

Profile: Les Wigan

Chief Operating Officer of Kayo Sports

CAMLA Young Lawyers representative and co-secretary for 2019, Calli Tsipidis, recently caught up with Les Wigan, to discuss his career, role as Chief Operating Officer of Kayo Sports in Sydney and the challenges of the digital landscape both past and present.



CALLI TSIPIDIS: Congratulations on the (now not-so-recent) launch of Kayo! Can you give us an 'elevator pitch' – what is Kayo?

LES WIGAN: Kayo Sports is a multi-sports streaming service that launched in November 2018 to provide Australians a new way to experience sport. It features over 50 sports live and instantly streamed, with the best from Australia including AFL, NRL, Cricket, A-League and Supercars as well as international favourites such as NBA, NFL, NHL, Formula 1, MLB, European football and plenty more. The service has game-changing features and a personalised experience, which enables fans to watch when and how they want, anywhere in Australia, at an affordable price point.

TSIPIDIS: Can you tell me bit about your role as Chief Operating Officer of Kayo? What is a 'normal day in the office' for you (if there is such a thing)?

WIGAN: Well we are only a few months old so each day is still full of new and exciting challenges. My focus is working with individual teams to ensure we are giving our customers the best sports streaming experience possible. This can range from reviewing and implementing real-time feedback from customers, through to planning how we showcase upcoming sporting events.

TSIPIDIS: Kayo is a real game-changer for sports fans, so we can only imagine the immense amount of work that went into the product before its successful launch last November. What was the most interesting part of your role leading up to Kayo's launch?

WIGAN: We are really proud of the Kayo experience, it's taken a lot of hard work from many people across different teams. One of the most interesting and challenging aspects of my role was how we recruited and brought together a group of people and created the right team culture to take an idea and turn it into a reality over a short period of time.

TSIPIDIS: You have previously worked across News Corp and Fox Sports looking over and managing the digital strategies of both organisations. The digital landscape has changed so much, even just in the last 5 years. What do you think has been the biggest challenger to the digital media landscape in recent times?

WIGAN: That's a difficult question to answer as you are right, the landscape has changed so much, and it does feel like it's only going to accelerate. In terms of the digital media landscape, one of the biggest challenges is the competition for customers' time, they have so many more options, be it a broader range of media content, social media, and so on. Therefore getting and retaining their attention is becoming increasingly more challenging.

TSIPIDIS: Your career has placed you at the centre of very significant developments in sports media. What do you think is on the horizon for Australian sports media, in particular?

WIGAN: Australians love their sport and I think if we can keep investing and developing in how we get sports fans closer to the sports they love, then I am optimistic about the future of Australian sports media.

TSIPIDIS: What are you most excited about in terms of upcoming digital and technological developments, in general and for Kayo, specifically?

WIGAN: We are working on new ways to give sports fans a more immersive sports streaming experience. For example, we are the only place where you can watch up to four sports at once on a single screen, or deep dive into a Supercars or F1 race by using our new RaceView experience. We have big plans to create new experiences that will take sports fan even closer to the game.

TSIPIDIS: Looking back over your career and, in particular, the last 12 months with the launch of Kayo, what is one piece of advice you would give to yourself?

WIGAN: When building and launching a new business, never lose sight or compromise on the primary goal, which in Kayo's case was to deliver a world leading streaming experience with over 50 sports.

TSIPIDIS: What is your favourite feature on Kayo?

WIGAN: That's easy. Splitview. On a Friday night I can follow the Super Rugby, NRL, and AFL all at the same time.

TSIPIDIS: Finally, with over 50 sports available, the all-important question: what are you watching on Kayo?

WIGAN: I have been watching the Queensland Reds, they had a great come from behind win against the Sunwolves recently. My NRL team is the West Tigers, so it was great that they chalked up wins against Manly and the Warriors. I am a big F1 fan, so I am hoping Ricciardo and the Renault team can get some good results over the upcoming season. I'm also looking forward to seeing the Aussies in action at the Cricket World Cup in May and the Rugby World Cup later in the year.



Calli Tsipidis is Junior Legal Counsel at FOX SPORTS Australia