

While the VGSO returns a dividend to the Department of Justice, we're not driven by profit. As a result, billable hour requirements are fair and achievable, leaving time for further training and development.

Significantly, the VGSO is supportive of lawyers who wish to engage in further studies.

Three young lawyers have recently been granted a 12-month leave of absence to undertake further studies at Oxford University, the London School of Economics and Berkeley.

There are ample opportunities for secondments in other government departments as well.

Lawyers also undertake year-long stints as associates in the Supreme Court. In times where job security has become increasingly important, the organisation's flexibility and encouragement is second to none.

So could government law be the most sought after job for young lawyers? We predict that as our reputation continues to grow, the VGSO will cement its name as the most attractive workplace for a young lawyer.

A rewarding and stimulating environment awaits those who dare to take the step. ●

GEORGETTE APOSTOLOPOULOS & JAMES PERRY, YLS EDITORIAL COMMITTEE AND VGSO

Georgette is a first year solicitor, VGSO commercial and property branch and James is a first year solicitor, VGSO litigation branch.

Quiz: Finding the Perfect Partner

We all hope that one day we will find the One – that perfect Partner that appreciates you, guides you when lost, cheers you up when down, rejoices in your victories . . . Yes, well, then there's reality. So how does your partner stack up against the ideal? Complete this fun quiz for a guide to your Partner's type.

1 You have been trying to make sense of a task given to you by the Partner, but no matter how many times you go over the instructions, you still have no idea what you are meant to do or even where to begin. You gather enough courage to approach the Partner for further explanation.

The Partner says:

- A "You can't be serious, it's such a simple task!"
- B "Ah yes, a difficult problem – good luck with that"
- C Nothing – he/she is not there
- D "Try Google"
- E "Stop fumbling around and get it done"
- F "Sure. Let's break this down into issues"

2 You're in a monthly department meeting. The Partner:

- A Interrupts everyone
- B Sits quietly and leaves halfway through to start his/her weekend early
- C Is not there
- D Passes off your idea as his/hers
- E Hands out work with unrealistic deadlines
- F Allocates work based on everyone's skills and experience

3 There's drama over a letter of advice that went out to a major client, which appears to be entirely unchecked.

The Partner in charge:

- A Waits until the Friday night drinks and then has a go at anyone who comes within 5 metres of that letter
- B Blames you, the person who prepared the draft letter and gave it to him/her to proof-read
- C Does not know about it, as he/she is not there
- D Re-reads the sent letter and says "Gentlemen, I'm still not seeing the problem"
- E Engages HR to discipline "the perpetrator" and demands they apologise
- F Accepts responsibility to the client and counsels the team about the best way to avoid a repeat in the future

4 Think back to your interview. The Partner:

- A Appeared disinterested and disengaged except when speaking about themselves
- B Called you by the wrong name
- C Was (you guessed it) not there, leaving the HR lady to make excuses for his/her absence
- D Asked you oddly specific legal questions and frantically jotted down your answers
- E Spoke exclusively about how she made it as a Partner and how you, as a woman, had to prove yourself to be acknowledged
- F Had read your covering letter and CV and asked careful questions

5 It's the firm Christmas Party. The Partner:

- A Talked loudly with their buddies about the incompetency of their team
- B Attended the pre-function lunch where he/she had too much to drink and had to go home
- C Is there, which is a little surprising as most of their department is absent, working on a huge merger
- D Is using this opportunity to solicit the tipsy trainee lawyers for advice about their practice area to help them on their current litigation files
- E Attends half an hour late, complaining she was left to clean up the mess of junior solicitors and then mixes only with the Partners for the rest of the night
- F Reminds their team about appropriate behaviour beforehand, mixed with all staff and left early

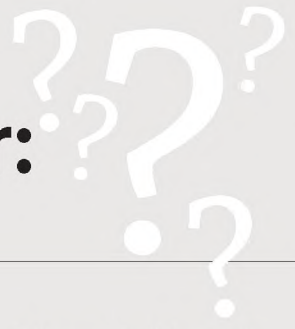
TANYA SKVORTSOVA, YLS EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Lawyer, Christopher Burnett Lawyers

To find out if you are the Perfect Partner turn to page 13 for Quiz results.

Finding the Perfect Partner:

The Results



MOSTLY As:

The Explosive Partner

The Explosive Partner is many things, but “tactful” he/she isn’t. Sexist, opinionated and aggressive, they will take every opportunity to humiliate the younger lawyers and let them have a piece of his/her mind. The Explosive Partner always has a handful of favourites, whom they will promote into their area irrespective of their competency. If you work under the Explosive Partner, be straightforward, careful, competent and cautious about over-engagement. Remember that while it may be fun to be part of his/her circle in the beginning, it will inevitably end in tears as soon as he/she feels threatened by you.

MOSTLY Bs:

The Lazy Partner

The Lazy Partner’s motto is “get it off my table”. Not “delegating” but rather “dumping” work on juniors, this Partner won’t check your work but will be the first to blame you when things go wrong. Arguably the most dangerous to a young lawyer’s career, the Lazy Partner will leave you not only open to making critical mistakes, but

also to getting the blame for them. If you work under this Partner, prepare work in “issues-based” memos and get him/her to sign off on each stage before embarking on the final product. If you can, develop an internal mentor who checks your work before handing it to the Partner.

MOSTLY Cs:

The Never Available Partner

To whom does that empty office belong? Sounds like you work under The Never Available Partner. Friday afternoons were written out of this person’s work description a long time ago. Never there to get his/her hands dirty with any work, they always manage to make an appearance at introductory meetings and create a lot of communication about the success of the firm/department. If you work under the Never Available Partner, be aware that they commonly promise deadlines that can’t be met and give off-the-cuff advice that is often wrong. Book in time with their P.A. at around 9.30am. Take him/her through your work quickly pointing out your concerns and possible answers.

MOSTLY Ds:

The Incompetent Partner

Think David Brent from *The Office*. The Incompetent Partner is often hard-working, but it’s only once they are made a Partner that his/her lack of skills becomes apparent. The Incompetent Partner will use the junior lawyers as his/her beacon of knowledge and ideas and may try to pass some of these off as their own. Watch out for the excessive use of legalese and fluff-words such as “synergy” to compensate for the lack of substance. The best way to work under the Incompetent Partner is not to try and prove them wrong – it won’t go down well. Instead, engage with them on key ideas – make them theirs, make your concerns theirs. Write briefly, accurately and provide authorisation. Best of luck!

MOSTLY Es:

Ms Power Woman

As is often the case with female Partners, Ms Power Woman has had to work particularly hard to get to where she is. At some point along the way Ms Power Woman decided that it would be a good idea to “masculinise” her practice to beat the boys

at their game. Bullying, rude, dismissive, this lady has purposely adopted the persona of aggressive male litigators in a quest for equal footing. Ms Power Woman is a particularly bad role model to female young lawyers and has no interest in their development as professionals. Always remember that Ms Power Woman’s work will take priority – you’ll have no choice in this matter. Consider how you can make her life easier – you may just become invaluable to her.

MOSTLY Fs:

The Perfect Partner

That most desired of creature; organised, structured, consistent and respectful. This Partner is genuinely committed to mentoring younger lawyers. Make the most of your good fortune if you happen to work under the Perfect Partner and always ask questions after you have carefully considered the issues. Be respectful and supportive and you will be treated the same way in return. ●

TANYA SKVORTSOVA

Adapted from the presentation given by Andrew Douglas at the YLS Towards Better Practice seminar.

We’re

DREAMING OF A

White Christmas



**Law
Institute
Victoria**

Young Lawyers’ Section Christmas Party and AGM

| Friday, 27 November

| Register now at www.liv.asn.au/whatsongcalendar