

EIP



Careers in Ideas week 2020: Thursday

To support CIPA's Careers in Ideas week initiative we are interviewing people at EIP about how they found a career in intellectual property. Today we asked Sharon St. Louis and Vanessa Johnrose to share their stories.

Sharon St. Louis, Paralegal Manager

1) How do you think the IP Community can improve diversity, particularly within the BAME community?

I think diversity could be improved by looking within the local community for talent from students that may not feel that an Oxbridge or Russell Group university is attainable for them. It is also important that when the IP profession is showcased, those from an ethnically diverse background are genuinely made to feel wanted rather than being there to be the BAME representation.

2) What career advice would you give your 18 year old self?

My advice to my 18 year old self would be to look to the future and get around obstacles, don't let them get in your way. Remain focused and don't be afraid to ask for support to help you reach your goals.

Vanessa Johnrose, Executive Paralegal

1) Do you feel the IP community is diverse and inclusive?

When I started working in IP in 2004 there was not much diversity, but I have noticed progress and feel EIP is more diverse than other firms I have worked in. While I have never encountered any barriers in my career I am aware that other people have experienced situations where their gender or ethnicity has affected their progress.

When BLM happened it was interesting the different reactions I experienced within my team - one colleague asked me how I was doing and was keen to discuss the issue with me, while another colleague found it difficult to broach the subject with me for fear of saying the wrong thing. I appreciated the concern shown by both colleagues but their differing responses in how to open a discussion around race shines a light on what a complex issue it can be.

2) As a working parent what advice do you give your children about their choice of career?

I have actively encouraged my daughter (aged 20) to follow a career path in something that she enjoys (fashion) which I believe has given her the confidence to get a job she loves (as a visual merchandiser in retail). I believe it is important for my children to look at their individual strengths, do a job they enjoy and I encourage them to set no limits on what they can achieve.