

RQ Capital

Stephen Kenworthy | Head of Finance



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What does your role involve?

I'm responsible for all financial matters: cashflow, management of accounts and reporting to the monthly board meeting. Effectively, it's my responsibility to manage any money going in or out of the company, as well as managing our relationship with the bank and other funders.

How long have you worked for RQ Capital?

I joined in October 2016. I had become a bit tired of the large corporate world, so the chance to get involved in a small company like RQ was too good to miss. I find it much more rewarding and enjoyable!

What is the most enjoyable aspect of your role?

I enjoy the variety – not knowing what each day is going to bring. You can start your day with a great plan, but by lunchtime that might be blown out of the water! But I enjoy that variety that working in a small company brings.

And what do you find most challenging?

Managing people's expectations – both our borrowers and the other members of the team! I have to communicate what's going on to people at the bank and other funders, who often have lots on their plate. So it's a challenge to summarise where we're at and what we need – but that's part of the fun of it.

What led you to a career in Finance?

I started in finance straight from school in 1986. I've worked for many different companies across a wide variety of industries. In finance, there's no specific path. There's always something new to learn.

I didn't know what I wanted to do when I left school, but I thought finance might be a good fit. In fact, I often joke to people that I chose accountancy because it was alphabetically on the first page of the careers booklet!

My favourite thing about my job is that people who aren't in accountancy always seem to think it's magical and mysterious. I've always liked demystifying it for them – trying to explain why we're asking them so many stupid questions!

What do you think differentiates RQ Capital from the competition?

We're a small team and we work to a simple model, meaning we can make decisions very quickly. We don't have to go through committees or have endless meetings. If George talks to someone, he can make a decision about whether to lend almost by himself. We can often pay money to an existing borrower within half an hour – where other companies can take days.

A lot of our business is repeat business, and I think that's why. Our borrowers know we can adapt and act quickly.

What advice would you give someone who wanted to work in Finance?

If you've got a head for maths and problem-solving, it's not as boring as it's portrayed! I've had some amazing opportunities through working in finance – including travelling to Canada five or six times a year with my job in the 90s.

Finance can lead you in so many different ways – the people I trained with are now doing a weird and wonderful collection of jobs.

If you're interested in business in general, finance is a great place to start. People will always need accountants!

What do you like to do in your spare time?

I've got six grown-up children and four grandchildren, so they fill up quite a bit of my spare time! I enjoy being active in the outdoors, spending a lot of time running and walking. I've done a couple of marathons and ultra-marathons, as well as a few long-distance walks with my wife. My happy place is the outdoors, especially if there's a pub waiting at the end of every day! I've also done 286 parkruns, having started it in around 2008 – so that's a staple part of my week.

Quickfire Round

Any TV recommendations?

The new Jack Reacher series on Amazon prime was pretty good – much more convincing than Tom Cruise!

Read any good books lately?

When I look at my bookcase, it's full of running books! They're a bit specialist, but very inspiring. Born to Run by Christopher McDougall is about hidden tribes in South America and is the inspiration you'll need if you want to be running 30 or 40 miles in a day.

Your dream dinner party guests?

Anybody who could talk about running or the outdoors. Alfred Wainwright, who wrote Lake District guidebooks, would be great. Eliud Kipchoge, who ran the marathon in two hours a couple of years ago, could probably give me some tips!

I enjoy meeting people from all walks of life when I run. Often, ordinary people are just as inspiring and interesting as the big names.

What did you want to be when you were growing up?

A train driver! My father worked for British Rail, and I went through a big train phase.

Favourite film?

I've got two – 14 Peaks and Free Solo. They're both climbing films, both inspiring and frightening in their own way. I like watching people doing things I wouldn't dare do myself!

Business pet peeve?

Pointless work politics and gameplaying.

Describe yourself in three words?

Easy-going, honest and forthright.

Describe RQ Capital in three words?

Flexible, approachable and straightforward.