

## Career Profile

### Justin Catalano, Financial Analyst

By: Nick Skotidas, Student Career Leader

Upon receiving his Honours Bachelor of Business Administration degree in 2005, Justin Catalano entered the finance work force. Throughout his tenure at Laurier, Justin had always contemplated the notion of working in finance and in particular, becoming an Investment Banker. Business students are given an in-depth look and feel for the financial world at the outset of their studies that often ignites an intrigue and passion for this career path. However, it wasn't until Justin's second co-op work term that he had the chance to actually apply the theory that he had learned in class and experience first-hand the tasks, challenges and rewards of the finance field. Justin's passion for the finance industry was further reinforced following his first co-op work term where he worked as a Marketing Analyst for a natural gas company. This experience supplied a strong lesson in what he did not necessarily enjoy, which is often just as valuable as finding your niche! Instead, Justin describes himself as a "numbers guy" and has pursued a career that he not only enjoys, but where the skill set has always come naturally to him. With this winning combination, it was only natural that he pursued this calling.

Through co-op, Justin was able to gain experience in retail finance as well as equity research with Scotia Capital. This latter experience gave him the opportunity to land a job for Toronto-Dominion Mezzanine Partners Fund as a Financial Analyst. As Justin describes it, "I haven't looked back since!" Within this role, Justin's responsibilities include preparing financial models, primarily LBO's (Leveraged Buyouts), for both public and private companies. He is also involved in performing due diligence research on potential deals. Justin exclaims that many of the theories and knowledge obtained at Laurier's School of Business and Economics have greatly prepared him for this role.

Justin explains that he entered this area of business because he loves the fast-paced nature of the industry. In saying so, he also takes pleasure in other enjoyable aspects of his job such as learning and educating himself on how different industries. Justin takes the initiative to constantly learn about many businesses in order to compare and contrast them and seek out the best options in terms of financial matters.

As is the case with all jobs, there are certainly some challenging aspects. The time frame that work needs to be completed is very short and Justin explains that he often works long hours to complete a project. However, Justin believes that finance is a very exciting and worthwhile career choice given that you are provided with an opportunity to learn about many industries. He asserts that a career in finance allows you to truly push yourself and see all that you can accomplish. The passion and sense of fulfillment evident in Justin's descriptions about his career are inspiring and stimulating.

Some advice that Justin would like to give to anyone contemplating or entering a finance career is to be ready to work hard, show initiative and pay close attention to detail. At first it may seem daunting and difficult, but give it some time and you will begin to reap the benefits. Justin also explains that to get into the industry he recommends applying to the co-op program to gain some exposure to the various jobs that are offered. While still in university, obtain your Canadian Securities Certificate (CSC) and your Chartered Financial Analyst Level 1 designation. These provide you with a great amount of credibility and make you more attractive to hiring companies.

Justin believes that business is not as hard as people make it out to be. With the right amount of effort and initiative you can accomplish anything. It's all about setting goals and working hard to attain them. Don't worry yourself with memorizing, but instead focus on understanding core concepts. Then, and only then, will you be successful! In addition, Justin remarks that with respect to the finance world, it's all about dedication. You have to devote your time to become successful!

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