

I'm In! *This is my story*



‘*In today’s world of agile working anything is possible. You can be a partner, a head of a team, a mum and be sane!’*

Danielle Drummond-Brassington
Partner

Q: Tell us a little bit about yourself.

A: I trained at CMS and have spent my entire legal career here. I was interviewed by David Day for my training contract and had the interview from hell, not because of David, but because the front of my tooth chipped off when I was eating a sandwich in the lunch break of the assessment centre. I had to do the rest of the day with the corner of my tooth missing and all the nerve endings out! I still say I only got the job because of my tooth; if I could hold it together because of the tooth during the interview, I could hold it together for anything. 16 years on I am still here, a Partner, heading the largest real estate disputes team in the UK – all achieved before I turned 40.

CMS was the only place I wanted to work, and was one of the only law firms that had offices in Germany. I did a German diploma in law and wanted to work somewhere where I could use it – clearly doing Real Estate Disputes I do not use it now!

I have two young boys, aged three and five and my 20 minute commute allows me to spend time with them in the mornings and most evenings.

Q: What does diversity and inclusion mean to you?

A: It is about having a zero tolerance towards discrimination, and being meritocratic, judging people solely on their work. However, I also believe it is important to promote inclusivity and take different approaches when it is required

Q: Do you believe that you can have children and still progress to partnership?

A: Yes! But no one is saying it is easy and there are days when the whole infrastructure you build around you collapses! It is difficult and requires you to be very well organised – it is about finding a balance and compromising. Unless I have work commitments, I get home to read bedtime stories and pick up anything that needs doing later on in the evening. As a role model, I want more junior colleagues to know that it can work. In today's world of agile working, anything is possible. Furthermore, what should be measured is our input and output not how many hours that people are in the office for.

Q: What is it about CMS that makes you truly believe that you can be yourself?

A: When I was applying to CMS I felt an instant connection when reading the training brochure and it was this gut instinct which led me to believe that this was the place for me. It is an honest environment, where I feel that I can be myself.

Q: Do you feel you have people that you can look up to at CMS who are like you? How beneficial has this been for you?

A: I have always felt supported at CMS. There are so many role models around and you take different things from different people. For example, Mark Heighton was recently listed in the FT's list of champions of Women in Business list and I have been lucky to work with him and have him as a mentor during my career. I think CMS is lucky to have a women in the senior partner role and that is sends a positive message to everyone.

Q: Do you believe that CMS is a diverse and inclusive company – how could it improve?

A: Yes, I think we are diverse and inclusive, but there is always room for improvement. Our Partnership is very racially homogenous and we need more Partners from ethnic backgrounds. LGBT* and women are already being focused on and we need to keep doing more.