Lester Aldridge

30 years of Lester Aldridge – Interview with Vicki Chant

Vicki Chant is a Trust Administration Manager in the Private Client team at Lester Aldridge and is celebrating an incredible 30 years of service with the firm today. We caught up with Vicki to find out more about her career at Lester Aldridge.

When did you join the firm and in what role? How has your role changed over the years?

I joined the firm on 1 July 1991 as a secretary in the Private Client team working for a legal executive. I wasn't busy enough and when Barry Glazier's PA was leaving, I asked if I could work for him. I had previously worked for a large firm of solicitors in London and was PA to the senior partner of the commercial property team so I enjoyed a challenge. I worked as Barry's PA for 9½ years and during this time he was also the managing partner. Whilst working for Barry, I was also the firm's training coordinator and worked for one other fee earner for some of the time – it was extremely busy.

I was promoted to Trust Administrator for the team over 20 years ago and am now the Trust Administration Manager. I also assist with deputyship matters. My role is quite compliance-driven because there are a lot of regulations governing trust work and we have to follow rules and regulations set by the Office of the Public Guardian and Court of Protection for deputyship work.

How have you seen Lester Aldridge change since you joined?

There have been huge changes at LA since I joined in 1991 and I can't believe I've been here for 30 years - I would probably have got less for murder! When I first joined, the Private Client and Conveyancing teams were on the same floor as there weren't that many of us. I have seen so many people come and go, and have made some really good friends and even though some of them have left we still keep in touch. I have also seen many people retire and sadly some of those are no longer with us. It was a much smaller firm in the 1990s to what it is today.

How has technology changed over the years and how has this

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impacted your role?

Hugely! The day I started I was shown to my desk and in front of me was a Wang computer. I had used a computer in my previous jobs in London and locally, but never a Wang. In those days (that makes me sound so old!), you didn't get taught how to use a system, have an induction or spend a day training as people do now. I didn't know the first thing about how to use the Wang but soon got the hang of it.

There were no precedents to refer to as we do now. All research was done by either looking at books or looking at old files for documents that we could use as templates. There was no internet either. We had to type everything from scratch and Wills were sewn up with a bodger (used to make the holes), a large needle and green tape, rather than being bound up – I think I can still remember how to do that!

Some dictation was done on old fashioned reel-to-reel tapes - hands up if anyone still remembers them! We also had a Telex machine – not many of you will even know what that is!!

Technology has had a huge impact on my day-to-day working practices and has improved it no end.

What's your favourite part of the job?

Helping people. Whether it's when dealing with trustees, beneficiaries, elderly clients or dealing with an estate. When we get a thank you, it really is appreciated. The worst part is losing clients who you've grown to know really well over so many years and who feel like more than just a client – it's like losing a really good friend.

Describe what LA means to you, on a personal level.

Meeting my husband; work colleagues who are more like family; being encouraged in my career.

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