

# Owl Financial **Inspiring** Interview

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Chris Clarke, **Area Sales Manager**



Chris' story is one of a range of inspiring interviews.

**Find out more>**

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## My Journey, **Chris Clarke**

We've collated a series of motivational case studies that show the journey of some of our most ambitious Advisers and Managers. It's fascinating to hear about their background, why they joined Owl, what motivates them and tips for others building their career in the business.

### Here we hear **Chris' story**

If you would like to share your Owl journey to help inspire others, please email [enquiries@owlfinancial.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@owlfinancial.co.uk)

### My Journey to Owl

Before joining Owl I had two jobs. I spent years playing semi-professional rugby. I loved the game, but this wasn't enough financially so I also worked full time as a teacher, working 8am to 5pm in a pupil referral unit. Looking back, not sure how I did it. Four nights a week I would finish my teaching job and go training, typically back at around 10pm.

I retired from rugby in 2014, but continued teaching. During that time I decided to take out insurance and was introduced to an Adviser who worked for the company. I was happy with the cover he recommended and took out a policy. During our discussions, we spoke about my job and he suggested I should consider working as an Adviser. I applied and was successful - great I thought, I could get some extra money by combining the job with my teaching position.

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When an opportunity like this comes your way, you should seize it. With hard work, focus and the right mindset, you'll be surprised how much you can achieve. I completely changed career – it's been one of the best moves I've made.

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## Learning the ropes

I'd never sold anything before, so wasted no time reading, watching and basically doing everything I could do learn about the products and selling. This was completely new, but I was determined to try and make it work.

In my first year, my income grew fairly steadily; by the second it had doubled. I thought seriously about whether I should give up teaching and focus on my role as a Protection Adviser. I decided to bite the bullet and give it a go - it's one of the best decisions I've made.

## If at first you don't succeed...

I knew early on that I wanted to become a Sales Manager (I'd gained some experience of managing during my teaching position), so at the earliest opportunity I applied for the Potential Area Sales Manager (PASM) programme.

For others who may be considering - take it from me, it's worth trying again, if at first you don't succeed. Initially, I wasn't accepted on the programme, which was a bit disappointing but I understood. One of the key things holding my back was my trying to juggle two jobs.

After I made the decision to focus on my Adviser role, things started to change. Third time lucky, I was accepted on to the programme and passed. I was really pleased. Being a manager just feels right and it's great that I can do this whilst still selling.

## Job satisfaction

One of the best things about this job is helping others - not just customers, but those looking for a career change. It's good to be able to give people a chance. In my team, I have Advisers with differing experience and backgrounds. As I always say, 'If I can do it, you can'. With focus and training, like me they can enjoy a career that will pay well, whilst allowing you to work flexibly.

Of course, it's customers that keeps you going. Every time I hear about a customer who's been helped by a claims payout it motivates me.

## My top tips

- If you're going to do a job - commit to it.
- Don't treat this job like something on the side.
- Empathise with others - put yourself in your customers shoes and treat them how you'd want to be treated.
- Embrace technology - learn, practice and continuously develop your knowledge and skills.

From a personal perspective, this job enables me to work flexibly, have more time with my son and family, plus earn a good income. My goal is to continue to make the most of this opportunity, keep improving / helping my team and enjoy what I do.

I continue to look at how I can further support clients and am committed to developing my skills and knowledge. For example, I'm pleased to have successfully passed CeMAP examinations (mortgage qualification).

What an inspiring example of someone who has come from a non-insurance background, has worked hard and now has an exciting career ahead.

**Thank you Chris for sharing your inspiring journey.**