

Elliot Falconer, Account Manager, AMV BBDO



Course of study	BA Philosophy & Economics	Year of graduation	2017
City / Region / Country	Liverpool , UK		

1. Tell us more about your job; an example of day-to-day work, average week, or a recent project (or how would you describe your job to a friend?).

The main responsibility of Account Management is to be the link between the client and the agency. We work with strategists, creatives and producers to provide creative solutions that help our clients' businesses grow. We guide the client through this process and ensure that the project is moving forward on time and within budget.

2. What attributes make someone successful in this job (or what skills are involved in your current role)?

As an Account Manager you're managing the project internally and externally, so it sounds obvious but good organisation skills are vital.

You also need to stay calm under pressure - tight deadlines and the inevitable curveball can be stressful, but it's important to keep a clear head to find the best way forward and set a positive tone for the rest of the team.

Closely related to this is the ability to have frank and difficult conversations - you're the person the client calls when something goes wrong. You're also the person that needs to convince the client to take a creative risk, or to let them know that the creative route they really like is actually way

over budget. It's not something everybody is comfortable with, but it's an essential skill for account handlers.

I think the most important skill is the ability to actively listen. You need to really listen to and understand the client's ambitions and concerns, as well as listening to your team within the agency to ensure that you're moving forward with the right creative and strategic solution for the brief.

3. What do you like most about your job?

Being constantly surrounded by creative, intelligent, brilliant people. I love Account Management because you get to work across strategy, creative and production, the variety is really stimulating

4. What are the most challenging aspects (role or sector)?

The industry is becoming faster, with clients demanding work be turned around increasingly quickly. The speed can be intense, but on the flip side, the fact that the industry is constantly changing is really exciting too.

5. How did your degree prepare you for your current role (or are there any skills/knowledge you developed which you are using now)?

Studying Philosophy gave me the tools to engage with ideas objectively, without emotion or bias, and to articulate an argument well. These skills are really valuable when reviewing strategy or creative work, and when dissecting and responding to client feedback.

Studying Economics gave me a deeper understanding of how business works, what drives people and why they make the decisions they do, which I benefit from daily.

6. How did you get to where you are now in your career (or what experiences helped you)?

I managed to do work experience at BBH shortly after I finished my final year exams. I was surrounded by super smart, super creative, super nice people and fell for the company and its amazing legacy, as well as the industry, immediately.

Fortunately for me, one of the Account Executives (the entry level Account Management role) at BBH had just left, so I was asked if I wanted to interview for the job. I worked on the Tesco team there - retail accounts are very fast-paced, with a new seasonal campaign always round the corner. The sheer volume of work we made and the pace of the account was unbelievable. As my first job after university, I couldn't have asked for a better education in the advertising basics and I'm hugely grateful for my time there.

I joined AMV in March 2019 - they had just won the Ford of Europe account, so I was really interested in how we could make an impact on the brand and make some great work. My Grandad used to work in the Ford factory in Liverpool, so it was lovely to have that personal connection to the brand too. I've been at AMV since then, helping to launch Ford's new brand platform in December last year amongst other projects, it's been brilliant.

7. What advice would you give to current students about getting into / starting out in your sector? (e.g. relevant experiences, supportive people, necessary education)

I would definitely do work experience, or an internship if possible - it means you really understand the role that you're applying for, and employers will know you're serious about the role and industry if you've had hands on experience. Most agencies offer a work experience scheme of some description, even if it's just for a week, so apply for as many as possible.

8. What is on the horizon within your industry that our students should know about? (positives or negatives)

When AMV was founded, an advertising campaign most likely consisted of a print & TV ad. People consume media in so many different ways now and our output as an agency (and industry) reflects that.

Most of the work AMV has won awards for in recent years has not been traditional advertising - one of the best examples of this is the Trash Isles campaign we did with LADBible in 2018. After an area of plastic waste the size of France formed in the North Pacific, AMV worked with LADBible to submit an application to the UN to recognise The Trash Isles as an official country. As a result, 200,000 people became citizens and the campaign reached half a billion people, raising awareness of the damaging effects of ocean plastic and compelling other countries to clean up their act. There are so many interesting ways to create fame for a brand now over and above a TV ad, so it's a really exciting time to join the industry.

It's also really important that the industry is becoming more and more inclusive place to work. The BLM movement has led to very open discussions about race and class within AMV and the wider industry. I'm reassured by the actions that AMV has taken that the industry will be a better place to work for more of us over the next few years.