

Expanding financial services group embarks on new recruitment drive

15 September 2017: Tim Montague-Jones has worked in equity research for more than two decades, but he first became fascinated by the stock market even earlier – when he was a boy in the 1980s.

“My dad and I bought a few shares, just for fun. I told him to sell when the price had gone up, but he didn’t and the company we invested in eventually went bust,” he says.

“This was my introduction to the realities of the equities market and it was when I got attracted to the idea of making money from investments.”

Today Montague-Jones is the head of Australian equity research at ASR Wealth Advisers (ASRW) and he’s forged a successful career out of his passion for investing. He joined ASRW in November 2016 after holding senior analyst roles at Macquarie and Morningstar – and now he’s about to hire a new team of Sydney-based equity analysts

I want about one analyst for every 20 companies we cover, so we can deliver more targeted analysis,” explains Montague-Jones. “While many larger firms are cutting back their research capabilities, we’re expanding. We’re a young entrepreneurial company that doesn’t view research as a cost centre – that’s a refreshing attitude and is one of the reasons I came on board myself.”

The new jobs at ASRW are a “launch pad” for recent graduates to take their equity research careers to a new level, he says. “I’m looking for candidates with at least a year’s experience in research and who’ve demonstrated a hunger to learn new skills. I want people I can nurture, so they can grow their careers as ASRW expands.”

ASRW was founded in 2009 as an Australian provider of investment advice and dealing services to corporate and private clients. It’s now grown to employ more than 50 people and is part of the Amalgamated Australian Investment Group (AAIG), which owns several integrated and diversified financial services businesses.

“If you join ASRW, we’ll give you a unique platform to present your research at an early stage in your career. Your name will be on it; your expertise will be out in the market,” says Montague-Jones. “And because we’re fairly small, we can help build your skills and give your career development more attention than you’d get at a larger bank or brokerage.”

As well as equity analysts, ASRW and parent company AAIG are both recruiting advisers and are offering competitive salaries and brokerage splits, as well as high volume and quality lead-flow. “The quantity and calibre of staff hired in the last 12 months have led to a continued positive shift in our culture. Each individual brand within AAIG employs experienced and well-regarded industry professionals,” says Montague-Jones.

This continued group-wide expansion means there are regularly new job opportunities for experienced, motivated and dynamic people, who can demonstrate a strong commitment to client service and a track record of success.

“It’s an exciting time to be in an AAIG firm because we’re heavily re-investing into the businesses with new technologies and products as well as new staff,” adds Montague-Jones.

“All of this is aimed at providing an unrivalled service to clients and making working for an AAIG company a rewarding experience.”

ASRW prides itself on “thinking ahead of the curve”. “Too many brokers are pumping out mediocre research. Here you need to have fresh ideas that people haven’t heard of before – that’s the challenge of these new jobs we’re creating in our Sydney office.”

What does it take to succeed as an equity analyst at ASRW?

“Think laterally about the implications of events – the effect of an OPEC meeting on energy stocks, for example – and form opinions about the

underlying trends in a sector,” says Montague-Jones. “The key is to increase the quality of our research so we retain the trust of our customers and make sure they invest wisely.”

To test whether candidates will cut it at ASRW, Montague-Jones asks them during the recruitment process to make a presentation about a company they would recommend investing in.

“Some people give all the right answers in the interview and look good on paper, but they’re not so strong when presenting,” he says. “Working as an equity analyst at ASRW is about commanding an audience – whether that’s on a webinar or even on TV – so you must be confident and know what you’re talking about.”

A presentation tests your research expertise and acts as a gauge on how you would perform in front of a client. “We want to walk away from the interview actually wanting to buy the stock you’ve just pitched to us,” says Montague-Jones.

ASRW’s size and its “interactive” culture prevent staff becoming siloed in their jobs, he adds.

“Everyone at the firm and in the wider AAIG group can see what you’re doing. We have a track record of being transparent and honest about every stock call,” he says. “I have weekly investment meetings with senior management, for example. If they’re concerned about a particular stock, I can look them in the eye and reassure them.”

Montague-Jones now enjoys the flexibility to cover stocks across all sectors. “If there’s a particular company I find appealing, I can focus on it regardless of industry – that’s quite unusual for a research job. I don’t feel constrained working here as there’s freedom to navigate the market.”

He’s also finding ASRW to be a “fun and inclusive” place to work. “You don’t just communicate with other equity advisors. It’s like being part of a corporate family because you interact with the whole company. In the past, I haven’t had many dealings with people in compliance, for example, but here I know everyone,” says Montague-Jones.

“Careers here are very dynamic. The market is always evolving, so your mind is kept active and every working day is completely different,” he says. “I’m constantly learning new things about companies, industries and macro trends – even after 24 years of working in equities.”

If you are keen to express your interest in working for AAIG, send your details to contact@aaigl.com.au or visit our website for more information.

For more information, please contact:

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