

Private practice secondment for an in-house trainee

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Back at school when dreaming of becoming a lawyer, I never imagined that I would be qualifying in house. Having worked for a financial services company since graduating however, I was delighted when they offered me an in-house training contract, which began in July last year.

Life as an in-house trainee has been great, but there was problem: I knew I would always wonder what life was like in private practice and whether I'd chosen the right path. Luckily, the option to do a six month secondment to Browne Jacobson's corporate team became available and I jumped at the chance to experience life on the other side for my second seat. I'm six weeks in, and it's been a steep learning curve, but I'm really enjoying the change!

Here are some of the biggest differences that I've noticed so far:

- **Clients:** The best thing about private practice so far is the variety of work that comes from having clients. Having a single client in-house is great, as you feel really involved in what's happening in the business and can see projects through from start to finish, but the insight that I am now getting into the inner workings of a variety of other big businesses is really interesting and exciting to be involved in.
- **Supervision:** The level of supervision required in private practice can naturally be higher, due to the nature of working with clients and as a result of trainees potentially moving into areas which they have no prior knowledge (which has been my experience with corporate). This has been a change in working for me, but it's great for learning and it's comforting to know that work for clients has been reviewed before going out the door.
- **Time recording:** You mean I have to note down everything I do all the day, down to the minute?! This was certainly a new concept for me; and I've found that you have to be really on the ball to accurately keep track of everything you're working on. In honesty, this is one thing that I probably will not miss about private practice!
- **Dress code:** I'm used to living in a perpetual state of dress-down-Friday so I'm still not quite feeling like me in a more formal dress code, but I did feel that I must have finally reached grown-up status when having to wear a blazer to a client meeting the other day! I'm joking (kind of), but it is quite nice to feel a bit smarter. And it now feels like I have loads more clothes when it comes to the weekend
- **Other trainees:** One big benefit of private practice is training alongside lots of other trainees. It's nice to feel like we're all in the same boat and it helps to be able to chat about our experiences. There are also the trainee events to get involved in, for example we're soon going to be walking a marathon together for charity!

The main thing that I've taken away from my experience so far is that there are unique benefits to each of the two working environments. I will be going back in-house in September, but I already know that I will miss lots of elements of working at Browne Jacobson, and who knows what the future holds...



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