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Investments

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A day in the life of... Solomon Nevins, senior investment manager at Architas

Architas senior investment manager Solomon Nevins talks about his investment philosophy, his 'civilised' commute to work, and how he likes his tea.

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What time do you get up in the morning?

6.20am, every day. A weekend lie-in would be nice but usually my baby daughter has other ideas.

How do you get to the office?

I get the DLR which, for a London commute, is quite civilised as it's above ground and I manage to get a seat both ways. On the way to work I will generally read my emails and try to get myself geared up for the day

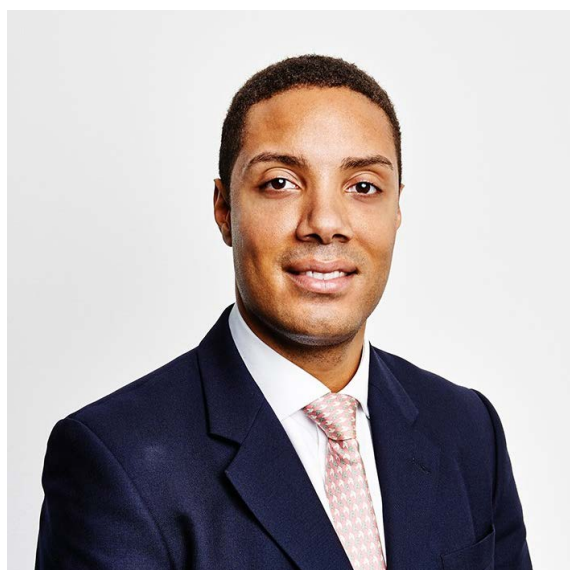
ahead.

What's the first thing you do when you get to work?

To say hello to everybody and have a brief chat about whatever happened last night in sport or on the TV to keep it light. Then I get stuck into it and place trades that we have discussed the previous day, that's how most days start.

Do you keep your sandwiches in the fridge, or on your desk?

I like to get out of the office at lunch time even if it is just for a quick walk around the block to get some fresh air and we are spoilt for choice with good takeaway places in the City. I'll generally bring my food back to the office.



Are you a tea or coffee drinker?

I drink coffee in the morning and tea in the afternoon. You can't beat a cup of well-made English breakfast tea, which in my opinion requires two minutes of brew time with continuous stirring, followed by a big splash of milk and then waiting until it cools to a good drinking temperature.

How much fund research do you do per day? What does it typically involve?

This massively varies but on average about 25% of my time. In advance of meeting a manager I like to do some quantitative analysis to check both its long-term profile and recent performance, review any previous notes that are on file and read presentation materials. During the manager meeting I want to get an understanding of their view of the investment opportunity, get a sense of how credible and experienced they seem and check that their approach is consistent with the returns that they have generated. Afterwards, I will discuss it with a colleague to talk over any potential issues or inconsistencies that stood out and ultimately to reach a conclusion about whether to invest.

What is your investment philosophy?

To stay grounded and humble. Plenty of fund managers, who are far smarter than me, have blown up their portfolios. I think one way to avoid this is by not getting greedy or cocky, and listening to people who disagree with my views. That's how I try and go about investing really.

How do you describe your job to friends who don't understand financial services?

Not many of my friends work in financial services; so often it can be a long process, especially when trying to explain multi-manager to someone who does not know what a stock is! What I try and explain is that ultimately the job is investing people's money that don't have the time or expertise to do it themselves; and partnering with experts, that specialise in investing in different regions and markets, to invest some of the money on our behalf.

What's the best thing about your job? And the worst?

The best thing and worst thing about the job is the unpredictability of financial markets. On one hand, a market and economic backdrop that is constantly changing is exciting for the opportunities it presents and the need to understand the changes to update views on investments. On the other hand, this unpredictability means that good work doesn't necessarily equal good results. The randomness and sometimes irrational behaviour of financial markets means that you are not fully in control of the outcomes and that is frustrating.

What's your favourite fund right now and why?

I like the CatCo fund on the basis that it generates returns that are unlikely to be correlated to financial markets. It has provided re-insurance cover against large-scale, low probability natural disasters, such as hurricanes in Florida and earthquakes in California. The fund receives insurance premiums for providing this protection, which forms its returns. Its risk, natural disasters large enough to trigger a pay-out, has no connection with financial markets and economic conditions so we expect the fund to provide a high level of diversification to our portfolio.

What do you like to do out of work?

It happens less and less now I'm a father but occasionally instead of going straight home I'll meet up with friends for an after-work beer to have a general catch up. I also like going to concerts, going to restaurants and sport, whether it is watching or playing it.

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