

M&A
THE
INSIDE
STORY

*What life is really like
as a junior banker at
DC Advisory*



M&A

THE INSIDE STORY

WHO WE ARE

We're an international corporate finance adviser with specific expertise in cross-border transactions which means we do deals with companies in different markets, particularly in Asia, Europe and the US. We offer our clients tailored and independent advice on mergers & acquisitions (M&A), debt raisings and restructurings. We have offices in Asia, Europe and the US and we're a subsidiary of Japan's Daiwa Securities Group.

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This guide is designed to give you an honest and real insight into what it's like to be a M&A practitioner on the internship or analyst programme at DC Advisory.

We reveal how the industry works and give you a true picture of what your life as a DC banker could be like. We've collaborated with new analysts at the firm to write this guide. We think it's important that you are given more than a glossy, corporate image of our firm so you can make the right choice for you. This guide will help you with your application thought process and give you the real story of life as an M&A banker.

WHAT IS M&A AND WHY IS DC DIFFERENT?

M&A is the business of buying and selling companies, or shareholder stakes, and is usually done by investment banks and independent advisors.

There are a lot of players on stage when a deal takes place, such as accountants, lawyers, lenders and corporate finance advisors, like DC, as well as of course the corporations or private equity firms who are buying or selling companies.

Your client
could be
anywhere
and in any
sector

“

You're working with lots of different parties – the lawyers and due diligence providers are working all day and night – so it's demanding on your time and you have to stay sharp.”

Alexine, Analyst, Debt Advisory
Studied Business Engineering (BSc)
and Finance (MSc) at KULeuven

Every business and management team is different



You have to be really good at prioritising – sometimes managing directors ask for things last minute and that can take your evening. I don't plan things Monday to Thursday because work is unpredictable.”

Jivko, Analyst, L&R

Studied Economics (BSc) at Bates College and International Management (MSc) at Bocconi University.

It's a complex process and each transaction is different. Not only because every business and management team is different, but also because every deal has a different process and set of requirements.

As a corporate advisor you could be working on the sell side or the buy side of the deal, for a private equity company or a corporation. You may have to help your client to refinance or organise new loans to achieve the deal.

Your client could be anywhere, such as China, Germany, Japan, the UK or the US. And they may be selling to or buying a business just about anywhere. Imagine how varied your day to day life could be as a banker in that process.

You could be working across different sectors, for example, helping an industrial company buy a tech company, or selling a digital platform to a media company, or helping a beauty brand acquire a new product line to transform its business.

Firms use M&A to achieve all sorts of business goals. They may simply want to grow the business in a particular market; they may want to make a strategic move to head off the competition; it could be about acquiring new technology from the start up world; or, particularly when private equity firms are involved, it may be because management wants help to grow its business using investment and expertise that they won't find anywhere else.





The mid-market is niche and companies often aren't listed so you can become an expert in a sub sector very quickly"

Ben, Analyst, IP&S
Studied Banking and Finance (BSc)
at Loughborough University.

At DC we cover a range of sectors including business services, healthcare, industrial products and services (IP&S), infrastructure, leisure, retail and consumer (L&R) and technology, media and telecoms (TMT). We also have a dedicated debt advisory team which provides impartial advice on refinancing and debt packages, for example, loans that companies may need that are provided by other banks and non-bank lenders.

We also have a specialist team which is dedicated to giving clients access to the Asian markets. They work daily with our colleagues at Daiwa Securities, the Japanese bank and DC's parent company, in Tokyo, Beijing and Hong Kong. So as an intern or analyst, you're spoilt for choice when it comes to the range of experiences in M&A you can have at DC. The other thing that's interesting about DC, considered a boutique M&A advisor as opposed to a bulge bracket bank, is that we focus on the mid-market. That means we tend to do deals worth at least £50M and up to around £1BN.

That equates to around 90 completed deals a year across our four European offices. What this means in real life is that it's busy, everyone works fast and intensely and you get a lot of exposure to different deal processes. And with each deal process you learn a huge amount about your role and the world of M&A, which is very different to doing one or two bulge bracket deals a year as you might at other banks. The main difference between DC and a bulge bracket bank is that at the latter you'll have a small role as part of a big deal and rarely get to see the whole process. At DC you're involved in everything immediately: you meet clients and have real responsibility within a small team of people.

We do deals
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£50m
up to
£1bn



LIFE AS AN ANALYST

A normal day for an analyst generally starts between 9am and 9.30am and can last around twelve hours, sometimes longer, sometimes shorter, depending on what they're working on.



Everyone is really supportive and you learn so much. I love this job for how challenging and logical it is and all the different personalities in the team"

Alexine, Analyst, Debt Advisory

**Every day
really is
different.**

Getting stuck in

Analysts at DC join a sector team and get stuck into deals immediately, after an initial two-week training programme designed to give new joiners the basic skills they need to start working on deals. The training course is held in London and attended by new analysts from all the European offices. The course covers the basics of accounting, reading balance sheets, valuation, modelling and how debt works.

Analysts are often surprised at how involved they are, such as going to client meetings and being an active part of the deal team from the start.



I did business and finance at uni but many of my colleagues didn't. I work with law, neuroscience and humanities graduates. You're taught how to read balance sheets on the job."

Ben, Analyst, IP&S

IS M&A FOR YOU?

Our analysts say that while you work hard and long hours, the rewards are great. You get to learn a lot very fast about an exciting part of the industry.

To thrive in this environment, you should be interested in learning and self-motivated. While a finance degree is not a requirement, you do need to be numerically literate, although you are taught the skills you need on the job and in training.

Working with lots of different people and personalities

The most interesting thing about M&A is the sheer variety and opportunity to work with lots of different people and personalities in real businesses across a variety of industries. Other parts of banking are much more abstract and the day to day can simply be crunching numbers using sophisticated technology for clients you don't meet.

MYTHS AND REALITIES

Myth

Everyone's a shark & out for themselves

Reality

You have to be a team player to succeed

Myth

It's a hierarchical, old boys' club

Reality

It is male-dominated but addressing the balance is a priority across the industry

Myth

Seniors oppress the juniors

Reality

Managers don't make requests for no reason – you always understand why you're asked to do things

Myth

Women have to prove themselves more than men

Reality

It can sometimes feel like women have to work harder

Myth

You work long hours & are stuck inside

Reality

It's a big time commitment but you learn a lot & are constantly challenged

Myth

People are generally homogeneous in banking – conservative & traditional

Reality

Everyone's different. Varied backgrounds & smart people are what makes it interesting

Myth

There's a "face time" culture

Reality

You'll work hard and for good reason – because you're entrenched in the deal

Myth

You have to be a maths, economics or business graduate

Reality

Not necessarily. Numerical literacy is important, but you can learn everything you need on the job

Myth

You never get to meet clients as a junior

Reality

At DC you get to meet clients early in your career

Myth

All M&A at every bank is the same

Reality

Bulge bracket banks are different to boutiques – boutique deal teams tend to be smaller so you see every aspect of a deal