

POWER PROFILE



Photo: Lau Wai

Susheela Rivers, managing partner of DLA Piper Hong Kong, covers a lot of ground while running a busy law firm, writes **John Cremer**

HIGH-FLYERS

When offered the role of office managing partner for law firm DLA Piper Hong Kong, Susheela Rivers readily accepted, but with one precondition. Keen to maintain close contact with clients, she continues to have day-to-day involvement in deals and transactions as head of the firm's Asia-Pacific real estate practice. She has refined the knack of fitting new commitments and responsibilities into an already hectic schedule. "I always really enjoyed the people element and the deal making that drives business growth for an international law firm," she says. "But now, there is also an opportunity to look at the strategies and direction needed to take an emerging Asian client base worldwide and to empower partners and associates so that can happen." A key aspect to all this, she believes, is to set clear standards and parameters. Those include being agile as an organisation, having a diverse mix of staff and, when necessary, encouraging individuals to take control of their own careers. "These are exciting times as we build more international platform," she says. "To bring people along with me, my leadership style is participatory, but I'm also very focused because time is a luxury."

As the youngest of four siblings, Rivers grew up in the small fishing village of Mersing on the east coast of peninsular Malaysia. Her father, a doctor who met her mother while studying in Hong Kong, worked there as a general practitioner, and the surroundings made for an idyllic early childhood, close to the beach and free to roam with friends. Opting for all science A-levels, her initial plan was to study medicine, but two factors prompted a change. Firstly, the path to law looked a bit shorter; secondly, an elder brother had already got into medical school thereby taking that "role". "Also, I was good at English and debating and, in the end, I liked what law offered: the ability to verbalise thoughts and convey a message accurately." Accepted to study law at Queen Mary College in London, she moved to England in 1987, little suspecting she'd be there for the next 20 years or more. Perhaps inevitably, the first few months were a something of a shock to the system. "I had 'Asian eyes' going overseas realised there was a lot to learn," Rivers says. "But I came to like the freedom and bravado and was excited to be in a centre of excellence where the teachers had written some of the textbooks. I also liked the discipline and thought process of studying law, particularly jurisprudence. There is the element of intellectualism in seeing that everything has two sides to it."

After a year at Chancery Lane and two more as an articulated clerk in Lincoln's Inn, Rivers joined Clifford Chance and chose to specialise in real estate investment and securitisation, acting over the next 15 years for many of Britain's leading property developers and investors. In parallel, she had married and had four children, benefiting from far-sighted employer policies which allowed mothers to have flexible hours and take on a reduced workload when essential. So, when an offer came in 2008 to join DLA Piper in Hong Kong, there was much to consider, but fortunately everything fell into place. "In terms of work, the initial challenge is to adapt what you know to an Asian client base," she says. "They have preferences when doing deals, so as a 'value-add' lawyer, you have to provide something extra." Having to keep numerous balls in the air, Rivers has necessarily become quite an expert at delegation, prioritising and finding workable compromises. For her, the secret is to manage expectations. "Happiness is a choice, so embrace the career you have chosen and find ways to manage the demands of our work and personal lives," she says. "Also, have a sense of purpose, be calm and know your limits, and if something doesn't go right, be forgiving of yourself."

For the full story visit www.cpjobs.com/hk/highfliers

CAREER TRACKER



Naveet McMahon
China Money Network
McMahon joins China Money Network as managing partner and part of the company's founding team. Before joining CMN, she was the publisher and director of sales, Asia-Pacific at Remark, the market research and events division of Acuris. Prior to that, she held management roles at both *FinanceAsia* and *Euroweek*, based in Hong Kong.



Steven Lo
Citi Private Bank
Lo has been appointed regional head of Citi Private Bank for Asia, effective February 1, 2018, based in Hong Kong. He has extensive private banking experience at Citi Private Bank and has been the global market manager for Hong Kong since 2010, responsible for managing and developing the bank's business in the SAR.



Zijian Yang
Schroders
Yang has been appointed multi-asset fund manager for Schroders' Asian business. He joins from Allianz Global Investors Asia-Pacific, where he was a senior portfolio manager. Wang has over nine years of industry experience, working as a portfolio manager in Hong Kong and Europe for a variety of different funds and holds a PhD in computational finance.

Sponsored by

EXECUTIVE SEARCH & HR SOLUTIONS
T: 2980 1169 F: 2869 4410
Email: exec-search@hk.tricorglobal.com
Website: www.hk.tricorglobal.com



Send your latest appointments to **careertracker** @ **classifiedpost.com**

NEWS BITS



In a first, New York bans salary questions to fight gender pay gap
NEW YORK - New York, in an effort to combat the gender pay gap, has become the first US city to ban employers from asking job applicants about previous salaries. City officials say asking about past salaries perpetuates unequal pay levels. Those found in infraction of the new law will be subject to fines of up to US \$250,000 (HK\$1.95 million). *Reuters*



Massachusetts panel seeks regional talks on daylight savings change
BOSTON - A special commission in Massachusetts has recommended against switching to year-round daylight saving time - and ending the practise of moving clocks forward and back twice a year - unless neighbouring states also go along. "Any move should be regional, because acting alone would make Massachusetts a major outlier, and could disrupt commerce, trade, and interstate transport," the report says. *AP*



British charity Oxfam dismisses 22 staff over sexual abuse
LONDON - Aid agency Oxfam said it had dismissed 22 members of staff over allegations of sexual abuse in the past year, as campaigners called on governments to strengthen oversight of aid groups they fund. Oxfam said it dealt with 87 claims of sexual exploitation and abuse involving its workers in the year ending April 2017, a 36 per cent increase on the previous year. The charity employs more than 5,000 people.

Photos: AFP/AP/Franke Tsang

FEATURE

Even if you hate your job, leave it gracefully

If you are planning on leaving a job where you are miserable over the coming year, whatever you do, suck it up and plan for a graceful exit. Rule number one: Stay off social media. Too many people give into their negative feelings on the way to their next job and commit career suicide by trashing their former employer, says Cornelia Shipley, a speaker and an executive coach with more than 20 years' experience training clients on how to formulate personal and professional goals. "They either get really excited about the new opportunity and say, 'I'm outta here.' Or they are so angry and hurt, that they operate out of that hurt and do things that are destructive to them," says Shipley. "They try to win the hearts and minds of the general public through Facebook 'likes' or 'retweets' instead of focusing on what they truly want." Even if you can't stand the boss, taking the high road is critical to managing a career for the long game. That could mean decades. The world has changed from the days where you got a job for life, stayed in the same house and waited for retirement. Gig economy workers hop from one job to another constantly. You may hold many jobs by the time you retire, so be sure you leave good feelings in your wake.

Just because you are leaving the company does not mean you are leaving your relationships behind

"If you would like to have a good life and land well, take revenge out of the equation," advises Shipley, who worked for several years at Fortune 500 companies. The story your employer will tell about you is key. They don't have to love you, but you don't want them bad-mouthing you either. That's the kiss of death. "People are moving every day in the new economy," says Shipley, author of the book *Design Your Life*. "If you burn a bridge with your old employer, that bridge may wind up at your dream job and they will not hire you." So if you hate your job and are leaving, read this before you do something rash: decide how to tell your boss. Every organisation is different, but generally it is best to inform your boss in person and well in advance. Make sure you thank your supervisor. Craft a clear story. You are going to have to tell those you are working with at

some point. Work with your employer to decide when, what and how your colleagues will be notified you are leaving. Make sure you authentically express your appreciation for working with colleagues and leave things on a high note wherever possible. Say thank you. Just because you are leaving the company does not mean you are leaving your relationships behind. Make sure you thank your mentors and sponsors and craft a plan to stay in touch. You never know when or how your paths may cross in the future. Have a transition plan. Make sure you don't leave your team or employer in the lurch. Make yourself available in the event it takes time to find your replacement and be willing to train someone to bridge the gap until a back fill can be found. Work until your last day; minimise the amount of disruption your departure may create and focus on delivering quality work until your last day. *The Washington Post*



Photo: Thinkstock

Thomas Heath is a local business reporter and columnist in the Washington Metropolitan area.

For our doctors' previous diagnoses, visit www.cpjobs.com/hk/careerdoctor. You can also send your job-related queries there, which might be picked for publication.

Contact us

Business Director
Cecilia Kwok
cecilia.kwok@scmp.com

Subeditor
Oliver Farry
oliver.farry@scmp.com

Senior Content Manager
Yvonne Luk
yvonne.luk@scmp.com

Assistant Project Editor
Kenice Kwok
kenice.kwok@scmp.com

Art Director
Candy Lai
candy.lai@scmp.com

Classified Ads Sales 2565 8822

Printed and published by South China Morning Post Publishers Limited, Morning Post Centre, 22 Dai Fat Street, Tai Po Industrial Estate, Tai Po, New Territories, Hong Kong, Tel: 2680 8888

facebook.com/classifiedpost