

MEET THE TEAM

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"I've learnt that listening is the most important skill."

Describe your role at Chadwick Nott

I am a Senior Consultant working in our South West & South Wales team. I recruit solicitors from newly qualified up to Equity Partner for law firm clients.

My clients are all law firms in the region varying from four or five Partners in size through to multi-office national and international firms. My job is all about matching my law firm clients with my candidates.

The best way of finding the right people for my clients is to understand not only their particular vacancy or needs as fully as possible, but more importantly the wider organisation including strategy, culture and ethos.

What's something you've learnt that has helped you in your career?

My job involves a lot of questioning but just as importantly, a good deal of listening. I've learnt over the years that the latter is the more important skill - it could be just one or two nuggets of information when talking to a client that really makes the difference for my candidates.

As for my candidates, my style of questioning may be a little different but the task is largely the same: 1) unearth what it "really" is that is making them either question their current role or more actively decide to apply for opportunities; and 2) try to match them up with either existing vacancies that would suit their skill-set, or "create" roles with firms that are in expansion mode.

One of the interesting parts of my role is that no two people are the same. Therefore, whilst there will be common themes that feature in most candidates' preliminary conversations with me - such as dissatisfaction around



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remuneration or team dynamic - it's often the less obvious grumbles that tip someone over the proverbial edge to decide to move.

Describe some of the challenges in your role

Dealing with people, all day, is extremely rewarding but sometimes challenging. As humans we are all wired to change our minds, doubt our abilities, and question our resilience and the direction of our loyalties. Given I am dealing with well-educated professionals who are trained to question, doubt, check and then check again (and I speak as an ex-solicitor myself), then it's not surprising that my role involves me using my softer skills of encouraging, boosting and reassuring my candidates as much as it does providing them with facts of job specifications.

A good recruitment consultant is not simply a post box for job specifications or CVs, but provides a "consultative" service - whether that's providing our candidates with factual market information or providing them with a sounding board about their current situation.

Another challenge lies in the speed at which the wheels turn, whether that's because of a candidate pulling out of the process, or my clients pressing the green button on the recruitment process and then putting it on hold. It's helpful that I've been a solicitor myself as I can often understand my candidates' grumbles, while also appreciate the challenges my clients may be facing.

What are the best things about your role?

One of the things I love most about my job is being able to use my presentation and persuasion skills to "carve out" roles for candidates. These skills are certainly put to the test when I'm working with senior lawyers and one of the main reasons why I particularly enjoy recruiting Partners. I also love the freedom I have over structuring my working day. I alone am in control over organising my workload.

Whether junior level or senior level lawyer, I never tire of the feeling I get when I secure them the job offer for which they were hoping. It's genuinely heart-warming when someone tells you that you have changed a key aspect in their life for the better. It never loses its shine and it usually has a real knock-on effect on other areas of their life. So often people will tell me that changing job was the catalyst for the pieces falling into place in their personal life too. That's a pretty great feeling.

Is there a difference when you work with Partners?

There are a number of different skills involved: from the listening skills needed when interviewing, research skills when defining the market and pitching and presenting skills when in dialogue with the firms. It's also less vacancy driven than for more junior roles. This means that I have to be "proactive" rather than "reactive" and find or even "create" the right role for my senior lawyers in close collaboration with my clients.

I relish this challenge and find it rewarding to achieve a successful outcome for both parties.

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