A Day in the Life of a Corporate Law Trainee

8.45am
I arrive at the office, pick up a copy of the Financial Times and scan both the headlines and the section that lists what companies are in the news. I’m looking to see if there is any news about any of the clients I’m working with. It is always interesting to read about a deal which you are working on!

9.00am
I check my emails to see if anything has arrived in my inbox that is urgent and respond to anything I can straightaway.

9.10am
Normally at around this time, I’ll have a meeting with my supervisor to discuss what work I can help him with during the day. I’m currently sitting within the Corporate practice area where the majority of the work is to do with mergers and acquisitions of well known companies. We also offer general corporate legal advice to our clients.

A typical morning might involve me researching a point of law in order for us to confirm a position with our clients. This may involve browsing the legal websites, reading cases or articles around the subject. If I can’t find what I’m looking for, I’ll speak to our information team who can normally direct me where to look. Once I have found everything I need, I prepare a note to summarise my findings. My supervisor will then review it and discuss it with me. On the basis of his comments I will make any necessary amendments and once it is finalised, he will then show it to the client or use it internally with other members of the team.

11.00am
I’ll usually try to go downstairs for a quick cup of coffee mid-morning before continuing with my work.

11.10am
If I’m not doing research, I might have to start drafting a document for a client. This might be part of an agreement relating to the sale of a company or alternatively, it could be a document relating to a client’s corporate governance policy which needs updating in light of some new piece of legislation. I will need to research the client to make sure I include all the relevant points, and exclude those that are not. Again, I will show this to my supervisor, we will then review it together and make any necessary changes. It will then be sent to the client for approval.
1.00pm
Lunch is either spent with some other trainees in the canteen or possibly at a departmental meeting. Normally these are to get us up to speed with changing areas of law. Today we had two partners from our China offices talk about the increasing role of China in the global economy. Alternatively there is a series of non-law, general interest talks which anyone can attend. One such recent example was when the BBC journalist Fergal Keane came in to talk about his experiences of covering the Rwandan genocide.

2.00pm
After lunch I will carry on with my outstanding work left over from the morning.

Often during the afternoon, other lawyers will pop by to ask if I can carry out a quick piece of work for them. Not only does this broaden my understanding of the work the department does, but it also helps me to get to know the other members of the team.

If there is a conference call taking place, my supervisor might ask me to sit in on it. This is a good way to gain insight, not only on the deal in hand, but also how to react with clients. If anything of particular importance comes up in the call, I will need to document it in a telephone note.

6.00pm
I will normally try to go to the gym after work – I find it’s a good way to relax after a day in the office. I might even go to a class if there’s one on that I enjoy.

If it’s a Thursday or Friday night, I’ll meet some friends in the firm’s bar, the Yellow Budgie, and we’ll have a few drinks before heading off for dinner somewhere.