



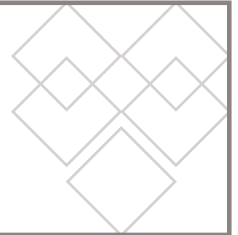
Environmental, Social & Governance 2024



PROFILED:

HEATHER GAGEN

Travers Smith



**TRIVERS.
SMITH**



Environmental, Social
& Governance



HEATHER GAGEN

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PERSONAL BIOGRAPHY

Heather Gagen is head of Travers Smith's ESG & impact group, and head of the dispute resolution practice. She has a holistic understanding of the evolving ESG regulatory and operational issues businesses need to manage. She also brings extensive experience of acting on large-scale and high-profile ESG-related litigation, including novel parent company liability claims, as well as offering preventative counselling to clients facing potential ESG-related risk.

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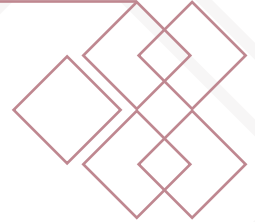
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Q&A WITH HEATHER GAGEN

**Could you provide an insight into how you approach your work? What drives and motivates you?**

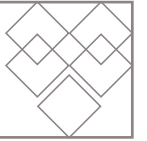
◆ I genuinely love my job – the intellectual stretch, the opportunity to immerse myself in my clients’ businesses, and the need to communicate clearly, persuasively and empathetically. This means I bring enthusiasm, hunger and energy to my work. I am stimulated by working in new and rapidly developing areas of law like environmental, social and governance (ESG), because this demands innovative and pragmatic problem solving. As a woman holding senior leadership roles in my firm, I am also highly motivated by a desire to demonstrate that it is possible to fulfil your professional ambitions alongside having a young family, and to support and inspire others to reach their full potential. I do that by being honest about where the challenges and compromises lie, and where the huge reward and fulfilment can be found, so that people can make informed choices and be confident in themselves to pursue their professional ambitions.

What strengths and characteristics do you, your team and your firm strive to demonstrate to clients?

◆ As our track record shows in ESG, we are at our best working at the cutting edge in rapidly developing areas. We focus on being technically best in class but highly practical in our approach. Our advice takes account of every nuance of the law but gives clear recommendations, grounded in common sense and operational realities, to our clients. I know our clients see, from the way we work with them and each other, that we are highly collaborative – it is in our DNA as a firm, and we get better results because of it. We take our work incredibly seriously, but not ourselves – I think clients really like that about us. Personally, I like to think I bring to the table

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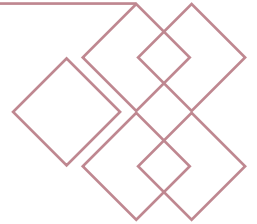
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a highly strategic mind, a great deal of emotional intelligence and a strong sense of humour.

Reflecting on your area of expertise, how do you see this sphere of the market shaping up over the coming months? Are any exciting trends or developments on the horizon?

◆ Businesses are navigating an incoming wave of ESG regulation that brings mandatory disclosure and due diligence requirements. At the same time, they are facing the commercial pressures of political and economic instability globally which can make it difficult to develop and implement long-term strategies around ESG. This means that boardroom focus on ESG will inevitably increase, but businesses will want to take a variety of approaches – depending on their geographic footprint, sector and commercial ambitions. They will need to decide if they will see ESG through a compliance lens, or whether they want to use the regulatory framework as a springboard to achieve more ambitious sustainability goals. I also expect the trend to continue of businesses being held to account, whether by regulators, in court or the media, for their record on ESG. They must have this front of mind in developing their strategy and approach to sustainability. ■

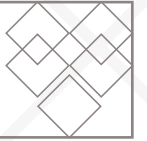


“BOARDROOM FOCUS ON ESG WILL INEVITABLY INCREASE, BUT BUSINESSES WILL WANT TO TAKE A VARIETY OF APPROACHES – DEPENDING ON THEIR GEOGRAPHIC FOOTPRINT, SECTOR AND COMMERCIAL AMBITIONS.”



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REPRESENTATIVE ENGAGEMENTS

- ◆ Leading the defence of two separate sets of proceedings against Camellia plc and two of its English subsidiaries involving novel ‘parent company liability’ claims. These involved alleged human rights abuses in the operations of two overseas subsidiaries of the Camellia group in Kenya and Malawi respectively.
- ◆ Part of development and delivery team for Travers Smith’s ESG Academy, ‘Sustainability Insights’, an online training programme designed for clients which offers market-leading knowledge and experience on a wide range of key sustainability topics.
- ◆ Chair of ThoughtLeaders4’s ESG Litigation Summit 2024.
- ◆ Speaker at Legal 500/Legal Business’s ESG Summit 2024.
- ◆ ‘Recommended Individual’ in Legal 500’s UK Green Guide 2024.

