

# Meet the team

Tom Vandersteen

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## What do you do at Outset and how do you support our clients?

I am Outset's Senior Systems Analyst and Administrator which means primarily I am responsible for the development, procurement and implementation of new software and hardware solutions and enhancements to improve accuracy, efficiency and deliver enhanced service to our customers.

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

Oddly I actually started my ICT career while working as a Prison Officer, I broke my wrist badly and needed an operation. So ended up seconded to the ICT department for a year.

I taught myself VBA and built several mini systems to automate tasks, I then went on to work for Kent County Council as a Systems Analyst and learnt SQL, Web Application and Project management. Since joining Outset, I've then expanded that knowledge into Python, C#, JavaScript, JSON, XLST, Handlebars, API's and more.



## What has been your biggest challenge in your role?

Getting used to working with Lawyers! They are absolutely a different breed of user, very observant and diligent, nothing gets past them, brush over something or leave something out and they'll crack you open like a witness on the stand!

It can be challenging sometimes but it's also great as it means every time I go into a meeting or presentation I make sure my homework is on point, it's taught me never to skimp on prep and to be confident in my skills and knowledge.

## What do you enjoy most about your job?

Finding the solution, solving the puzzle. I love that moment when it all comes together and works just like you knew it could, there's always a better way of doing things, you just haven't found it yet. I love it when we get to prove that.

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## What do you think sets Outset apart?

Integrity, when they say they support you, whether you are an employee or a client, they really mean it, it's not just lip service, they are invested in you, they've genuinely got your back and want you to succeed.

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

I never really knew what I wanted to do even from quite young, I floated around doing all sorts of different things, I actually ended up working as a prison officer for quite some time before I eventually ended up in ICT. I should have known I would end up there eventually, I used to enjoy writing out code books on my Commodore 64 as a kid and building websites for myself and my friends as a teen.

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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?

Someone once told me that "Sometimes the only difference between the professional and the amateur is the confidence to push the button and see whether it works". I always remember that when I doubt myself and it pushes me forward.



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

I'm quite into DIY and working with my hands. I've built wardrobes and benches before and most recently a pretty huge raised decking project in my garden. I've always got at least one project on the go around the house.

## Who inspires you most and why?

Stephen Hawking was a hero of mine, not just for his tenacity and persistence in the face of the obstacles he had before him but also for his attitude towards his own mistakes, every failed theory was a just a learning point and springboard for the next and just as valuable for being so.





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

Be bold, mitigate risks by all means but don't always farm them out entirely at the expense of the opportunity to create something amazing that is 100% yours.

There is no innovation without risk and every failure is a lesson. Take a leap!

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

As a fairly introverted person, it's been interesting to see how easily more extroverted friends have struggled with lockdown in comparison to those of us that already favoured a bit more of a solitary lifestyle.

It's often culturally assumed that introverted personalities are somehow meeker or weaker personality types but lockdown has demonstrated that this assumption only comes about as extroversion is considered a social norm.

I think it's just highlighted for me that we are all strong in different ways, it all depends on the circumstances you find yourself in.



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