

## Head of research – ‘Ones to Watch’

**Location:** Central Oxford

**Reports to:** CEO

**Salary:** £45,000 - £65,000

**Type:** Permanent/full-time



Oxford-based **Fast Track** is looking for an experienced and talented researcher and project manager. They will be part of our senior management team and responsible for our high-profile ‘Ones to Watch’ programmes, which identify the UK’s future star companies and featured in the business section of **The Sunday Times**, as part of our league tables published for the past 22 years. They will be expected to conduct the research for one or two programmes, and to contribute to the strategic development of the business.

The ideal candidate should be a bright graduate with **at least five years’** relevant company financial research and project management experience, a team leader with excellent writing skills and a strong interest in the UK’s private companies. They should have the ability to build productive relationships with leading entrepreneurs and our blue-chip sponsors. They could come from a variety of backgrounds, including, but not limited to: accountancy, private equity, corporate finance or business consultancy.

To thrive in the role, the successful candidate will need to embrace our culture of continuous improvement, have exceptional attention to detail and strong account handling skills at a senior level.

This role is new, having split the director of research role into three, with a head of research – operations and a head of research – league tables.

### The role & responsibilities

- **Leadership:** lead and co-manage our 15-strong team of full-time researchers and seven freelancers
- **Project management:** Lead, manage and personally conduct the research on one or two of our five OtW programmes in **The Sunday Times** on Fast Track, Profit Track, Tech Track, Top Track 250, and our ‘Disruptors to Watch’. Be responsible for reviewing, improving and presenting shortlisting docs for internal judging and help manage external judging with sponsors
- **Research and analysis:** conduct primary research, identify and visit future star companies, analyse their accounts and develop methods to win over unresponsive companies and engage their founders
- **Writing and editing:** write and/or edit the supporting OtW articles, with by-lines in **The Sunday Times** supplement
- **Account handling:** help account manage our blue-chip clients that sponsor our OtW programmes, and other sponsors where relevant. Meet and greet OtW companies’ directors at national awards dinners
- **Networking dinners:** work closely with our events team to help to engage ‘Ones to Watch’ companies to secure their attendance at our 30+ invitation-only networking dinners; and attend and assist at up to 8 dinners a year

### The candidate

- Graduate with at least five years’ relevant company financial research, project and team management experience; some level of accountancy training would be an advantage
- Excellent inter-personal skills and experience of managing people
- Strong interest in, and knowledge of, entrepreneurs and private companies; good understanding of company accounts and ability to analyse private company performance in multiple sectors
- Experienced at using financial data sources as key research tools, such as Fame and Companies House
- Robust, organised, flexible and adaptable with meticulous attention to detail, the ability to write clearly and concisely and deliver to tight deadlines
- Highly service-orientated, with experience of client servicing

## The company

### *Who we are*

- Fast Track is the UK's leading research and networking events company focused on top-performing private companies and entrepreneurs, from the fastest-growing tech companies to the largest private companies, which we rank in our league tables in **The Sunday Times**
- It was founded in 1997 by our chief executive Hamish Stevenson with cornerstone, and ongoing, support from Richard Branson and Virgin
- Our sole source of revenue is from our blue-chip sponsors, who use it to raise their profile amongst different types of private companies, and to meet and win new business from hard-to-reach entrepreneurs and directors at our company visits and networking events
- We employ c30 full-time members of staff, and seven freelance researchers; many staff have worked with Fast Track for over ten years

### *What we do*

- We research and publish seven annual private company league tables with **The Sunday Times**; and our 30+ highly-regarded, invitation-only events create valuable networking opportunities for their entrepreneurial directors and our sponsors
- Attendees and speakers at our events range from founders of our alumni growth companies such as Fever-Tree, Matchesfashion.com and Skyscanner, to the founders and CEOs of our alumni from the largest private companies such as Ineos, Dyson, and Pret A Manger
- We conduct 350 annual research visits to companies shortlisted for our league tables, accompanied by partners from our sponsors, where we interview the founders, chief executives and finance directors
- Our sponsors include: Virgin (all 22 yrs); HSBC, Lloyds, PwC, and UBS Wealth Management (15+ yrs); Barclays, BDO, Hiscox, Grant Thornton and Virgin Atlantic (10+ yrs); BGF, BMW and Linklaters (5+ yrs); DHL and N+1 Singer (3 yrs); and Oracle Netsuite and Santander (1 yr)

## How to apply

Please email [jobs@fasttrack.co.uk](mailto:jobs@fasttrack.co.uk), in confidence, with your max. two-page application letter, including your current and expected remuneration, notice period, and where you saw the vacancy; and a copy of your CV.

For further info, contact Eva Gronbech on **01865 297100**.

## How the recruitment process will work

- *Online assessment*: all applications will be reviewed, and selected candidates will be asked to complete one-hour online exercises
- *Telephone interviews*: after the online exercises have been assessed, shortlisted candidates will be telephone-interviewed by a member of the team, before we potentially invite you to one of our second-round interview evenings at Fast Track's offices in St Clements, Oxford
- *Interview evening*: we will aim to hold multiple dates between now and **Wednesday 20 March** and beyond if need be, to accommodate as many candidates as possible. These interview evenings typically last from **5pm to 8pm**, and will include candidates from across the roles

The evening will start with a presentation about the company and the different roles, then candidates will have the opportunity to ask questions. This will be followed by one short written skills-based exercise (no preparation needed), a short individual interview, and a more informal chat with senior members of our team. (Note: these are not group interviews or tasks, merely a more efficient way for us to manage the time of our senior management team as we are recruiting for multiple roles)

- *Follow-up final round interviews*: all final-stage candidates for the more senior roles, and any other candidates where necessary, will be invited back for a final round of in-depth interviews, including with other members of the team