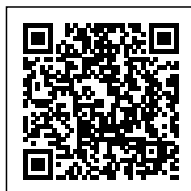


# HALF OF ASSOCIATES NOT GIVEN TAILORED CAREER PLANS

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## **Most associates want to work fewer hours, while a significant number want more tools to help them work remotely – but most are happy with the firm they joined, says new study**

Around half of law firms in Spain and Portugal do not provide their associates with career plans tailored to meet their individual needs, despite the vast majority of associates believing that it would be a good idea, new research by Iberian Lawyer indicates.

A survey of associates at law firms in Spain and Portugal found that nine out of ten (88 per cent) thought that law firms should provide associates with career paths tailored to meet their individual needs. However, 47 per cent of respondents said their firm had not provided them with a tailored career path. The study also revealed that the majority (59 per cent) of associates said they wanted to work fewer hours – around half (49 per cent) of the respondents to the survey said they worked at least 51 hours per week, with 14 per cent working at least 60 hours per week.

In a possible indication that workflow is increasing for law firms in Iberia, nearly half (46 per cent) of associates said their working hours had increased in the last year, with 11 per cent of respondents

saying their working hours had increased by more than 10 per cent in the last 12 months. Associates said their working lives could be improved by more remote working and “fixed working hours”. One associate called for “senior partners to limit working hours”, while another said there should be “more flexibility about the way we work in terms of presence at the office”. Almost one in three associates (30 per cent) said their firm did not provide them with “sufficient tools” to facilitate remote working.

The majority (79 per cent) of participants in the survey stated that their aim was to become a partner, though one in five said reaching the partnership was not their objective. Forty-one per cent of study participants said they thought their prospects of becoming a partner had improved in the last year, though 12 per cent believed their prospects had got worse. However, there generally appears to be a lack of understanding among associates about what is required to make partner. A total of 59 per cent of respondents said their firm does not “communicate clearly what is needed to make partner”. As one respondent remarked, this situation could be rectified by “clear, objective, known career rules”, while another called for “transparency about the way to be promoted”.

Most associates appear to be happy working at their current firm. A total of 79 per cent said that, if they began their career over again with the knowledge they have now, they would join the same firm, though one in five said they would not.

### **More ‘honesty’ needed**

One respondent was clearly unhappy at their current firm and called for more “honesty” from partners. The respondent added: “We need open-minded partners. The existing partners are clearly from the past, do not realise that the world has changed, are not up-to-date on legal developments, rely on associates to get the work done and live in constant fear of having their weaknesses revealed.”

A total of 58 associates at law firms in Spain and Portugal took part in the study, which was conducted via an online survey in May and June 2016. A total of 57 per cent of respondents had been practising as a lawyer for ten years or more, 19 per cent for seven to nine years, 17 per cent for four to six years, and 7 per cent for one to three years. Fifty-seven per cent of respondents were male, 43 per cent were female.

**55%**

Proportion of associates at Iberian law firms who say they are given “sufficient input into innovations at their firm”