



TRAINEE INSIGHTS JANE ROGERS | PODCAST TRANSCRIPT



Kwasi Yeboah



Emilio Fabrizi



Jane Rogers

Kwasi Yeboah: Welcome to our *Trainee Insights* podcast series, home of discussions about life as a trainee or junior lawyer at Ropes & Gray in London. This podcast is for anyone who has an interest in building a successful career at the firm’s London office.

Emilio Fabrizi: We seek to provide you with insights into the culture of our firm, and practical advice about how to excel as a trainee, or make an application to Ropes & Gray London.

Kwasi Yeboah: Today, we are pleased to be joined by none other than Jane Rogers.

Emilio Fabrizi: Jane is the acting head of the London office at Ropes & Gray, and a partner in the finance group. She’s also a member of the firm’s policy committee, and previously co-head of the firm’s global finance practice. Jane plays a key part in driving the culture and strategy of the London office.

Kwasi Yeboah: Jane, thank you very much for joining us today. We can’t even imagine how many things you’re juggling at the moment, but how are you doing generally?

Jane Rogers: I am great, thanks. I’m really delighted to be here and have a chance to speak to you and Emilio here on the podcast—great to be here.

Kwasi Yeboah: Jane, you’ve been recognized in quite a number of directories for your work, including *The Lawyer*

“Hot 100”, and you’re regarded as one of the most experienced hired lawyers in the city. From your perspective, what are the key attributes required to operate as a commercial lawyer at the very top of your game, especially at a firm like Ropes & Gray?

Jane Rogers: Well, thanks for that. I think it’s really about a combination of demonstrating a depth of legal expertise and a strategic understanding of your client’s business. The base really has to be substantive knowledge, and then being able to apply that knowledge to provide legal advice and solve problems through the lens of the client’s business goals. I would add to that, being versatile—not shying away from challenges, and recognizing and adapting to changing market conditions, which we face all of the time. I think those are really the key things.

Emilio Fabrizi: Great. I think those insights are incredibly important, and I think especially to junior lawyers and office trainees, as so much of the job goes beyond just doing the legal work. I think touching on being versatile, and able to adapt and meet your clients’ needs in various situations, not just on the legal points, is incredibly important. As a junior lawyer, the sooner you can realize that and build that level of expertise, it can only help you have this fruitful and long legal career.

I think another question, which would be useful to our listeners, is: What are the key aspects of Ropes & Gray’s strategy in London? Could you outline some of the key things that the firm is doing currently in order to fulfill their strategy? We understand, and I think most of our listeners do, that Ropes has a leading private equity and finance practice, but quite recently has been building on a lot of other practice areas such as asset management, life sciences, restructuring, whilst maintaining good advisory and contentious practices overall. So, how do all of these things tie together in respect towards the growth and strategy of the London office?

Jane Rogers: Your question touches on a number of really important themes for Ropes & Gray London. I would say that a key aspect of our strategy is focusing on market-leading practices that address the most complex and sophisticated client needs. You've just mentioned some of those really core offerings that fit that description, and that we've worked really hard to develop in London. So, working with private equity sponsors in their investments across a broad range of industries and geographies. Structuring and executing complex financings for those private equity sponsors, as well as for corporates and for major banks. And thinking about asset management, we advise a global client base of asset management firms across the spectrum of investment strategies and asset classes. Then importantly, the additional practices that are really important to the types of clients that we want to serve, so that includes our excellent tech practice, our regulatory capabilities, competition, anti-corruption, and, of course, data privacy, which is of increasing importance. It's these types of cross-disciplinary offerings that we are continuing to grow in London, and that are part of what I think provides such a dynamic experience for our trainees and associates—that you're talking about how important it is as a junior lawyer to really start understanding the legal aspects of the practice, as well as client needs. I think having these types of offerings and the types of client base that we do at Ropes & Gray London really lends itself and helps demonstrate what I think is the tangible energy and excitement that we have and the growth, and in the market impact that we are having here in London. Creating that experience helps us achieve the key strategic goal of attracting and retaining the best legal talent, which is really important, obviously, to what we do as a law firm.

Kwasi Yeboah: From a trainee perspective, that cross-disciplinary approach and that very focused strategy has been very much apparent in each of the departments that I've sat in. I'm pretty sure it was the same for Emilio as well, in that you really are exposed to some of the best practitioners in each of those practice areas. Each day is unique and different, and you work on transactions, which will always have these nuances that you've not particularly seen before. I think all of those things really come together and give you a holistic training experience, where you start

to develop your knowledge of nuanced technical, and at times, specialist legal points from a very early stage, so I think that's highly beneficial to the training process.

Jane Rogers: I feel we've been really successful, I am happy to say, in being able to attract great legal talent. You guys are great examples of the fantastic trainees and the junior associates that we have at Ropes & Gray, so I hope we're being successful in that, and continue to do so.

Kwasi Yeboah: I think we've definitely benefited from that strategy. So, with all of this in mind, how would you say Ropes & Gray stands out from its competitors in the London market?

Jane Rogers: We've already discussed some of our differentiating factors in terms of the practices, or what I view as differentiating factors in terms of the great practices and clients that we have. I would say that one of our real strengths is our ability to collaborate as a firm, and that's with our lawyers across practice groups and across offices—I think that truly sets us apart. We field the best teams for our clients. We share market intelligence and client opportunities among our lawyers. And we really are fully integrated in a way that allows us to provide seamless service to our clients. I may be biased, just slightly, but I think we do that in a way, and I think our lawyers, and our practices, and our clients are really the best in London.

Kwasi Yeboah: Ropes & Gray is truly distinct in that we have a special set of clients, and these unique specialist teams that we can pull out. I think that's probably the case as a global firm across all of our offices, but I suppose how does the strategy and approach of our London office, in particular, fit in with the global Ropes & Gray brand, especially in the U.S.? And what are the opportunities and challenges that we have as a firm that's part of a wider global unit?

Jane Rogers: Those are really good questions. I would say that the London strategy, as we have been discussing it, is completely aligned with and, in my view and in others' views, core to really achieving our goals as a global firm. Our strategy as a firm involves maintaining and further bolstering our position as a preeminent global law firm. The practices and offerings that we've been discussing as our focus in London are also absolutely critical to our firm's

strategy. In addition to our focus on high-profile, cutting edge work for the great clients that we've been talking about as well, we continually seek to maintain, and I would say even leverage, our values—those values that are really important to us as a firm. And what are those? I would say integrity, high performance, collaboration, which we've talked a little bit about, and mutual respect among our lawyers. As well as a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, which I think is really fundamental to who we are as a firm, and to our identity. I think all of those attributes are other differentiating factors for our firm, our lawyers, our practices, and I think they also drive the success of our firm—the way we think about our culture and our values, and translating that into business success. In London, in particular, as part of a global firm, of course, we're able to draw from the stature and resources of a major international law firm, while still fostering what I think we have maintained in London, which is that entrepreneurial spirit within a cohesive and supportive environment. So, I think those are really the way I think about how London fits into the broader Ropes & Gray global network.

Emilio Fabrizi: Even though we're obviously founded in Boston and have a plethora of U.S. offices, as well as offices in Asia, I think the growth of the London office has been quite unique and special, and incredibly natural. I think Ropes' strategy has been the right one, and has grown at I think what's a very steady, but fair rate. We can see that in terms of the trainee intake being increased, and our practice is increasing in size at the right level, where we're not jumping the gun and trying to run before we can walk. I think that definitely benefits our clients as we grow and work alongside them.

I think the final question for us is: Being a member of the firm's policy committee, how would you describe the culture at Ropes & Gray? And what are some of the steps that we're putting in place to maintain and develop this unique Ropes & Gray culture? Because I think something that makes Ropes incredibly special, and you touched on this, is that everyone is quite entrepreneurial. But I think something which I've noticed at Ropes, compared to other places which I applied in terms of law firms, is that Ropes is truly a meritocratic practice, where irrespective of your level, if you show commitment and work hard,

opportunities are afforded to you. I think this podcast is a great example of that. So, how does the firm maintain this culture and level that it has?

Jane Rogers: That's also a really great question, and I love hearing you talk about that. I have to say, you're absolutely right. The fact that you have done, as we were chatting a bit before we got started, I think it's amazing that the two of you have put this together, and took the initiative to do that, and have put some great material together for the website, and for potential trainees and junior lawyers to consider, so well done. And you're absolutely right—we value excellence at Ropes & Gray, and we value taking that type of initiative. We are happy to give our young lawyers as much responsibility as they are ready to handle, while making sure that they feel that they have resources, support, and supervision around them at the right level, of course, as well.

I've been at Ropes & Gray almost my entire career, so I have strong feelings about our culture. A lot of law firms talk about culture, but I certainly know that when we talk about it, we mean it. I already talked about taking some of our values and turning those into business success, but it's even more than that. I think we all spend a lot of time working really hard at law firms, and it's nice to be able to experience collegiality and the support that I think we find really important at Ropes & Gray. I think on an additional level, you will often hear partners of Ropes & Gray talking about stewardship, which means we're striving to leave a better firm for the next generation of lawyers who are coming through, and that we know are talented, and we want to help develop their excellence. We want to provide the best career development and opportunities for our trainees and our associates, and these are all the things that we really embrace as a firm. We talk about them, but I think we live them as well. You asked the question, "How do we nurture this, and how do we sustain our culture?" And that's really hard. I think it really has to do with our people at Ropes & Gray. Teamwork and mentorship are celebrated—they're rewarded. We're always looking for lawyers who share these values and who will really thrive in this type of environment. So, thank you for being great examples of the things that we talk about all the time at Ropes & Gray.

Kwasi Yeboah: You mentioned our people, and if there's anything we've learned on this podcast is that we have this collegiate culture that's made up of a range of very talented and unique characters. We know that you, for instance, have worked at our Boston office previously before moving to London, so perhaps you can tell us a little bit about what Ropes & Gray's Boston office is like? And now as a long-term resident in London, what would you say is your favorite thing about the city?

Jane Rogers: I grew up, professionally that is, in our Boston office, so it will always be a special place for me. It has a different feel, of course. It's a much larger office—many more people. We started out in Boston—have been there a long time. But what's nice about it is, again, we have a lot of consistency across our people at Ropes & Gray, and so you can go to the Boston office and it has a different feel in many ways, but at the same time you're going to find the same sorts of people and who share your values, and so that is great about our Boston office. I always enjoy catching up with the colleagues when I'm there—that's obviously critical. I will add that the visitor office that I always try to use has a perfect view of Fenway Park, which is a huge plus. But I have loved living in London for the past

11 years. There are too many great things to really name a single favorite—the culture, the food, the parks, how easy it is to travel to other parts of the world, as well. While I loved my experience in Boston, and enjoy going back very much to visit Boston and our offices in other cities, I feel really fortunate to be able to do what I do at Ropes & Gray while living here in London—it's amazing.

Emilio Fabrizi: That's definitely pleasing to hear that you've enjoyed the transition over, and that notably for me, something that I didn't know, is that the Ropes & Gray Boston visitor's office has a good view of Fenway Park.

Jane Rogers: You can see the crowds, and the Green Monster, and it's fantastic, so you'll have to check it out when you're there.

Emilio Fabrizi: Jane, it's been fantastic speaking with you today. Thank you to our listeners—we hope you have enjoyed the discussion. For more information about Ropes & Gray in London, including career opportunities, please visit ropesgrayrecruiting.com/UK. Please follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#), both @RopesGrayGrads, and feel free to get in touch with us via those social media handles if you have any questions or thoughts for future episodes.

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