

# Meet the Outset team

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David Westell

HR Consultant



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## Describe your role and how you support our clients (in no more than 100 words)

My role as an HR Consultant requires me to work with our clients to drive their HR agenda whilst helping them to identify, scope and deliver on projects that would enhance their productivity and wellbeing. The role is centred primarily on providing pro-active, tactical HR solutions at a strategic level whilst providing business partnership/HR Director level support to develop our clients working practices and knowledge of HR in its widest form.

I also support and advise clients on reactive HR issues within their business by supplying pragmatic advice and 'on the ground' presence to attend/hold meetings and deliver decisions.

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## Give us a brief timeline of your career so far

I studied Business & Finance at university whilst working as a bartender in Southampton. It was a great experience and I have fond memories of that bar that once stood on Ocean Village marina.

Preferring the bar industry, I pursued that for a few years, working up to managing numerous bars and restaurants. I ended up working at the head office of a large pub and restaurant chain in Watford.

After 6 years in Watford and gaining a CIPD certificate in employment relations, law and practice it was time to relocate back to Kent. I changed jobs and started work for a large consultancy company as a Senior Employment Law Consultant. This field based role centred on delivering clients HR solutions through the provision of appropriate legal and HR advice and documentation. I was suited to the role as I enjoyed establishing good client relations and helping them solve a wide variety of problems. The role also allowed me to gain experience in a number of different legal jurisdictions.

After 8 years, it was time to change again. Which brings me to Outset. A great business with fantastic people. 5 years now (July 2020) which has gone by in a flash.

I am currently studying towards my Level 7 CIPD diploma in Human Resources Management – not sure why I put it off for so long.

It's odd to see all that work and time condensed into 5 paragraphs. Happy to elaborate – I'm known for liking a chat.

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**What do you wish someone had told you when you started out? Or what piece of advice were you given early on that has stuck with you?**

My dad once said to me “find something that you enjoy doing and make a career out of it”. Like any good son, I didn’t pay much attention to my dad’s advice. I never set out to become an HR Consultant at all (who would?) but the career found me through a variety of life changing events and decisions.

I have since passed on the same advice to my son. Time will tell if he follows my path of no design – hopefully not.

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**What has been your biggest challenge in your role**

Although certain client challenges can be challenging in their own way, they are fine. Every problem has a solution, you just need to know where to look. The biggest challenge is the multifaceted nature of the role where you may have several ‘plates spinning’ at once (figuratively – I’m not a variety act). The pay-off once you succeed is great.

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**What do you enjoy most about your job?**

Simply – the people. Both my colleagues and my clients. Don’t tell them that though 😊

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**What do you think sets Outset apart?**

Outset is not a traditional law firm and it is not a large corporation. It is a friendly, solution driven, client first SME where everyone in the business uses collaborative knowledge and technology to solve our clients problems.

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**When you were young, what did you want to be when you grew up?**

Either a footballer or a computer programmer. The footballer one is fairly obvious. The computer programmer idea had no real thought behind it, only that the computer industry in the early 80s (yes, I am THAT old) was a big thing. I was about 7 years old at the time and clearly smarter than I am now.

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**What do you enjoy doing when you are not working?**

Food and travel. I like to cook nearly as much as I like to eat. Just wish I liked to exercise as much as cooking and eating.

I love a holiday but had the last one postponed in March this year. When that holiday does go ahead it is likely to be 2 years in the making.

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## Who inspires you most and why?

It's difficult to pick one inspiration in particular so I will answer this in general terms.

Those individuals or groups who continue to achieve despite unbelievable and sometimes tragic adversity. Having the mental fortitude to keep going when it would be so easy to stop is something to admire. Those stories help put things into perspective.

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## What piece of advice would you give someone in business?

Regardless of the field, there is always someone smarter than you. It is never a bad thing to canvas advice from reliable sources before making a measured decision.

My advice does come with a caveat though. Ensure the advice is reliable and remember the lyrics in the track by Baz Luhrmann – Everybody's free (to wear sunscreen). The track was originally an essay written as a hypothetical commencement speech by columnist Mary Schmich, originally published in June 1997 in the Chicago Tribune. The essay and the song, gave various pieces of advice on how to live a happier life and avoid common frustrations. My favourite part reads:

*"Be careful whose advice you buy but be patient with those who supply it.  
Advice is a form of nostalgia, dispensing it is a way of fishing the past  
from the disposal, wiping it off, painting over the ugly parts  
And recycling it for more than it's worth."*

## And lastly...

### What is one thing you've learnt during lockdown?

I'm a fairly handy amateur carpenter it turns out. Rebuilt a shed and made a brand new roof. Before you ask, it's still standing!



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Scan the QR code with your phone camera to download and save David's contact details.

