

The 11 Secrets Behind Legal Success at CLM

Posted on: April 11, 2025

Our firm is delighted to announce 11 team members are being promoted in 2025, having demonstrated talent, dedication and

commitment to furthering their knowledge and legal skills.

So what is the secret to their success? We spoke to each of them to discover what this promotion means, what motivates them, what advice they would give to others, and what is next on their personal or professional horizon.

Nicola King – Senior Associate

What does this promotion mean to you?

For me it is the chance to set an example for other females and show that you can do this role while raising kids and working part-time. It is no secret that females are under-represented in senior roles in the legal profession, and I want to play my part in changing this.

What is the secret to your success?

Having good people around me, both at work and at home. I have an amazing team around me in the Property & Development team, many of whom I have worked with since I started at CLM eight years ago, and their friendships and belief in me always helps when I doubt myself. My husband is also my biggest support and always builds me up.

What do you love most about the legal profession?

I love the way I get to use my brain to think through every possible option and come up with the best solution for whatever situation I am handling. Conversely, this means I analyse everything out of work also (can't turn off the lawyer!).

What advice would you give to a new law school graduate?

Don't be afraid to ask questions. I remember as a new grad being terrified of asking the wrong question and would have to build up the courage to approach my supervising partner to ask questions (he was lovely by the way and not at all scary!). Also, I find being nice and appreciating those around you gets you further.

Kaitlyn Nicholson – Senior Solicitor

What does this promotion mean to you?

This promotion is a significant milestone in my legal career and one that I am very proud of. I started working in law firms just under nine years ago where I began as an office junior and this promotion is a reflection of the hard work and dedication since then to work and study at the same time while obtaining my Legal Executive diploma and then my law degree.

What is the secret to your success?

I've always believed that having a strong work ethic and a willingness to listen and learn from those around you is imperative to personal knowledge growth and also ensuring that clients are receiving the best advice.

What do you love most about the legal profession?

I love that the law is consistently evolving – it keeps things interesting. I'm also drawn to the problem-solving aspect, whether it's helping a client navigate a complex transaction or untangling a legal issue. There is a real sense of satisfaction in being able to help create solutions for people.

What are your future ambitions?

I'm committed to continuing to grow my technical knowledge and have a special interest in property and development work.

Claudia Riddle – Senior Solicitor

What does this promotion mean to you?

This promotion means a lot to me due to falling within my tenth year of living with a traumatic brain injury. I can remember various doctors and specialists telling me I was

‘brave’ for continuing with my plans to go to law school after I was involved in a serious motor vehicle accident, so to have been promoted to senior solicitor within the decade of my accident feels pretty special.

What is the secret to your success?

I think it’s a mix of showing up consistently, being willing to learn, and not being afraid to ask questions. I’ve been fortunate to have great mentors and colleagues who have given me the room and support to grow.

What do you love most about the legal profession?

I love the constant challenge – there’s always something new to learn. It’s fast paced and collaborative, and there’s real satisfaction in helping clients achieve their goals and navigate legal complexities.

What advice would you give a new law school graduate?

Be present, ask questions, and don’t think you need to know it all.

Georgia Thompson – Senior Solicitor

What does this promotion mean to you?

A mix between validation of the effort and work I have put into my career so far, encouragement to set more ambitious goals, and motivation to keep working hard and strive for more.

What is the secret to your success?

Might sound simple, but the secret to my success is being positive, and when it gets hard (because it will), choose to find the positive in the situation or stage. Positivity is contagious, and it can impact others in a great way if you let it.

What do you love most about the legal profession?

I love that each day I learn something new, whether that be a new concept, approach, technique or skill, and it makes me feel like I am constantly growing. There's no such thing as being stagnant around these parts!

What advice would you give to a new law school graduate?

Say yes to everything as you never know what you will learn. Don't be afraid to ask questions and stay true to yourself. Positivity will go a long way and surround yourself with good people!

Mel Cox – Associate Registered Legal Executive

What does this promotion mean to you?

It means a lot to me. I have dedicated my working life to CLM (I joined after leaving high school), so it is nice to be able to continually move up the ladder.

What is the secret to your success?

Enjoying the work that I do. Definitely the support of a great team, and having good clients helps as well!

What do you love most about your role at CLM?

Being able to do work that I enjoy, and interacting with great colleagues and clients.

What advice would you give your younger self?

Don't leave it so late to apply for the promotions!

Natalie Fleming – Registered Legal Executive

What does this promotion mean to you?

I'm so excited about this promotion. Having previously worked as a registered legal executive, and taken a step back following maternity leave with our second child, I'm really excited to get back into running my own files and working directly with our clients. This promotion shows my colleagues value my work, and trust me to do a good job.

What is the secret to your success?

I take a pragmatic approach. I think it is important to gain trust with your clients and colleagues by being transparent and efficient, having good time management skills and showing integrity.

What do you love most about your role at CLM?

I love the variety of work that I have. I enjoy working with our clients to get their desired outcome, and helping them buy or sell a home, which is usually a very exciting time for our clients.

What other goals do you hope to achieve this year (personal or professional)?

I'm just really looking forward to growing my knowledge further this year.

Erin Handley – Associate

What does this promotion mean to you?

This promotion is another step up in my journey in the legal profession and an acknowledgement of my continued growth with the firm.

What is the secret to your success?

There is no real 'secret', just a willingness to work hard and a desire to achieve the best results for clients in the most efficient and effective way.

What do you love most about the legal profession?

I get to work together with a great team to help clients achieve their goals.

What sacrifices have you had to make to get to where you are today?

I studied for my law degree whilst still working part-time in a demanding role and with a pre-school aged daughter. It meant a lot of juggling of time and family, and balancing achieving well at uni, at work and maintaining a life outside of those things.

Ashleigh Hartigan – Senior Solicitor

What does this promotion mean to you?

Recognition for all the work I do.

What is the secret to your success?

Hard work ethic, dedication, and taking on constructive feedback.

What do you love most about your role at CLM?

The people around me that I work with.

What other goals do you hope to achieve this year (personal or professional)?

Continuing to develop and learn in my work life, and personally, continuing to develop with my netball umpiring and dancing.

Cathie Kerr – Associate Legal Executive

What does this promotion mean to you?

The promotion means recognition of my long services to the firm of 33 years.

What is the secret to your success?

The secret to my success is the empathy I have and show to the families of my clients.

What do you love most about working at CLM?

The people I work with is what I love the most about working here.

Kerry McIntosh – Senior Registered Legal Executive

What does this promotion mean to you?

It means recognition of the work I have contributed to the firm and knowledge gained in my career.

What is the secret to your success?

My secret to success is developing strong legal skills, empathy and communication, and maintaining a professional and ethical approach.

What do you love most about working at CLM?

The people. I have made many friendships at Cooney Lees Morgan.

What are your future ambitions?

I would like to continue to progress as a Legal Executive in the firm and to eventually become an Associate….and/or win lotto.

Marley Orr – Registered Legal Executive

What does this promotion mean to you?

It makes me proud of how far I have come in a short amount of time.

What is the secret to your success?

Hard work and a having a great support system, at work and in life in general.

What do you love most about working at CLM?

The team I work with. They are always willing to take the time to assist whenever I need guidance.

What sacrifices have you had to make to get to where you are today?

Initially, hours of study which meant less time with my daughter.