

Harnessing the energy

In the fourth article of our series on ACCA members' experiences at big-name businesses, we meet Augustas Daugela and Linzi McGarva of multinational Royal Dutch Shell

In the world of big business, they don't come much bigger than Royal Dutch Shell. Ranked second only to Walmart in *Fortune* magazine's Global 500 of the world's biggest companies, its vital statistics are breathtaking. Around 93,000 employees in more than 90 countries; stock market listings in London, New York and Amsterdam; and profits of more than \$20bn last year on revenues approaching \$400bn. So what's it like to work for a global behemoth?

ACCA members Linzi McGarva and Augustas Daugela work at Shell's business service centre in Glasgow, one of five finance operations hubs around the world that handle shared processes including management information, data management, expenditure and revenue.

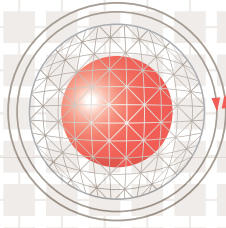
'I guess because Shell is a large, successful energy company and quite a big employer in Scotland, it's exciting to work here and to be part of a recognised brand that people can relate to,' McGarva says. 'They're a good employer, they care about their employees. You are rewarded for hard work and delivery. They offer flexible working to accommodate business needs and individual lifestyles.'

Daugela adds: 'Getting to meet different people from various countries around the world is one of the most enjoyable aspects of the job. My finance manager and control are based in the Netherlands but other people could be based in Belgium, the US, India or Singapore. It's a truly global environment so it's very exciting having these opportunities to deal with people from various backgrounds.'

McGarva is part of Shell's management information team and provides finance support to the group's downstream functions (which include refining and shipping crude worldwide and producing petrochemicals for industrial customers). 'My particular



*Inside the behemoth:
Augustas Daugela and
Linzi McGarva*



The CV

AUGUSTAS DAUGELA

2007

Completed HND in accountancy at Stow College in Glasgow

2007

Shell, UK: Global systems administrator; financial reporting analyst, financial reporting accountant

2011

Qualified with ACCA



role is ops manager for finance, and I and my team of seven provide management information and analytical support on finance functional spend. The key to that really is around building relationships with stakeholders and providing stakeholder satisfaction through credible analysis and data integrity.'

Daugela is a reporting accountant for a global lubricants company within Shell, responsible for submitting management accounts and quarterly group finance accounts. 'We also operate a number of controls for quarter-end processes and report intra-group balances,' he says. 'Working on ad hoc projects is another aspect of the job. We're currently involved in a dual-currency project which will result in us having a different functional currency but reporting for fiscal reasons in the local currency.'

Daugela finds the scale of the business remarkable. 'There are so many various materials and different types of fuels and lubricants that we work with – literally thousands,' he says. 'My company's activities mainly consist of supplying base oils and waxes, additives and finished lubricants to Shell group or third-party companies operating in the lubricants sector, so it's business to business rather than business to consumer.'

McGarva studied for a degree in accountancy at Napier University in Edinburgh and qualified with ACCA during an 11-year spell at Lucas, the auto and aerospace engineer, where she was latterly finance manager. She then spent six years with General Electric in Prestwick before joining Shell in 2008 as an analyst for downstream finance.

There's no 'typical day' in her job. 'Sometimes I am caught up all day in meetings, other days I do my numbers,' she explains. 'We have

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traditional cycles of monthly reporting, planning and forecasting. We can't start our reporting until the ledger's closed and data has been submitted to our management information system. We get a lot of ad hoc queries and as a team we discuss and share a lot of information. That's the beauty of having a centralised team. We support and work off each other.'

Daugela was born in Lithuania but



The CV

LINZI MCGARVA

1990

Lucas UK: joined as a graduate trainee; various roles including internal audit, management accounting, financial accounting, systems implementation and management and finance manager

1994

Qualified with ACCA while at Lucas

2001

GE, Prestwick: financial controller; financial planning and analysis manager

2008

Shell, UK: analyst for downstream finance; management information manager for downstream finance

came to Scotland after school. After an HND in accountancy at Stow College in Glasgow, he started at Shell as a global systems administrator in 2007. He qualified with ACCA in June 2011.

'We need to submit our results quarterly on day seven, so we pretty much have seven working days to prepare everything and liaise with the business people to review and analyse the results and make sure the financial

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'SOMETIMES I AM CAUGHT UP ALL DAY IN MEETINGS, OTHER DAYS I DO MY NUMBERS'

results we're reporting are correct,' Daugela explains. 'We spend a lot of time communicating with various stakeholders in all the businesses and there are also intra-group discussions to align our reporting positions.'

Both highlight the wealth of training and career development opportunities at Shell.

'Shell supports and encourages professional development and sponsors training through a number of professional bodies including ACCA as one of the main ones,' says Daugela. 'We also have the Shell Open University with a number of virtual or face-to-face courses that employees can attend. There are other tools to learn softer skills like leadership or negotiation. I'm also involved in the

Shell mentoring scheme for ACCA students, which is designed to support students through their studies. That's about sharing my experience with mentees: how I went about studying; what we do in various departments; the kind of skills you need; and career progression opportunities.'

Diversity and opportunity

McGarva adds: 'There's great diversity in the different processes in Glasgow and the number of roles within that – and quite a big span of job grades – which allows for a number of opportunities within itself.'

Health and safety is a particularly high-profile aspect of life in the energy industry. 'It's top of every agenda and is reinforced all the time – it's part of

our culture,' McGarva continues. 'We have an annual safety day and it's mandatory that everyone takes part.'

'We tend to have different themes,' adds Daugela. 'There are things like the 12 life-saving rules: don't use your mobile while driving, wear your seatbelt and so on. Any time you hear a senior leader from Shell talking, safety is top of their list.'

McGarva feels 'finance is finance' pretty well wherever you go but that the oil industry is interesting and exciting: 'There are stories on the oil industry in the media every day. Energy affects us all, in our day-to-day lives. It affects the economy and the environment and with the increase in demand and the changing needs of consumers and changing sources of energy it's always going to be topical and relevant. It's good to be able to relate who you work for to the wider world.'

Victoria Masterson, journalist