

'CROSS-THINKING' IS KEY FOR ANY LAW FIRM

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Law firms should help their professionals to focus on common goals, create spaces for them to collaborate and incentivise lateral thinking, says Fernando Vives

Innovation is one of the most frequently used words at Garrigues. We continuously consider innovation with regard to how we approach our clients and how we work. Innovation is key to offering an excellent service to our clients, anticipating their needs and assisting and accompanying them in their projects.

In our firm, we are always working on improving and modernising our relationships with clients. We

are also continually seeking to improve and modernise the services we provide them. The best ideas often arise from collaboration between professionals from different areas who do not usually have the chance to interact. In order to create an environment that encourages such collaboration, we have launched the Innovation Think Tank, which is an in-house ideas lab aimed at channeling, in a collective way, the innovative efforts the firm's professionals are already making individually. The aim of this is to boost the exchange of innovative client-oriented ideas and to encourage new ways of thinking and working. All ideas have something to contribute, whether or not they are ultimately implemented.

The think tank includes 112 professionals from the firm, all of whom signed up to the initiative voluntarily. The members of the think tank have very different backgrounds and experience. They hail from the firm's offices in Spain and around the world, they are a variety of ages and they have different responsibilities, which is important because it enables new ways of working to reach all parts of the firm.

The think tank has three key objectives. Firstly it aims to forge an environment that fosters 'cross-thinking' that results in original and inventive ideas with the aim of improving the client experience from a common perspective. Secondly, it seeks to identify the types of people that are most committed to the culture of innovation, which is a long-standing hallmark of our firm. Finally, cooperation between different offices and different countries is helping us to detect new opportunities. All of these objectives are already being achieved within the first few months of the project.

What is cross-thinking? Cross-thinking helps our people to focus on common goals and create spaces in which our professionals can collaborate. This is key for any law firm, especially for a global firm like Garrigues, which has teams and offices worldwide. We are now benefitting from an environment that incentivises lateral thinking, which results in creative approaches and original ideas.

How does the think tank work? With regard to the methodology, the think tank is structured around different challenges, which are then resolved by teams. The think tank has already given rise to 50 different initiatives. They include initiatives related to innovation in business development and the ways in which we contact clients and potential clients. The firm is already working on implementing some of these projects (13 have been selected and are in different phases of study and development). The benefits of these projects include the creation of new solutions for improving processes, mechanisms for automating routine tasks, strategies for improving client service, as well as approaches for establishing new services. Some initiatives require technological development, while others identify ways of improving working methods, both internally and client-facing.

Being attuned to the times

Among the initiatives that have been developed as a result of the work of the think tank is a service called Client-Pal. This is an app, which is currently being rolled out. It facilitates cross-selling between different practice areas and offices, as well as promoting better communication. One of the aims of the think tank is to create an environment in which we are always reconsidering how we can better serve clients. We really believe that the Innovation Think Tank will allow us to be truly attuned to the times, with the result that we will be able to offer a competitive business advantage to increasingly sophisticated clients. It is vital to be open to the market and to what market players are doing. In that respect, the think tank is building a strong culture that drives us to continually rethink what we do in order to improve efficiency and boost the quality of our work.

Fernando Vives is executive chairman at Garrigues