

Swapping seats

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With September quickly approaching, the close of another seat rotation is imminent. Having spoken to many trainees, NQs and even senior associates we can confirm that, across the board, seat rotations are recognised as difficult and tricky times. So, as your blog authors round off another 6 month seat and ultimately the first year of our training contract (!) we thought we'd provide a small insight into seat transitions!

As I'm sure you all are aware, each seat rotation in Browne Jacobson lasts 6 months, where you experience a range of emotions, starting with fear, anticipation, nervousness and ultimately excitement to learn. As time progresses in your seat, you soon become increasingly familiar with the way that particular team works, your supervisor's preferred style (which - to burst your bubble - changes from supervisor to supervisor), team dynamics and, underlying it all, how to do the work you have been tasked with! Like anything, with time you develop the skills and knowledge you need to competently perform your role as a trainee (one hopes!).

It is often around the 4 month mark where most things fall into place and feelings of comfort start to emerge. However, this month is bittersweet as it is also around the time that you consider the options for your next seat, where it dawns that you will soon have to start all over again! You are to leave the known and enter the unknown – filling the boots of another trainee, meeting new people and essentially delving into a new area of law!

However, not everything is scary as everyone at Browne Jacobson understands your position and undoubtedly your new team will welcome you with open arms. You will quickly find yourself feeling comfortable again and this time with a wider breadth of knowledge. You will have a whole new area of law in which to immerse yourself and from which to soak up masses of information. Additionally, as a more 'experienced' trainee you will find yourself more confident, which might just surprise you! Starting a new team will provide you with a new realm of legal jargon to add to your repertoire (to impress all your non-lawyer friends) and ultimately increase the amount of friendly faces you have in the office, enhancing both your support system and social life!

So, whilst seat transitions can never be seen as 'easy', they are important to recognise as a landmark moment as not only have you completed 6 months in a particular department, you are also 6 months closer to removing 'trainee' from your email signatures to becoming a 'solicitor'...that's the silver lining I suppose!

Also rumour has it that seat transitions become easier over time...we'll let you know in 6 months!

Until then we have compiled some top tips to help ease the transition period:

Top tips:

- Meet with your new team and establish contact early.
- Dig out any old LPC notes / resources you can find around the area of law you are entering into – never hurts to prepare!
- Organise a handover meeting with the previous trainee – take plenty of notes and ask questions.
- Organise a meeting with your new supervisor to understand how this team operates, what you can do in advance of moving seats (if anything) and ultimately to show your interest!

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