

Practice Development Specialist

The legal profession offers a wide range of job opportunities. It is hard to generalise about what's it really like to work at a law firm as it depends on aspects such as the size of the firm and what type of role you have. Knowing the law is only one part of the legal profession; there is also the business side.

There are many opportunities to work at a law firm in a business support function rather than as a lawyer. For example, to ensure effective and efficient operations, law firms have Practice Development or Knowledge Management professionals.

In my job as a Practice Development Specialist at Cleary Gottlieb, I help busy lawyers do their job more efficiently and support the management of the firm's knowledge database. For instance, when a lawyer is working on a case and needs to go to court, I research relevant judgments and references or look into specific questions surrounding court procedures. I have to analyse complicated questions and formulate clear and precise answers.

Lawyers have to deal with a huge number of documents on a daily basis. I ensure that our lawyers have access to smart technology and tools to store and search for legal documents. Managing these tools requires good organisational skills. I also learn a lot about legal terms and how to recognise the different types of legal documents.

As a Practice Development Specialist, you get the opportunity to work very closely with lawyers and many other professionals at the law firm. No two days or assignments are ever the same. Each day provides an opportunity to apply a different skill set and develop new ones. Because Cleary is a very fast moving organisation, like most big law firms, you have to be flexible and constantly update your strategy to achieve your goals.

In addition, Cleary is a truly international organisation, with offices worldwide. This means you get the chance to work with colleagues in almost every part of the world, from Asia to the Middle East and the United States. Every day, I work together with people from different cultures and backgrounds to find solutions for complex issues, which I find greatly motivating and inspiring.

I also think Cleary has a strong culture of collegiality and respect. If you have any questions or need support, it is no problem to knock on the door of a senior lawyer or even a partner. Everyone genuinely enjoys working with one another in this diverse and challenging environment.

Working in Practice Development or in any other support function provides a great opportunity to experience how a law firm operates. You also get a chance to work alongside highly motivated professionals and develop important skills to develop your career.

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