



■ **IN TUNE:** Matthew Sproston with his banjo ukulele. "I do gigs all over the country playing George Formby songs."

Boss with another string to his bow...

Matthew Sproston is commercial director for CJS Engineering, based at the City Business Centre, Llanthony Road, Gloucester. Away from work, he has a surprise talent – as a George Formby ‘impersonator’. **Robin Brooks** goes to meet him

jobfacts COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR

WHAT QUALIFICATIONS ARE NEEDED TO DO YOUR JOB?

I have a degree in business management and accountancy and an HNC in civil engineering. In my job I need to have sales and general business experience and a knowledge of recruitment, coupled with an understanding of the technical side of the business.

WHAT PERSONALITY TRAITS ARE NEEDED?

On a personal level, I have to be able to listen to what the customer wants and to keep calm under pressure. I have to multi-task and be responsible for lots of things.

WHAT'S THE WORST THING ABOUT YOUR JOB?

Sometimes it is difficult to prioritise. When you have a number of urgent jobs, it can be difficult to decide how to allocate resources.

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT YOUR JOB?

I enjoy taking an initial enquiry and seeing it taken through to the successful completion of the contract. It's also good working with such a dedicated team of true professionals.

LI LIVE in Abbeymead in Gloucester and it takes about 20 minutes to drive in to work. In summer, when I am working in the office, I cycle – weather permitting.

It takes about the same time as it does to drive and the exercise leaves me feeling energised.

CJS is a structural and mechanical engineering design company based in the City Business Centre in Llanthony Road, Gloucester (www.cjs-eng.co.uk).

We specialise in engineering consultancy, conceptual design, layout and detail engineering, working in a number of fields, including automotive, materials handling, nuclear, structural and mechanical.

Recent contracts include the structural design for a passenger embarkation walkway at the Oban ferry terminal in Scotland, the structural design for a Toyota plant in South Africa and conveyor systems in Jamaica and Greece.

We employ 28 staff, working either in-house at the Gloucester office or working on site with clients at their premises.

When I get to the office at 8.30am the first thing I do is to have a short meeting with my fellow directors Andrew Howarth and Paul Price.

We make a great team and work together to make the most of our different fields of expertise.

My primary role is to make sure there is enough work for the staff and that there is enough staff to perform the work that has to be done.

I have to make sure that all the design staff know what they are doing and when a particular piece of work has to be completed. It is very much a team effort.

My activities fall into three main areas: sales and marketing, office management/trouble shooting and occasionally helping the engineering staff with hands-on technical

activities as well.

I don't have a standard day. Some days I will be out of the office seeing clients and on other days I will be in the office supporting staff and keeping everything running smoothly.

We have 12 staff working here in the office and 16 working in the offices of clients.

I am in frequent contact with customers to make sure we are giving good service and that our staff are performing well.

I am also responsible for generating new business, handling incoming enquiries, providing quotations and developing a good relationship with clients.

I also do all of our recruitment, interview potential new staff and manage the accounts side of the business.

The end goal for the company is making sure that the clients receive their designs and drawings on time and to the agreed budget.

We are not manufacturers. We produce technical blueprints for other companies to manufacture and we provide a very flexible service for our clients, who frequently call on us at short notice.

We pride ourselves in being able to rise to that challenge.

For lunch I usually grab a bite to eat at a local sandwich bar or, if I am out on the road, I'll stop at a Little Chef.

In the evening I often play squash, tennis or table tennis.

I also play the banjo ukulele to a reasonably high standard and I do gigs all over the country playing George Formby songs at old people's homes and British Legion Clubs, charity events and conventions.

Some younger people are often surprised at how fruity his lyrics are. In fact several of his songs were banned by the BBC because of his sexy double entendres!

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