

# Dan Stickney

## B.Sc. Wood Products Processing (2001)

**“The icing on the cake is the co-op portion itself - there is no substitute for the practical hands-on knowledge developed through the application of skills taught in the classroom!”**



**Job Title:** Senior Associate

**Company:** PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC)

([www.pwc.com](http://www.pwc.com))

**Location:** Edmonton, AB

**Size of the Company:** 155,000 employees worldwide

**Education:** Bachelor of Science in Wood Products Processing (University of British Columbia); Master of Business Administration / Master of Forestry (University of Alberta)

How do you work your way up from waiting tables at Earls to being a Senior Associate at one of the largest professional services firms in the world? Well if you go by Dan’s experience, all you need is the right education, a lot of hard work, and a little ambition.

After graduating from high school, Dan worked at Delta Airlines for several years. After some serious soul-searching, he decided that he wanted more security in life and that he wanted to develop himself further. Dan was attracted to the Wood Products Processing degree because of the demand for skilled workers, and the opportunities available as a result. He also liked the idea of being in a smaller university program; a class size of 22 meant more one-on-one interaction with fellow classmates and professors than larger programs.

After graduating in 2001, Dan was snatched up by his former co-op employer at Loewen Windows. He later moved on to work at All Weather Windows as their Front-line Supervisor, and later as the Inbound Supervisor. After three years of working in the industry, Dan reached a crossroad. He could either move to where his ideal jobs were, or upgrade his education so that he could continue working in Edmonton. That’s when Dan made the decision to go back to school to pursue his MBA. He was admitted into the University of Alberta’s program to do a joint MBA/MF. As part of his education, Dan completed an internship in Peru, where he researched the state of compliance and voluntary environmental markets to determine a market mechanism for protecting the standing rainforest in Peru.

When he graduated with his MBA/MF in 2008, Dan landed himself a position as Senior Associate in the Edmonton office of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP.

**Key Responsibilities:** As a Senior Associate, Dan works with a team of four under the Director of the Advisory Services Team. The Advisory Services Team works to offer sustainable business solutions. It is

projected that in the years to come, the job will involve an ever-increasing focus on corporate social responsibility and the environment. Dan typically spends most of his day in his office on the 15<sup>th</sup> floor of the Toronto Dominion Tower in downtown Edmonton. Almost 80% of the job involves researching projects, and the remainder of the time is spent conducting site-visits.

**Skills Required:** This job is typically filled by someone with a commerce background who is pursuing an accounting designation. Having said that, there are other paths to the job – Dan completed a joint MBA and MF. He is considering pursuing a Certified Management Consultant (CMC) designation, as it represents a commitment to the highest standards of consulting. Someone who is interested in business issues, who is outgoing and has well-developed interpersonal skills would do well in this position.

**Career Development:** A new graduate could start out as an associate and work their way up to a senior associate position. From there, there are many opportunities to advance within the firm, including becoming a manager, director, or even partner.

**Dan Loves His Job Because...** there are a ton of opportunities.

**Previous Employment & Co-op Experience:** Dan worked as a waiter at Earls after graduating from high school. He later moved on to Delta Airlines. For his first co-op work term, Dan worked at Knoll Inc., an office furniture manufacturer in Toronto, doing process documentation. His most enjoyable work term was at Loewen Windows, where he was analyzing processes and finding ways to make them more efficient. It was a chance to put into practice many of things he had learned in the program. Dan's last co-op term was at Fortinek, where he was a field representative. This position involved travelling to mill sites, conducting research, and performing administrative work.

**What He Values Most About the Program:** Co-op because it was the stepping stone that allowed him to work his way up progressive management levels (experience that is especially useful in his new position).

**Value of the Degree:** The B.Sc. in Wood Products Processing degree gives students a solid foundation with its mix of science, engineering, and business courses. It was part of the reason that Dan was admitted into the joint MBA/MF program at the University of Alberta.

**Advice for Students Wanting to Pursue an MBA:** Take the time to shop around before deciding which programs to apply to, because each university will have its strong points. It all depends on what you want to do, and where you want to go afterwards.

**Advice for Current Students:** Get involved in student societies. While he was a student Dan was a member of the UBC chapter of the Forest Products Society. He also encourages students to attend career-related conferences and seminars, such as the Portland Wood Show. Build up your network through the co-op program – it happens inadvertently but make sure you maintain those connections!