



CLIFFORD CHANCE LLP UNIVERSITY ALLIANCE OPEN DAY 2015

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Joshua's Report

An Open Day in the offices of any law firm is always a welcome insight for a law student. An open day at a 'magic circle' firm such as Clifford Chance is therefore an invaluable experience, particularly to someone interested in commercial and corporate law such as myself. Together with other second year students Jordan Owen, Osilama Ozekhome and Shannen Trout we had been nominated by the Law School to attend and represent Plymouth University and had then successfully negotiated the Clifford Chance selection process. Plymouth was one of about 20 University law schools that had sent students to this event, one of five held during the academic year as part of Clifford Chance's 'Open Door' policy to encourage students to find out and understand more about the ethos and environment of a city firm. On first arriving in Canary Wharf it was impossible not to feel both dwarfed by the enormous surrounding buildings and awestruck when entering the ultra-modern lobby of the Clifford Chance office on 10 Upper Bank Street. Over the course of the day there were many varied activities available, taking us much further than the impressive exterior; being able to see how the number 1 law firm in the UK¹ operates was a mixture of both affirmation and revelation when compared to our preconceptions.

The initial session introduced us to the core composition and values at Clifford Chance, as well as allowing for networking opportunities. This was a great chance to meet both successful lawyers and the Clifford Chance graduate recruitment team. On offer was not only an insight into the day to day activities of legal professionals but also an opportunity to ask questions about future steps in a career in law: what does a firm such as Clifford Chance look for in the lawyers of tomorrow? When describing their working relationships, from

¹ Chambersandpartners.com, 2015. "Global Comparison Table - Your Guide To The World'S Best Lawyers - Chambers And Partners". <http://www.chambersandpartners.com/global-comparisontable>.

smaller pro bono clients to many of the Fortune 500 companies, emphasis was placed on how tailoring the client service, regardless of their size, is a key to success in the legal sector. Incidentally the day was also a good opportunity to speak to the students at other universities and compare how the subject of law is taught across the country.

Perhaps the most informative session included a 'demystifying' workshop from a solicitor with experience in mergers and acquisitions across the world. We were given some introductory information regarding this area of law before applying this to an example of a real life scenario. This was of particular interest to us as, although career talks and content covered within our LLB are useful within their own parameters, the typical daily dealings of



law firms can still seem mysterious to an undergraduate student. Learning from someone who is actually practising on a day to day basis was a rare and eye-opening experience.

Later in the day we were given a tour of the building which helped to add a sense of tangibility to how the offices of a large law firm function,

including the interaction between the separate departments and how the basic facilities and logistics are handled. A genuinely surprising discovery was that the law offices contain a restaurant, hairdressers, auditorium, gym, squash courts and even a swimming pool on the 5th floor amongst many other amenities. The inclusion of these facilities almost makes you forget that you are stood in the offices of a law firm dealing with multi-billion pound clients but also a realisation of the demands of working for such a prestigious firm.

The day concluded with a Q&A session fielded by several trainee solicitors and advice on the application process for vacation schemes, as well as advice on how to apply for training contracts. Overall the day was interesting and insightful: an experience which we felt fortunate to have been able to have. The main point which I take away is that, regardless of whether a law firm has a one room office on the high street in Plymouth or a 30 floor building in the centre of London, the same basic priorities of client satisfaction, unification across the firm and strong underlying values can persist across the legal sector, even if the clients are completely different.

Osilama's Report

Being chosen as one of the representatives of Plymouth University to attend the Clifford Chance Open Day was an honour. I did not know much about Clifford Chance (CC) except that it was a member of the "Magic Circle". Thus, I carried out a background research, in order to know their fields of specialisation, and the benefits and opportunities they provided. CC is a multinational law firm, formed in 1987 by the merger of two London based law firms, Clifford Turner and Coward Chance. It is one of the world's leading commercial law firms, specialising mainly in the areas of 'Capital markets', 'Tax, Pensions & Employment', 'Real estate', 'Corporate & M&A', 'Litigation & Dispute Resolution', and 'Finance'. This was sufficient enough for me to conclude that the Open Day offered great opportunities. Although it did not seem like the type of event I would usually attend, I decided to go as I could not miss out on such a great opportunity.

The Clifford Chance Open Day is designed to attract undergraduates from different Universities across the country. Being one of the world's leading commercial law firms, the Open Day provided creative insights into the wide world of commercial law. CC hosts a number of Open Days each year (5 in the 2015-2016 session), to educate undergraduates about the opportunities offered by CC, in a bid to portray CC as the most suitable commercial law firm to further one's career.

Although I did not consider how the event was going to be, it was not what I would have portrayed it to be. It was interactive and recreational in nature. The event progressed smoothly, with breaks given every two hours for the undergraduates to interact with the Graduate Recruitment Team (GRT). This was very helpful, as a lot of the undergraduates were considering a law career at CC. Leaflets were distributed with information containing contact details of the GRT, in case there were any unanswered questions or any issues that needed clarification. The tour of CC was the recreational bit, as the tour was a bid to amuse the undergraduates (which it did). The event was also educative and insightful. During the event, we were lectured on their specialised areas of commercial law, with more emphasis being placed on M&A. The lecture was very informative, as M&A was not an area of law I was familiar with. A case study followed on M&A, where we were asked to work in groups to determine the outcome of the case. Although working in groups is not my preferred suit, I found it relatively helpful and entertaining, due to the cordial atmosphere provided at CC. We were also provided with a Q&A session with some of the trainees at CC, where we got to learn about their experience and time at CC. The trainees were delighted to be training at CC, as they confirmed that CC offered a lot of opportunities which most law firms did not. It was obvious that they meant what they had said, and this increased my reputation of CC.

The Open Day was very helpful to me, life-changing to be precise. Prior to the Open Day, I was adamant on being a Constitutional lawyer and a Human Rights Activist. However, the Open Day exhibited the world of commercial law as a more preferred career in life. Thus, I am determined to be a Commercial lawyer at CC. Being selected as a candidate for the Open Day has drawn me a step closer to achieving this. Moreover, CC offer a 2-year training contract for continuous training development, a training I plan to participate in once I attain a degree in LLB Hons. Clifford Chance Open Day was very useful in choosing a career, and I plan to attend another CC event if given the opportunity.