

ALUMNI MATTERS: FROM THE SENIOR PARTNER

Rebecca Maslen-Stannage, Senior Partner

A key goal of mine as Chair and Senior Partner is to further strengthen our sense of connection across our firm. And when I say “our firm”, that includes you as HSF alumni. As my former team members know (I have a tendency to recruit them back once they realise how much they miss us), I never accept that anyone truly leaves Herbert Smith Freehills..

We consistently find that the more we connect and collaborate, across geographies and practice areas, to bring the best of our firm, the better the outcomes for our clients.

It took me time to learn the power of connection. As a graduate in our Perth office, with no background in the law or business, I was determined to be the “perfect” lawyer. I focused purely on my legal work and never saying anything that was not the “right” thing. One day the penny dropped that I was developing the persona - and personality - of a perfect legal task implementing robot. I was transacting but not connecting.

Once I realised the magic of actually expressing my personality and connecting with others, work became so much more fun. The friendships I developed at and outside the firm made me a far more effective lawyer. Our job is about influencing, persuading, encouraging - having people enjoy working with us and want us on the team.



The power of connection is one reason an inclusive culture is so important to us. We recruit the best of the best and we want the benefit of all of us bringing our full selves to our roles with the firm, with no one feeling an outsider for arbitrary reasons such as gender, sexual orientation or cultural background.

There's nothing like pandemic lockdowns to reiterate the importance of connection. We missed one another - and were driven to find new ways to connect. We utilised VC technology we hadn't even realised we had, shared virtual cooking and dance experiences, and found innovative ways to share knowledge and learning. Our "Agile 60" way of working - when pandemic restrictions permit - with our team in the office 60% of the time and flexibly connected for 40% - has shown we can connect and collaborate in many ways.

So enjoy connecting with us and fellow alumni in this edition of Alumni Matters - and please keep in touch. We are particularly looking forward to connecting with you in person again as that becomes possible.