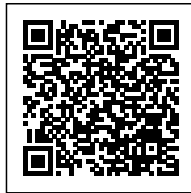


A QUARTER OF GENERAL COUNSEL CONSIDERING QUITTING

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In-house lawyers feeling underpaid, underappreciated and restricted in terms of career progression – some general counsel feel they would receive better training at a law firm
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some general counsel feel they would receive better training at a law firm



One in four in-house lawyers in Spain and Portugal is considering moving into private practice, mainly because they feel they would be better remunerated and have more opportunities to advance their career in a law firm, according to a new survey of general counsel in Iberia.

Research conducted by Iberian Lawyer found that 26 per cent of in-house lawyers had “considered moving into private practice in the last year”. Despite the fact that the majority of in-house lawyers reported that their income had increased in the last year, the most common reason cited for contemplating joining a law firm was the belief that such a move would mean an increase in remuneration. Of those who said they were considering joining private practice,

more than half (52 per cent) said it was because they believed they would be “better remunerated if I worked in private practice”.

8%

Proportion of in-house lawyers in Iberia who said their remuneration had been reduced in the last year

Limited career progression

However, aside from the issue of remuneration, it also appears that there is a feeling among some lawyers that one of the disadvantages of working in-house are that your chances of career progression are limited. Of those thinking of leaving their in-house role, 42 per cent said it was because they would have “more opportunities for career progression in private practice”.

It also seems that some in-house lawyers feel underappreciated by the organisations for which they work. A number of in-house counsel believe that they do not receive enough credit from the other parts of their organisation. Of those considering a move, a total of 26 per cent said they thought the legal department did not receive “the respect it deserves from other parts of the organisation”. Some survey respondents also hinted that law firms provide better training for lawyers than in-house legal departments. One remarked: “Private practice may provide better training and professional development, and would provide better opportunities for a senior lawyer.”

A number of in-house lawyers in Iberia have recently turned their backs on general counsel roles and moved into private practice. Notable moves included Ángela López Molina (a winner at last year’s Iberian Lawyer 40 under Forty Awards) leaving Grupo San José, where she was head of the international legal department, to join DS Ovslaw as Madrid managing partner. Meanwhile, in February this year, it was announced that Mercedes Carmona Mariscal, formerly Iberia legal director at BP, was joining MA Abogados as managing partner.



How much general counsel earn

With regard to the amount in-house lawyers earn, of the Spain-based survey respondents, 13 per cent said they were earning more than €200,000 per year (notably, half of this group worked in the technology or energy sectors). Around 40 per cent said their remuneration was in the €100,000 to €200,000 range.

Nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) of survey respondents said their income had increased in the last year. A further 16 per cent said the last time their income increased was one-to-two years ago, while 21 per cent said that had not received an increase in remuneration for more than two years. Of those respondents who said their salary had increased in the last year, 42 per cent said they had received a 1 or 2 per cent increase. However, 12 per cent said they had received a salary increase of more than 10 per cent in the last 12 months. However, the survey suggests a significant proportion of

general counsel are eyeing career opportunities elsewhere. Meanwhile, 30 per cent of respondents in Spain said their salaries were in the €60,000 to €100,000 category. Around 15 per cent said their remuneration was in the €30,000 to €60,000 range. Regarding in-house lawyer salaries in Portugal, the best paid Portugal-based respondent (who identified herself as female) said her earnings were in the €120,000 to €130,000 range. Overall, 18 per cent of the Portugal-based in-house lawyers who responded to the survey said their salary was in the €100,000 to €130,000 range. Meanwhile, around 40 per cent said their remuneration was in the €60,000 to €100,000 category. A further 40 per cent said they earned salaries in the €30,000 to €60,000 range. **Women underpaid**

Despite the fact the best paid Portugal-based in-house lawyer who participated in our survey was a woman, nearly half of study participants in both Spain and Portugal believe female lawyers are not fairly remunerated. A total of 45 per cent of respondents said they believed female in-house lawyers are paid less than male in-house lawyers “even when they have similar experience/expertise”.

53%

Proportion of in-house lawyers who are not expecting their salary to increase in the next 12 months