

# 48 Inside: Procter & Gamble

## Household giant

In the second article of our series looking at the working life of ACCA members at big-name businesses, we meet two finance managers working for Procter & Gamble

**Just north-east of central Newcastle is the Cobalt Business Park, the UK's largest office park – and the location of the EMEA Shared Service Centre for Procter & Gamble (P&G). In the foyer, one display shows the company's recent work with local schools, while in the corner a glass-covered stand artfully displays a selection of P&G's products.**

Virtually every household in the UK has a P&G product, with a quarter having more than four. Many of the best-known household products are

P&G brands: Pampers nappies, Fairy washing-up liquid, Ariel washing powder, Gillette razors, Pringles crisps, Duracell batteries, Lenor fabric conditioner, IAMS pet food, Oral-B and Crest dental products, Olay beauty products, Max Factor make-up, Head & Shoulders shampoo... and there are many more.

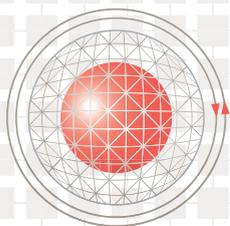
With 127,000 employees in 80 countries and a global turnover of around \$79bn, it's hard to believe the US-listed organisation started life as a

small, family operated soap and candle company and has grown to provide household-name products and services in 180 countries. Englishman William Procter and Irishman James Gamble founded the company in 1837 in Cincinnati, Ohio, which remains the present-day global headquarters.

In the UK and Ireland, P&G employs some 6,000 people. The European headquarters are in Geneva, where P&G's three Global Business Units (GBUs) for the EMEA region are based:



'YOUR AVERAGE CAREER PATH WITH P&G WILL SEE MOVES EVERY TWO OR THREE YEARS, OFTEN INTO AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT AREA'



## The CV

### MARCIN SOJDA FCCA

#### 2003

**Procter & Gamble (on acquisition of Wella)**  
Various roles, including: global senior financial analysis manager based in Switzerland (2005), finance manager Baltic region based in Latvia (2007), plant finance manager based in Poland (2008 onwards)

#### 1997

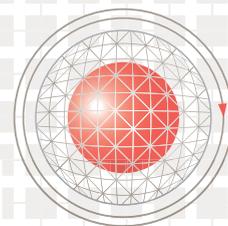
**Wella, Poland**  
Various roles, including: reporting assistant (1997), controlling specialist (1998), senior controlling specialist (2001), financial controller (2002)



*Luke Bowman*



*Marcin Sojda*



## The CV

### LUKE BOWMAN FCCA

#### 2002

**Procter & Gamble, UK**  
Various roles, including: banking back office manager (2002), banking front & middle office manager/bank relationship manager (2004), fine fragrances global cost forecaster (2007), tax compliance manager (2010 onwards)

#### 1996

**Northern Rock, UK**  
Treasury back office clerk (1996), later internal auditor in the Treasury & Finance function (1998). ACCA-qualified in 2001

Household, Beauty & Grooming, and Health & Wellbeing. Tax compliance manager Luke Bowman explains the company splits into four divisions. 'The GBUs are responsible for brand management, profitability and our product innovation pipeline,' he says. 'They also look after our R&D sites and manufacturing plants. In the UK we have three R&D innovation centres and a number of plants making products to serve markets right across Europe.

'We also have Market Development Organisations [MDOs]. There's an MDO unit for each market and their responsibility is to locally promote and sell the products, dealing directly with stores like Tesco and Boots. The sales forces and market research teams work within these, and each team will have a finance professional who is fully involved when dealing with customers.'

'Thirdly,' continues Bowman, 'we have our corporate functions which include areas such as Legal, Tax and Internal Audit. These teams provide

expert support and services to the rest of the business and offer some diverse finance roles.'

The fourth division is Global Business Services (GBS), where Bowman works. The Newcastle shared service centre is one of a number of GBS centres globally, and has around 500 people in the finance function, with responsibility for P&G's Western Europe accounting processes.

#### Centralised finance

'In 2000 P&G moved the majority of the financial accounting roles out of the local businesses and into the shared service centres,' says Bowman. 'Previously, everything was done locally. Now the general ledger accounting, local statutory accounts preparation, accounts payable, banking, tax compliance, cost and plant accounting have all been centralised here in Newcastle, so the GBUs and MDOs can concentrate purely on their roles of developing and selling our products.

They still have finance functions within those units, but they will be primarily looking at the management accounting side of things.'

Marcin Sojda, plant finance manager in Warsaw, Poland, is one example of a finance manager outside GBS. With around 3,200 employees, of which 100 work in the finance area and around \$500m of investment, P&G's Polish operations are significant, involving around 60 brands. Having started his career in Wella, prior to its acquisition by P&G, Sojda describes his role as 'a fantastic learning and development opportunity' due to the sheer variety in his work.

'One of the key advantages is you can touch every single process in the plant and improve it,' he says. 'You can work with the marketing department as a financial analyst, but you can also work with the function dealing with customers – which has a completely different approach and different experience – and other functions such

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as treasury, accounting and so on.'

P&G encourages its employees to move around to get to know as many different aspects of the business as possible – and Bowman and Sojda are no exception. Bowman has worked in tax compliance for six months, but has worked for P&G in other roles. 'We rotate assignments throughout the business,' he says. 'We want people to have the opportunity to move around and acquire varied experiences – your average career path here will see moves every two or three years, often into an entirely different area. The idea is that we're aiming to build the business leaders of the future, so we want them to continually learn new skills and gain experience in as many areas as possible.'

Moving around often includes international travel as well. 'A few years

ago I was based in Riga, Latvia and was responsible for Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia,' recalls Sojda. 'I've also worked in Germany and Switzerland. I had an assignment in Geneva between 2005 and 2007 as a global financial analyst role – I was responsible for preparing long-term strategy plans for the professional care business. It gave me a good understanding of our global processes, as well as good cross-cultural experience, because in Geneva you deal with so many nationalities from across the business.'

P&G aims to be a business that sees its employees as investments – to be nurtured, trained and retained; to be tomorrow's business leaders. As Bowman explains: 'As a build from within company, we only hire people at two entry levels. Firstly, at clerical base

currently 10 active ACCA trainees working for P&G across the Polish sites. In Newcastle, 35 have enrolled for ACCA training as the site looks to develop as an accounting centre of expertise – and, as with the rest of the Newcastle shared service centre, they come from all over the world. 'The diversity that Marcin talked about earlier is one of the advantages of P&G – it's one of the key things we promote,' Bowman says.

## Helping hand

In fact, people policy in general is a P&G strength, as Bowman is keen to point out. 'We have a strong link with UNICEF and helping in the Third World (after the [2010] earthquake in Haiti P&G sent a lot of aid), in addition to supporting local charities. Plus

**'WE'RE AIMING TO BUILD THE BUSINESS LEADERS OF THE FUTURE, SO WE WANT THEM TO CONTINUALLY LEARN NEW SKILLS AND GAIN EXPERIENCE'**

entry level – for example, an accounting technician – and secondly at managerial entry level.'

'There are only ever a few rare exceptions to this for specific expertise such as tax or legal. 'At whichever level you come in, you can get to the top of your field. It may be on a broad-based finance career path or a mastery path in a chosen area,' he adds.

## Developing people

Training is very important, says Sojda. 'We care about the development of our people. It's built into the P&G culture to develop people, so we have very strong internal training programmes run by professionals,' he says. 'They can be face to face, internet-based, over conference calls or from external speakers. We have programmes of external certification like ACCA available too.'

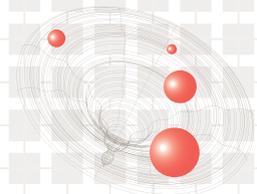
Sojda, who is the deputy president of ACCA in Poland, says there are

we're family friendly and put on staff events like P&G's Got Talent and pantomimes for the children of employees,' he says.

'Official working hours are 37.5 a week, but we operate on a flexible work basis with set core hours each day, around which people can choose when they start and when they finish. The recent snow proved an interesting business continuity exercise but, fortunately, it went well with people working from home. P&G is very flexible: we do offer reduced working hours, sabbaticals and location-free working if needed. Work-life balance is very important.'

This is reflected in P&G's steady workforce. Even with individuals moving around every few years – aside from those taking the mastery route in their roles – there isn't a high employee attrition rate, Bowman says.

**Santhie Goundar, journalist**



## The basics: PROCTER & GAMBLE

**\$79BN**

Global turnover for the year ended  
30 June 2010

**180**

Number of countries in which P&G  
provide products and services

**127,000**

Number of employees worldwide

**1837**

The year that P&G was founded in  
Cincinnati, Ohio by William Procter  
and James Gamble