

EIP

Careers in Ideas week 2020: Friday

To support CIPA's Careers in Ideas week initiative we are interviewing people at EIP about how they found a career in intellectual property. To finish up the week we asked Sunny Bansal and Charlotte Noon to share their stories.

Sunny Bansal, Managing Associate & Patent Attorney

1) How did you go from a developer at BT to patent attorney?

By accident is the short answer ????? Whilst working at BT I realised that coding was not for me so my foray as a developer was very short lived, and I decided to do a PhD instead. After completing my PhD I relocated to India and started working for an IP outsourcing firm - this is how I got into the profession. I was enjoying the work so I decided to pursue a career as a patent attorney and landed at EIP.

2) What's the best piece of advice/what's the most valuable lesson you have learnt in your time in IP?

I think the most valuable lesson that I have learnt is "always ask why". If you don't know the reason for doing what you are doing then you are more likely to get it wrong. Initially I ignored the importance of understanding why I was being asked to do something and simply focused on what I was being asked to do, but the result was average to disappointing. I struggled to understand why that was the case and to address this I just kept on working harder and longer but that did not improve matters. It took a long time for the penny to drop but I am glad it did!

Charlotte Noon, Head of Marketing & BD

1) What was your career path into IP?

After completing my degree in Marketing I started working in the City in general marketing roles but didn't find something which sparked my interest so after a few years I took a year out and went travelling around Australia. On the way home (specifically in Bali) I had a Eureka moment when I decided I wanted to get into professional services marketing and six weeks later I started at Lovells (now Hogan Lovells). That was over 18 years ago so clearly I like working in professional services marketing!

2) What does Diversity & Inclusiveness mean to you?

For me diversity is not about putting labels on people but rather about removing any barriers (real or perceived) which stop people from fulfilling their potential or put them off from applying for courses/careers which appeal to them. When I first joined the legal profession, partnerships in most firms were made up of middle class, often privately educated, Oxbridge graduate white males. During my career it has been pleasing to see the increase (albeit slow) in diversity within partnerships and I have had the pleasure of working for two very strong and successful female Managing Partners.

Inclusivity is about making things accessible and one point I feel strongly about is making flexible working available to all. The legal profession can have trouble retaining talent when people become senior if they don't want partnership or feel they have to choose between a successful career or their personal lives. In this day and age, where people can work remotely and flexibly to suit both their personal needs while offering flexibility to clients, I think it is important the firms respond to this. At EIP it is refreshing to see this openness to retaining talent and offering flexibility from part-time working (across all levels) to shared parental leave. Flexible working is not the preserve of working parents but should be available to all to enable people to continue with their careers while allowing time to fulfil their personal interests whatever they may be.