

ON THE SPOT

Richard Kempner is
an intellectual property
partner at Kempner
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What was your first job?

Hand-washing and polishing cars. My mate and I spent about three hours on each car (I struggle to get to a car wash these days). Once we rang the doorbell of a punter-to-be, and it was Val Doonigan, cardigan and all. He gave us a very big tip.

If not in your present job, what would you like to be?

An opera singer. The trouble is that my baritone voice is nowhere near good enough.

What would be your ideal day out of the office?

I'd get up at 6am and go for a run before reading the papers in a café with a hearty breakfast, just my wife and me. I'd then take the family out for a 10-mile walk in the Dales (I have four kids), followed by a nice cream tea, then a night of competitive bridge.

Name one person you would like to have dinner with and why?

My (now deceased) father, so he could see how I turned out.

What was your best subject at school?

Economics. I was the school prize winner and achieved the highest mark in the country for that particular board in my A-level. It seemed to matter so

much at the time, but doesn't really count for anything now.

What are your hobbies?

Mainly playing bridge and trying to keep fit. I'm pretty good at bridge and pretty bad at keeping fit.

What's your top time-saving tip?

Never put off doing anything. The sooner it's done, the sooner you can move on to other things.

What would you do if you won the Lotto?

I would carry on working, because I love what I do, but would probably want to reduce it to three or four days a week and, where possible, work from abroad.

What was your worst mistake and why?

Not backing my wife's idea in the early 1980s to set up a chain of coffee houses in London. She really did think of it before Starbucks, Costa etc.

What is the best thing about being in business in Yorkshire?

The fact that I can live two miles from where I work and my overheads at Kempner Robinson are a fraction of what they would be in London.

What would your epitaph be?

He always tried to do the right thing.