

# IT IS TIME FOR ANALYSIS

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**by ilaria iaquinta**

The last and first months of the year always have at least one thing in common: they represent the time for analysis. We feel like we are entering a new phase of our personal and professional lives, every time something ends and begins. These are periods which are harbingers of good resolutions, which stimulate us to look back and go ahead to face the near future with purpose and determination.

We start with self-reflection, thinking about what went well and what did not work out as we wanted. And from there we then build new year intentions and plans (with the hope that they will come true and that we will not have to repeat them again the following year).

Certainly, achieving everything we set our minds to is never easy, but the very exercise of reviewing our own performance and considering what we should and would like to do in the near future is never a bust. At the end of the day, it is a self-assessment that potentially drives us to improvement. It is also an opportunity to reflect on important issues, on which is no bad to have a first or second thought.

Thus, it is the right time to restart and plan the activities in the medium and long-term, organize the work of the coming months.

The legal services industry is in constant turmoil, it is changing, and in the coming months and years it will continue doing so. Certainly, it is impossible to predict the exact developments that will take place, but perhaps something can already be assumed (since black swans have proven to act mostly as an accelerator of already ongoing trends). And it is an exercise, this, that larger and well-structured law firms already do, through the outlining of their strategic plans, which are critical, especially in times of great change such as the one we are currently experiencing.

Indeed, without a strategic plan, it is unlikely that a law firm will be able to significantly improve its performance, processes, service delivery, and demonstrate its value to clients. In fact, it would be at the mercy of events and overwhelmed by the daily work. Knowing where you are going and where you want to go is critical; it also motivates the team. Who would want to work in a team that lacks vision? Especially during these hard times today....

Lawyers are dealing with several difficulties in their operations that hinder the transformation required by digitization and the ever-changing regulatory environment. In addition, the economic crisis triggered by the war has fueled pre-existing pressure on client budgets.

How to address all these challenges? The answer, clearly, is not easy, but a first step in the first instance can be to identify, recognize, and line up the specific critical issues affecting just the single law firm. As with everything in life, the analysis of the problem is the first step on the path that leads to the solution...

In part, this issue of Iberian Lawyer also does an analysis. It does so in the articles that retrace the partner moves and appointments published on our website throughout 2022. It is an article that photographs what has happened in the legal services market and offers an insight about its health by retracing its key steps. We interview the leader behind Velea Legal Group and their expansion to Portugal. A new Spanish player enters the market through their associated partnership. We also retrace which law firms have relocated offices this year and talk about the new spaces they have chosen and why. We also discuss diversity and inclusion in law firms, specifically detailing some current initiatives. On this issue, as always, you can find interviews with key players in the legal world, such as the one to **Irma Cebrián** and **Silvia Perea**, founders of ALSP Abroad, **Jordi Mercadé**, managing partner and founder in 2008 of Baker Tilly Abogados, and **Natalia Rebelo**, Country legal manager of Ikea Portugal. On the in-house front, two surveys, one conducted by the newsroom in collaboration with ACC Europe España on sustainability, the new testing ground for corporate lawyers, and the other the traditional CLO Survey conducted by ACC. In addition, you will find some of the views and reflections shared during the legal day in Madrid. To close, as always, a focus on finance.

Have a good reading and happy 2023!

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