

# Summer Clerk Testimonials

by Kyle Scott

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In the lead up to the summer clerkship application process, most firms went to considerable lengths to differentiate themselves from other firms and emphasise their respective selling points to the hundreds of students clamouring for that elusive clerkship. With all the firms making lofty promises of everything from meaningful work to “real” work/life balance, it was difficult to work out which firms actually deliver these things. In the end, how different can commercial law firms be?

“Harmers is far from a typical law firm”

My experience at Harmers Workplace Lawyers has shown me that Harmers is far from a typical law firm. The firm’s principles and approach to lawyering is progressive, and its approach to managing its people is even more so. As advisors to workplaces on issues of people management, the firm seeks to practice what it preaches to its clients by adopting best practice people management processes. ‘Full-firm’ consultation and full information sharing is at the heart of the Harmers approach.

The practical relevance of all this to me as a summer clerk is that I have been involved in many aspects of the firm that I would otherwise not have access to. For example, myself and another clerk joined the Business Development Committee where we sat around the table with partners and management and contributed ideas about the firm’s marketing strategy.

I have been impressed with the investment Harmers provides to its people in terms of training and development. As well as weekly staff training sessions for all legal staff, the extensive summer clerk induction program continued right throughout the clerkship period and provided valuable insight, not just on legal topics but on all aspects of life as a lawyer.

During my time as a clerk I worked with some of the most respected employment lawyers in the country on interesting matters, and I’m happy to say I did very little photocopying! A snapshot of some of the work I was involved in included researching the legality of terminating an employee for sleeping on the job, assisting a solicitor to interview alleged perpetrators of workplace bullying and assessing the implications of good faith bargaining requirements under the Fair Work Bill.

And while the work was varied and interesting, it was the people who really made the difference. The open-door approach combined with the size of the firm allowed me to quickly get to know everyone and feel like part of the team. The various coffee outings and Friday night drinks also helped to build these relationships socially as well as professionally. On top of this, Harmers’ casual dress policy made the working environment relaxed and comfortable.

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After 11 enjoyable weeks, I have only positive things to say about Harmers, and I would thoroughly recommend it as a fantastic firm to do a summer clerkship with, particularly for those people who appreciate the “Harmers difference”.