

**SIMON BROWNLEE**

**UNDERGRADUATE PLACEMENT STUDENT  
TO DEFENCE ACCOUNT MANAGER**



In the below interview, Simon tells us all about his 12 month placement as an Undergraduate Placement Student leading to a Defence Account Manager role when returning to Centerprise as a permanent employee upon graduation from University.

**What university did you attend and what course did you do?**

I attended University of Surrey, studying Business Management (BSc).

**As an undergraduate, you completed a one-year placement with CI, what did this role entail?**

My placement provided a fantastic opportunity to gain experience in a number of the key business units and functions, as part of a rotational program. From spending time in the warehouse 'getting my hands dirty' while also reviewing and implementing new processes, to planning campaigns and events in Marketing, to analysing and reducing aged debt in the Finance team, I was able to gain incredible insight into the variety of functions, personalities and people that knit together within the fabric of a company to make it successful.

**When you returned to University post-placement, what additional skills, knowledge and experience did you take from your experience with Ci?**

My placement experience with CI allowed me to return to University with a far stronger grasp of the real-life 'practice' of business to complement the 'theory' being taught at University. As such, I was able to benefit from a more holistic understanding of how the various university modules tied in together and was able to apply real-life and a greater depth of understanding to projects and assessments in my final and most critical year of University.

**When re-joining Ci in a permanent role, what was your role/s at Centerprise and how long were you doing it/them?**

My placement gave me breadth of experience across the business and allowed me to better understand and identify which role best suited my skills, personality and career aspirations. Returning to CI allowed me to hone in and specialise on a specific role, which in my case was Sales/Account Management. I spent six very enjoyable and equally lucrative years developing my skills as a Defence Account Manager.

**What was your biggest success at Centerprise?**

My biggest success from Centerprise was the person I left as vs the person I joined as. However, if I were to focus on a specific moment, it would be winning the largest single order in Centerprise's history to date.

**What was your favourite part/most challenging aspect at Centerprise?**

Building opportunities and pipeline. Closing big deals.

**What sort of scope for progression and development was there at Centerprise?**

In short, plenty. From my experience in speaking to friends who had placements elsewhere, CI provides a tailored and personal approach to a placement student's progression and development. A placement student will benefit from far more focus and support from all layers of management right up to the CEO and Chairman. In the much larger, global corporate environments, placement student and graduates will remain a small cog in a big machine and risk getting lost/ignored in the process. Everyone at CI takes a collective responsibility to help, nurture and develop younger talents.

**What advice would you give a potential undergraduate joining CI on a placement?**

Do it. Listen. Learn. Work hard. You do these and you will do well and build a fantastic platform for yourself moving forward.

**What have you learned at Ci that has stuck with you the most?**

100%. There is very little I would do differently. CI gave me an incredible start in both my career and my personal life post-Uni.