

Vishal Sinha

Vice President, BA Professional Markets,
Global Technology & Operations, Bank of America

Can you tell us a little bit about your job and your career journey?

I was born and grew up in India and that's where my career started. I worked for a Hardware Company, fixing printers. I then did a Masters and moved into working with Software, from there I got a job at Bank of America and settled in the UK.

What did you want to be when you grew up and why? Who inspired you?

Like a lot of boys of my age I wanted to be an Engine Driver; luckily engineering is in my family so I had a good insight into the professions I could get into if I studied engineering at University and this is the route I took: studying engineering as an undergraduate degree.

What difference did you want to make for yourself and young people through volunteering with Inspiring the Future?

I have a son who is now 12. I support him by encouraging him in his education and sharing my skills and knowledge about the world of work with him. All children should get this kind of support, and when they don't that's where Inspiring the Future volunteers can help.

How long have you been volunteering with Inspiring the Future?

For about four years.

What events and activities have you taken part in?

Mock interviews, Primary school talks, speed networking.

What has been the best part about volunteering?

When you go to a school and see that everyone has invested in this work of encouraging young minds, it's so rewarding. Some schools really understand why having working adults, who are not the students' Teachers or Parents, talking to the children is so important. When everyone is on board you can make much more of a difference.

What has been the strangest/funniest/best question you've been asked?

"How do you rob a bank?" (I didn't tell them).

What have you learnt from volunteering with Inspiring the Future about yourself and about young people?

Going back to the funny questions you get from children, it's really important to bring to life your job in an interesting way.

How have you benefited from volunteering with Inspiring the Future? Please give examples to skills, knowledge, attitude and behaviour.

The first time I did a careers talk it didn't go very well. Presenting to young people is a skill you need to work on and prepare for. Now I've done it a fair few times I can do it without worrying – it's a skill that's useful in work, being able to speak and present confidently to big groups and tailoring your presentation to your audience.

Who or what inspires you today and why?

Teachers, definitely. They make phenomenal efforts to not only teach but to try to inspire young people. When you meet Teachers who are making that extra effort it's really special and they make you want to be part of that work.

What's the one message you feel is important to share with the young people you speak to?

Be truthful to yourself when making decisions about your future. It's hard, but you need to understand what you actually like and follow a path that reflects that. That isn't to say that this might change, the truth can be a transitory thing, but in that moment be truthful to yourself.

Describe Inspiring the Future in five words

Amazing and inspirational for students and volunteers.

What would you say to other volunteers thinking of volunteering with Inspiring the Future?

People are often looking for their next challenge within their work environment, but they should also seek challenges outside the office. You should do it!

What difference do you think you've made to the lives of young people who you spoke with?

As a child you are very limited by the boundaries of who you know in your family and their network. You need to get exposure outside of those boundaries to see what the world can offer. I hope I have been able to do that for the young people I have met through Inspiring the Future.

Any other comments you'd like to add?

This needs to be a group endeavour. When Teachers, Volunteers and Parents all invest in this work we can have a massive impact.

Presenting to young people is a skill that's useful (practice) for work, being able to speak and present confidently to big groups and tailoring your presentation to your audience.