

# 'Law Practice is About Solving People's Problems'

My name is Tiwalola Osazuwa. I am currently a Senior Associate in AELEX's Corporate & Commercial Practice, with a focus on intellectual property, insurance and mergers & acquisitions.

Over the course of my career, I have advised numerous indigenous and multinational clients, on a wide range of corporate and commercial issues, including the protection of intellectual property rights; facultative insurance and reinsurance; measures for combating anti-counterfeiting; foreign investments and business set up; and merger & acquisitions.

I obtained my LL.B from the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife in 2009, and I was called to the Nigerian Bar in 2010. I am a member of the International Trademark Association, where I served on the Issues Identification Committee for two years, and I currently serve on the Trademark Office Practice Committee. I am also a member of the International Bar Association and serve on the Franchise Law Committee, Intellectual Property and Entertainment Law Committee, and the Mergers & Acquisitions Committee. As a member of the American Bar Association, I serve on the Intellectual Property Group and the Forum on Franchising.

## **Have you had any challenges in your career as a Lawyer, and if so, what were the main challenges?**

Yes. I have experienced some challenges. The most notable challenge has been maintaining the right balance between my responsibilities as a new mother with my career as a Lawyer. Following my return from maternity leave early last year, I had to catch up with all the work that had been done in the time I was away, mainly because I had been supervising the intellectual property team. I also felt the pressure to hit the ground running.

When you work at a top tier firm, there



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is a lot to do and working late is sometimes inevitable. This means that I had to juggle being able to meet my client deadlines, with being available for my child. This challenge has now been significantly resolved with a lot of support from AELEX. With an understanding of the challenges that we mothers face with managing care for our children and being able to concentrate on work, the firm provided a facility where our children can be cared for by our nannies.

## **What was your worst day as a Lawyer?**

I have definitely had some bad days, but none of them are memorable enough to mention.

## **What was your most memorable experience as a Lawyer?**

I moderated a table topic on franchising at the 2015 annual meeting of the International

Trademark Association in San Diego, California. I was five years post-call at the time, and I had applied to moderate by making a submission on franchising.

The International Trademark Association is a worldwide not-for-profit advocacy association of trademark owners and Lawyers. It has about 7,000 members from almost 200 countries.

## **Who has been most influential person in your life?**

My Parents have been very influential in my life. They are very hardworking people who taught my siblings and I, to distinguish ourselves by striving to be the best.

In my professional life, Mr. Theophilus Emuwa, the Partner who heads the Corporate Commercial and Intellectual Property Practice Groups of AELEX, has been the most influential. I have worked closely with him over the years, and learned a lot of what I know as a Lawyer from him. One of the most valuable things I have learned from him, is that it is not enough to know the law (as clients can always pick up a copy of the law to read it). I learned that as a Business Lawyer, it is important to be able to understand the client's goal, and then advice on how it can be achieved legally.

I have also been influenced by my husband, Nosa Osazuwa and Chinyerugo Ugoji (both more senior Lawyers), who have provided valuable advice and guidance, which has contributed significantly to my growth as a Lawyer.

## **Why did you become a Lawyer?**

I wish I could say that I read law for a noble reason like solving people's legal problems or something along those lines but that is not the case.

I was mostly influenced by other people,

who thought that I had a natural flair for law. From my junior year in secondary school, I was a member of the debating team, and I always led the team in debate competitions which we mostly won. This made my teachers, always say that I would be suited for legal practice. Also, my parents considered me to be talkative, and would say that I was a "Lawyer in the making".

To top all of these, I read one of my Mum's novels written by Sidney Sheldon - the Rage of Angels, and I was inspired by one of the characters who was a world-class Lawyer, and that did it for me.

## **What would be your advice to anyone wanting a career in law?**

The practice of law is not just about the knowledge of law itself, it is mostly about solving people's problems or aiding them in achieving their business goals. Once you have this understanding, you are on your way to becoming a great lawyer.

## **If you had not become a Lawyer, what career would you have chosen?**

I am not really sure, because I was one of those for whom it was law or nothing. Though when I was younger, I had wanted to be an Aeronautical Engineer, because my uncle was a pilot. I am not sure that I even really understood what an Aeronautical Engineer did.

However, towards the end of my junior year, I had made up my mind that it was Law or nothing.

## **Where do you see yourself in ten years?**

I will be a Partner in a top tier firm, and be actively involved in the development of the law, particularly in my areas of practice. I also hope to be a role model for younger Lawyers.