



## ❖ How have you found the industry change over the last 10 years?

- Adoption of propriety case management and accounts systems to enable digital working with fewer support staff.
- Fee-earners must be IT literate and able to see the 'whole picture' of client case management.
- Much greater awareness of commerciality and need for fee-earners to be aware of costs, overheads and earnings.
- Effective IT systems provide much more performance data and leave few hiding places for staff.
- Targets are all important and now much easier to measure.
- This brings in its wake the danger of knowing the cost of everything and the value of nothing.
- We are still dealing with real people and all their idiosyncrasies...

## ❖ What does a typical day as a Practice Manager look like?

- The advantage of these roles are that no two days are ever the same. It's a constant mixture of the routine and exceptional.
- This includes making sure files are billed, bills are paid, staff are paid, accounts are reconciled and so on. Interwoven with this is responding to LAA audits if legal aid, sorting property and HR issues, dealing with under-performing suppliers and contractors, and keeping directors happy.
- I'll you to decide which is the most onerous or taxing of these tasks!

## ❖ What does it take to be a successful Practice Manager?

- Need to be Jack of all trades and hopefully a master of some of them.
- An ability to understand accounts and seeing the bigger picture are pretty crucial, as the ability to work with a wide range of people.
- A thick skin and the ability not to take things to heart can be pretty useful too when the going gets tough.
- Not be scared of questioning assumptions and current practices and accepting senior partners are not always right and knowing how and when to say so.

## ❖ What might you be doing today if you had gone down a different career path?

- Having worked in the public, voluntary and private sectors, it would have been as a senior manager somewhere.
- Ideally with the benefit of doing something really worthwhile in the voluntary sector, with the civility of the public sector and the financial stability and autonomy of the private sector.

## ❖ What do you enjoy the most about your role?

- The variety and autonomy.
- A good practice manager should have the confidence of the directors/partners and staff and so be able to get on with things, happy that they are helping to run an efficient and successful enterprise, and able to deal with a wide range of challenges as they arise.

## ❖ What is the funniest thing you have seen working in law?

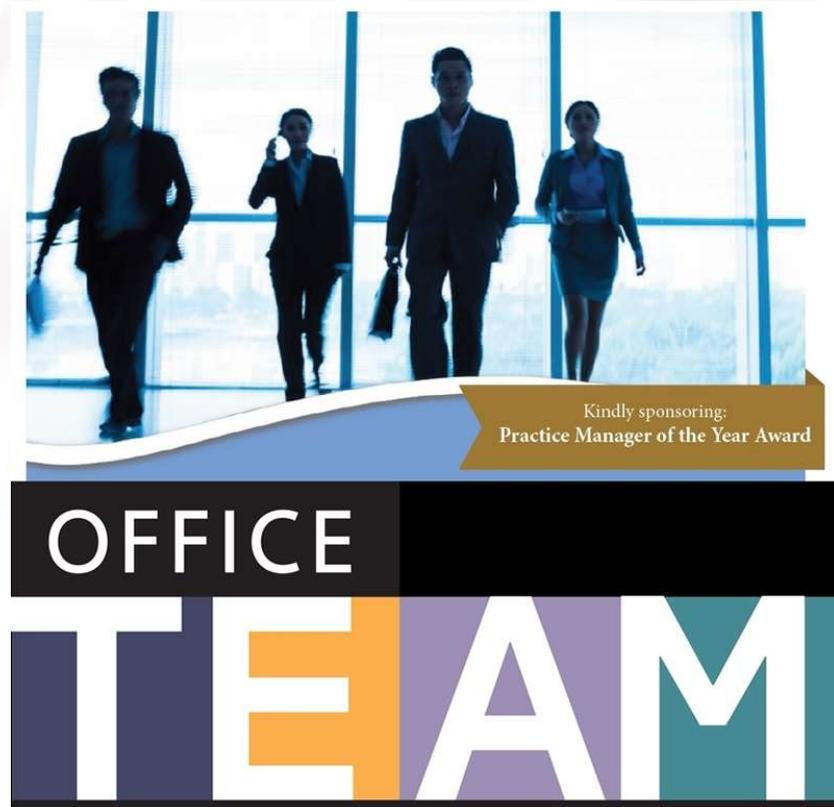
- The sense of entitlement and certain lawyers believing that they must always be right.
- Loved seeing an equity partner berating an IT support staff for their PC not working, only to be shown that turning the monitor on had a miraculous effect on its performance.

## ❖ How important are the Practice Manager meetings at NLS?

- It's very useful to share experiences, best practice, and be kept up to date with the latest developments that impact on practice management.

## ❖ What else do you enjoy outside of the law & do you achieve a work/life balance?

- In no particular order...
  - supporting worthwhile projects (in my mind) such as being Chair of the Trustees of Bennerley Viaduct
  - a director of the flats where we have one in Scarborough,
  - race Morgan three wheelers on circuits and hill climbs,
  - European road trips,
  - long distant tandem trips
  - Support and enjoy Landmark Trust properties
  - Go to the cinema and theatre when I can
  - And hopefully since November by being a good grandfather...



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