



Rachel Kelly

Director | Corporate and Commercial



As a child, I'd always wanted to be a lawyer – I liked the idea of wearing a suit, heels and carrying a briefcase – but I was put off when I was (erroneously) told I would need to learn Latin! I'm not very strong on the languages front. I decided to pursue accounting instead, only to find out that I was not particularly good at it. So, on completing my BCom, I decided to do an LLB on the basis that I wasn't going to take it too seriously and, if I didn't like it, I would just drop out and figure out something else to do. Fortunately, I loved law from the start, especially Corporate Commercial and M&A work. People think law is really difficult and, yes, it is hard work (and a lot of reading), but I think a lot of it is instinctive and just putting in consistent effort and graft.

While I love getting involved in transactions, the hardest part for me is when the “deal fatigue” sets in, and you are negotiating technical points on draft 12 of the agreement (often at 10pm). The best deals, and the nicest ones to work on, are those where both parties walk away with, substantially, all that they wanted, and where there haven't been too many tears and tantrums along the way. It's also great closing a deal – you get a sense of satisfaction at “job done “. We like to close off our big deals with a lunch or dinner with our clients (assuming they aren't sick at the sight of us at that point).

I think, particularly as a woman in law, it's

important to surround yourself with good people; people who you can learn from and people who have your back. Law is a tough field, and having people around you who are like-minded and can give you some perspective during those times that you need it is invaluable. Plus, if you have friends you can talk to, laugh with and count on, it makes the whole thing a lot more fun.

I have been very fortunate to have had many mentors during my career. Many of them have taught me technical points of law. Many of them have taught me practical ways of doing things, how to manage people, and how not to take it all too seriously. Things do sometimes go wrong and everybody makes mistakes, but it's generally not a matter of life and death. It's important to keep a sense of perspective, own your mistakes, learn from them and move on. I once heard it said by a senior lawyer that it's only when you get to about 50 years old that you actually start to know what you are doing, so there's a lot of us in the same boat who aren't always confident that we know what we are doing! That's normal, but you do learn more and more each day.

When I'm not working, you'll find me spending time with my two kids and six cats, in the gym (when I am tired of the two kids and six cats), hiking, or volunteering at the SPCA. Sadly, I can't adopt any more animals (I would love many more cats) but I try to make a difference by raising money for them. I'm also not ashamed to say that I like binge watching

Netflix series – the Last Kingdom is one not to miss (one of my cats is called Uhtred)!

The one thing that makes my life easier and that I wouldn't want to do without is my air-fryer! It makes it so much easier to make food quickly, which is helpful when you are working and don't have hours to stand in the kitchen and cook.

Working at the SPCA Book Nook, I have a lot of access to great books from a myriad authors, but my favourite author is probably Ken Follett (his cathedral series is fantastic) and I always have at least one of his books on my nightstand. My favourite colours are blue and pink, although the majority of my house is painted grey (I have very little imagination in the interior design space). In terms of holiday destinations, I would love to visit Florida. My kids are interested in rockets and rocket science and, obviously, they have a lot of that there. They also seem to have a lot of theme parks and entertainment. My worst trait is probably summed up best by a meme that a colleague sent me: “*Best quality: works well under pressure. Worst quality: doesn't work otherwise*”. I do sometimes struggle with sitting at a desk for several hours a day and concentrating on pages and pages of documents (which are sometimes very complicated) but, unfortunately, that's part of the job, so I have to get on with it! I like working from home because at least then I have my cats around to distract me when they do silly things (and the fridge is close by). 🐾