

CAPITALISING ON COLLECTIVE INTERNATIONAL AMBITION - DELOITTE

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The globalisation of markets and the need to diversify risk means that expansion is an unavoidable decision – the internationalisation of companies is an unstoppable process. In order to facilitate both clients' national and international ambitions their legal advisers must not only understand their business and be able to facilitate their needs but also share their ambition, says Luis Fernando Guerra, Managing Partner of Deloitte Abogados y Asesores in Spain.

"It is fundamental that a client is able to 'plug into' a very businessoriented way of working. Regardless of whether the need is in Spain or elsewhere, they must be able to utilise legal advice and solutions that are reflective of their own companies' structure and capacities."

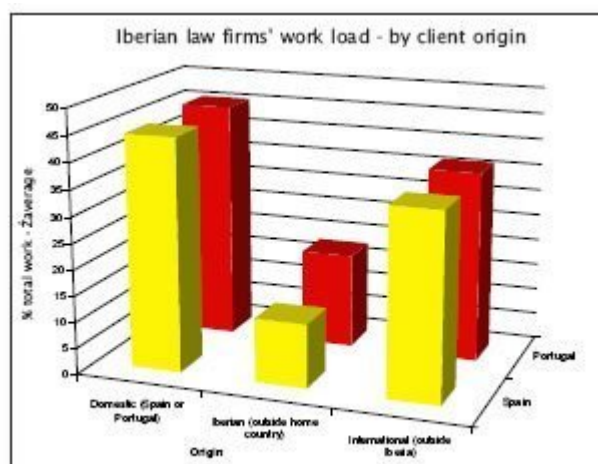
The financial crisis is characterised by a lack of liquidity and financing difficulties and has meant a greater effort by companies to ensure continued profitability and to safeguard investments, he says. For many it has also created greater awareness of new international markets albeit businesses are more carefully assessing their options.

"It is in these moments that the management capacity of enterprises is a differentiator. Those who take advantage of the opportunities and minimise the risk are those who will most likely succeed. It means that their ambition is not limited by the opportunities for development and growth."

Among the prevailing international trends is a significant expansion by Spanish companies in the US and now Brazil, as many look to capitalise on expanding infrastructure needs as well as opportunities in the renewable energy and banking sectors. But there is also the appearance of a new wave of businesses interested in opportunities outside of Spain, he says.

"It is no longer only the largest companies that are expanding abroad. There is a clear desire among more mid-size and family businesses to find new international opportunities – in this sense they are merely taking their management thinking beyond the positive steps already made in increasing efficiency and adjusting cost structures."

There is therefore no longer any "typical" international client, Guerra insists. The geographic focus and level and sophistication of needs of Spanish businesses are constantly evolving. The aim of law firms must therefore be to enable clients to literally "plug in" to a firm's network – not only to facilitate better communication and enable more cost-effective services, but to establish closer working ties and better understand potential future needs.



"Although the crisis is far from over, at the international level we see a much more optimistic scenario. Companies are responding to different needs and rates of economic growth in the markets they are targeting. The aim must always be to facilitate the business need while ensuring the necessary risk management also exists."

The US, for example, is looking to modernise its transport and energy infrastructure, while Brazil needs to build much of what it requires – part of the lawyers' role must be to help clients overcome the different legal and business challenges that each economic stage brings. One of the advantages of his own firm is the culture of multidisciplinary service, he says, encompassing not only legal expertise but tax and compliance also.

"Client management is done from a global perspective. It is the role of the 'Lead Client Service Partner' to act as the guarantor of quality and service regardless of what is required and where the client is in the world.

It is they who coordinate the work and maintain direct communication. Regardless of the services required there is only one point of contact."

Deloitte Abogados y Asesores has therefore invested considerably in ensuring not only the quality of services on offer but also to create and implement effective work and referral processes, says Guerra.

“When a client can rely on truly connected and coordinated teams in different jurisdictions it means that they are able to respond to issues faster as well as better able to react to new challenges as and when and where they arise. However a network is only as good as its weakest link and our challenge therefore is to ensure that clients are able to leverage off the firm's necessary collective expertise and ambition.”