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Marian Boyle is a partner in the London office of Sullivan & Worcester, and heads the UK insurance and disputes practices. She works closely with the firm's established trade and export finance team, and U.S.-based disputes team, offering advice on insurance, risk management, and commercial dispute resolution.

Sullivan & Worcester is an international law firm with offices in the US (Boston, New York, and Washington DC) and in the UK (London). In London, the firm focuses on trade, export and project finance as well as insurance and dispute resolution. The firm's lawyers are hands-on, business savvy and straightforward, and completely committed to their clients' interests.

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If you had to explain your job to a child, how would you describe what you do?

In the olden days, when people had disagreements about things, they often ended up having a fight. My job is to help people sort out their disagreements, without anyone fighting or getting hurt. Sometimes this means we have to go to court, but not always.

The theme of this year's IWD campaign is **#BalanceforBetter** – what does this mean for you and your company?

For female lawyers in particular, "balance" is often about juggling the competing demands of work and home. The reality of private practice within a law firm, particularly in dispute resolution and transactional finance where workloads can be very unpredictable, is that many women leave between qualification (where there is usually a good gender balance) and partnership (which is often very unbalanced).

There will be lots of different reasons for women choosing alternatives to private practice, but it seems that balancing work and home life is often a driving factor. Retaining talent is very important for law firms such as Sullivan & Worcester and we strive to find ways to enable allemployees, women and men, to achieve a better balance by embracing flexible working arrangements and developing alternative career paths to suit the needs of individual team members.

For law firms that help their teams achieve more balance, the "better" element in #BalanceforBetter comes from the tangible benefits of retaining highly skilled team members and, over time, having more gender balance at all levels.

What is the one thing you would advise women to do, if they aspire to be leading managers?

Invest in themselves by focusing on personal skills and self value – such as tackling any imposter syndrome or guilt; managing your time and stress levels; develop good sleeping and healthy living habits; and learning to say no. You will live for decades and can re-invent yourself or your roles/paths/jobs many times. Balance your life span – you don't have to do it all in 5 minutes!