

Case Study

My career in food and drink

Amy Oroko, Sustainability Manager,
Matthew Algie



"It's a great privilege when I get to travel to see the impact of our relationships and projects with coffee growers."

Q: How did you get started in your career in food and drink?

A: During school and university I was interested in a career at a charity or non-profit organisation. I sought out a placement year in a developing country, Malawi, working as an intern for a development consulting company. It was a fantastic starting point because I was able to work on a variety of projects and I learnt

loads about how the world's poorest farmers can benefit greatly from strong trading relationships and fair trade principles. Inspired by what I'd seen in Malawi, I decided to pursue a more practical role in the food and drink industry, helping farmers in developing countries to access the UK market.

Q: What was your route to get to this job and what are the entry qualifications?

A: I began working at Matthew Algie, a coffee roaster in Glasgow, in the summer of 2014, a year after leaving university. At this stage I had my BSc in Economics and International Development, experience working in Malawi and a further year in a graduate consulting role.

Whilst my degree was a necessary qualification for getting the job, I think my relevant experience abroad and consulting on projects (some of which were coffee related) was equally as important, if not more so, to Matthew Algie as my prospective employer.

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Q: What did you study at school and how relevant were the subjects?

A: I went to school in England and the subjects I took to an advanced (AS and/ or A) level were maths, chemistry, textiles, history and further maths. I wasn't sure what I wanted to study at university at this stage and so I chose a range of subjects that I was interested in and I was more naturally suited to. Whilst the only subject specifically required for getting into my BSc course was maths, the other subjects I chose helped to improve my research, writing and communications skills, and introduced me to industrial processes and manufacturing.

Q: What does your job involve and what are your main responsibilities?

A: As Sustainability Manager, I am responsible for coordinating Matthew Algie's approach to sustainability. This means I work on our strategy, projects and internal and external communications. This includes the sustainable sourcing of coffee and other products, reducing our environmental impact, investing in our employees, and, engaging with our community. This broad scope means that no two days in the office are the same – something I really enjoy!



Q: Why were you attracted to a role in food and drink?

A: My interest stemmed from my time working in Malawi and the desire to be part of this movement to make sure farmers get a better deal from being part of global supply chains. However, I've always been interested in where my food and drink comes from and, in particular, my impact on people and the environment in choosing to consume certain products.

Q: Would you encourage others to consider a career in food and drink?

A: I think the food and drink industry is a fantastic option because of the variety of roles that are available. I was genuinely surprised by the diverse opportunities available within Matthew Algie when I joined the company. I really think there's something to suit everyone depending on their specific interests and skills.