work.

Tuesday

Second day of our storyboard meeting. As the day is going on, our client is becoming more aware of the task ahead of them, and are keen to seek more of our help with this. What I didn't expect was that this would culminate in them asking me to get on a plane out to Dubai the following day to help their staff write and prepare their bid submission! Quick booking of flights and packing – for very warm weather!- and I'm off to the airport.

Wednesday

First day in the office in Dubai. Quite a daunting experience, having been the first time I had been over there without my colleagues, but I met the very helpful office staff, and had a long chat with the Directors of the company to assess what they needed from me to make the proposal a success. We had a really productive afternoon, mapping out the whole bid process and have now overtaken a whole section of their offices as 'Bid HQ'!

Thursday

Jet lag is starting to kick in a bit, but we are up against a very tight timeline for this piece of work, and need all hands on deck. We had an interesting meeting with a potential subcontractor, witnessing firsthand the very complex negotiations that go on in a very different cultural environment. The bid is at a good stage at this point, following some very long days, and one of the Berkshire Directors will be flying over on Friday to begin the 'Red Team' process, ensuring the bid is compliant, compelling and commercially competitive.

Friday

This is the equivalent of our Sunday in the UAE, so I take the morning off to explore my surroundings- which basically involves finding the nearest mall and spending a long time coveting handbags way out of my price range! I also managed to book myself on an evening trip up the Burj Dubai, the tallest building in the world.

Saturday

No weekend for me today, my Director arrived early this morning and red teamed the bid. After making the amends we are off to the printers to get the very large document bound and looking as polished as possible. Again, quite a difference to the UK- having to negotiate the language barrier and effectively trying to depict 'laminated' in sign language- not my finest hour!

I am booked onto a flight first thing tomorrow morning, with the bid in my suitcase, and I will be travelling straight from the airport to deposit the bid, which is for a UK based authority.

It's been a fantastic experience, and working in such a culturally diverse and dynamic city- whilst under extreme time pressure- was both challenging and fascinating, maybe next time I will try and buy that handbag too!