

MEET JAMES QUINN

Finalist for the RICS Matrics Residential Property Surveyor of the Year Award 2023

James Quinn AssocRICS

Surveyor and Managing Director at GB Home Surveys



As a surveyor, what does a typical week look like for you?

I currently run a firm of 16 including 12 surveyors, so I spend much of my time managing people and growing the business. I like to spend two days a week on the tools, where I'll usually be carrying out Level 2 or 3 home surveys and valuations.

At GB Home Surveys, we're all about customer-centric surveying where communication with customers is paramount. It's just as important as a well-written report, which is why my we keep in touch through every step.

If I'm not surveying, I'm helping to develop and train new surveyors, making sure we have development programmes in place to help employees progress.

What was your background before becoming a surveyor?

I trained on the second ever intake of the Sava Diploma in Residential Surveying and Valuation and before this worked for 15 years at multi-national corporation, PepsiCo. During this time, I undertook various roles in Sales and Marketing, managing small and big teams and budgets across popular brands like Tropicana and Walkers.

What made you consider training as a surveyor through Sava?

I loved my career at PepsiCo but as you move up the ladder there is a lot of pressure to travel around the world and stay away from home. I had young children and needed something that allowed me some family time.

My dad is a FRICS surveyor and inspired me to join the profession. I was originally looking at 3-4 year courses and thinking, 'can I make this work?'. Then I saw the Sava course, which gave me the right focus and felt like the better option for me.

At the time, my dad was working for a small surveying firm in the Forest of Dean - Gooch and Burley - and the owner was looking to sell, so I jumped on the opportunity, handed in my notice, dragged my dad out of early retirement and bought the business, ready then to start my training with Sava and grow the business as my own.

How did you find the Sava learning experience?

I simultaneously spent time rebranding GB Home Surveys, shadowing other experienced surveyors and studying for the Diploma in Residential Surveying and Valuation, so it was a busy time for me. It was challenging but I'm proud of the career I've made for myself.

I had a friend leaving the RAF and I recommended the Sava course to him. He trained up and now I've brought him into the business, so that's how much I recommend it.

What has been the highlight of your surveying career so far?

Bringing on and training 10 surveyors is definitely a highlight, but what I am most proud of is the business change I made three years ago. I took the decision to transform the business, rebranding to GB Home Surveys and steering away from mortgage valuations to grow our private work. This has put us in great market position and

we've gone from 70% of our revenue coming from mortgage valuations to 5%, with 95% now coming from private surveys. This has also provided job security for my employees at a time of change in the lending market, which I'd say is one of my greatest achievements.

What advice would you give to anyone joining the profession?

Everyone is different, but I recommend working for a company to begin with. Even if you have aspirations of being a sole practitioner, spend some time learning from a firm. Get a couple of years' experience under your belt before going out on your own and take advantage of having other professionals around you to talk to and learn from.

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How does it feel to be a finalist in the RICS Matrics Surveyor Awards 2023?

It feels fantastic, but this year is really competitive. Many of the finalists have qualified in last 10 years and have already done wonders for the industry. I feel proud to be alongside those who came into surveying later in life and have really made an impact, raising the quality of surveys, driving change within RICS and putting the customer first.

I won't be disappointed if I lose because every single finalist is outstanding and being alongside them is reward enough.

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