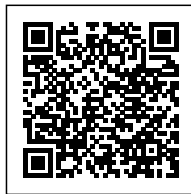


# JACOBO MARTÍNEZ, A NATURAL LEADER OF A FIRM ON THE RISE

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**Many of you may surely already know the protagonist of our Spanish cover. He is Jacobo Martínez, managing partner, head of the Labour area and member of the Executive Committee of Eversheds Sutherland Spain. In addition to his expertise in certain areas of the legal profession, his naturalness and approachability have won him many followers, both inside and outside the firm. We spoke with him about the strategic plan he has set for the firm during his term of office and beyond. Jacobo is part of the firm's history in our country, and this is evident when he talks about issues such as his team or the recent merger with FCB Advogados. With a friendly character, he does not hide his devotion to his family, wife, children and dogs, and, without losing his smile, he walks with a strong step showing that he is a natural leader.**



**At the end of last October, around the time of your tenth anniversary at the firm in Spin after the integration of Nicea into the international network Eversheds-Sutherland, you were appointed managing partner replacing Juan E. Díaz. Did it take you by surprise, or were you prepared?**

I have been fortunate to be part of the Executive Committees of the firm since its beginning, so I am quite familiar with the aspects of the management of the firm. I believe that we have been led by the perfect managing partners for each moment that the firm has gone through. On my side, I will work very hard in order to establish the challenge of growth that the firm will be up to in the coming years. This is a challenge that I assume is very excited, and I am very grateful to my partners for receiving their confidence.

**Since your arrival to the position, you have not ceased to carry out actions of different types and depths (at a higher and lower level, external and internal). We understand that all this responds to the five-year strategic plan, although your mandate is in principle three, isn't it?**

Effectively, the strategic plan for the next five years is very ambitious, and with the fulfilment of it, we will consolidate our position as a leading professional service firm in the business law sector. All professionals are very involved with the challenges in order to face the strategic plan.

The key business areas on which we are focusing are based on the consolidation of our transactional capacity, the strengthening of our transversal sectorial approach, and our leadership in the offer of services and products for the coordination of international advice (especially in the Latam area).

Regarding the type of advice, we focus on combining analytical work, from a great technical complexity that we develop for many of our clients, together with the practical one, decisive and very executive advice based on the experience of many years within the same area or sector. However, our strategy does not include that type of work that is based on mere efficiency, in which is not required highly qualified and specialised teams of lawyers.

Regarding the geographical strategy, we have just achieved our main objective, which was the presence of a Portuguese firm within Eversheds Sutherland, which consolidates us within our range of services for the most relevant national and international companies.

On the other hand, we will continue with the consolidation of the most basic aspects of Eversheds Sutherland's business culture at an international level (collaborative, creative, professional, inclusive and open), the implementation of innovative business procedures and systems, and proximity and excellence in our vocation of service towards the client.

**You were also one of the founding partners of the Employment practice, one of the practices that, to our knowledge, has grown the most in the firm both in terms of volume of work and contribution to the firm's total revenues in Spain, and which you will continue to combine with your new role. What is your assessment of your time as head of the area (exclusively), and what plans do you have for this firm's department in particular?**

The area has grown very fast every year since the foundation of the firm, and that's thanks to the effort and great dedication of all the professionals who have been part of it. The range of services offered by our department is very complete both in its non-contentious elements and in the handling of restructuring and collective bargaining processes and assistance in legal proceedings.

In recent years, we have also consolidated our offer of global products and services in the context of the centralisation of international services for large multinationals and Spanish companies. Our approach for the coming years is based on the increasing specialisation of our lawyers in each of the specific services and sectors, as well as on the strengthening of our transactional capacity.

We will continue to be one of the firm's recognised practices. I did not want to leave my obligations to the department even though I was announced managing partner, with a very active presence in relation to the most sensitive jobs for my clients. On the other hand, I am very fortunate to have an excellent team, with the presence of extraordinary lawyers in all categories of the professional career (including several lawyers with similar experience to mine), a circumstance that helps me to be able to combine the two roles.

**In this sense, going back to the past, why did you decide to specialise in Employment Law? Were you particularly concerned about workers' rights? Now that you are managing partner, how do you handle the Personnel and Talent policy? What is the firm's philosophy in this regard?**

I have always been attracted by the dynamism and the social component that Legal-Labour advice contains. From my position as managing partner, I can bring a different element related to my business vision, a crucial aspect in the current advice due to the development of companies at a global level, and the situations we are facing in the economic and social context existing at this time.

In a professional services firm, the main asset is precisely the human component, so talent retention is essential in the present and future strategy of our firm. From the current Management Committee, we are very committed in this regard with all professionals, adapting to each case and each circumstance.

The commitment to growth based on meritocracy has been in the DNA of this firm since its origin. Likewise, in a profession that requires so much commitment and responsibility, our firm must have the necessary flexibility to attend to our personal and family needs within the framework of our vocation of client service.

The new generations of lawyers (both our clients and our professionals) increasingly demand that all these elements must be present in the strategy of a leading law firm in business law, and we must respond to it.

On the other hand, internal communication is essential in order to coordinate and join the professionals, the principal asset in a professional firm service. Likewise, it is very important to enhance the sense of belonging to a group that forms a company above individualities but is enriched by its diversity. All the firm employees know that my door, and the ones from the rest of the partners, are always open for any question they want to discuss.

**The integration of FCB Advogados into Eversheds has been important news in the Iberian legal market. What do you expect this incorporation to bring to the firm in Spain?**

We had known FCB Advogados very well because it has been our main partner since our integration



into Eversheds Sutherland. It is the law firm that suits the best the type of services we offer, so our global offer is significantly enriched by this incorporation.

When some of our clients have needs outside of Spain and, therefore, have several jurisdictions under their responsibility, it is very important that the advice is practical, decisive and that it adjusts to certain response times. Eversheds Sutherland FCB has all these elements in addition to being a firm with a technical quality that has been proven in the Portuguese market for many years.

On the other hand, we breathe the strength, enthusiasm and commitment with which our colleagues have joined Eversheds Sutherland, and I am sure we will form a good Iberian tandem.

**Latin America is also one of the strategic points in your growth plan. What actions are planned or already underway in this regard?**

We have led the development of our LatAm Alliance from Spain since the beginning. Due to this, we have enriched our global service, offering highly innovative products that have given Eversheds Sutherland international prestige as a leading firm in the centralisation of global services for multinational companies.

This service offering is notably complemented by our Latin American experience in the areas and sectors of investment arbitration, compliance, energy, infrastructure and hotels and the leisure sector.

For the development of these areas, we have specific practice groups that we lead together with colleagues from the UK and USA in a tripartite executive committee that serves as a link with the firms that are part of the Latam Alliance, with whom we also have meetings and conventions frequently throughout the year to align our strategy.

In each country in the LatAm area, we have high-level law firms that are a reference in the market in the highest bands of the most relevant international directories and rankings, with a very high level of client satisfaction.

We consider that our active leadership in this area is a competitive advantage over other international law firms, and the type of services and products we offer represents a high added value that differentiates us from other Spanish law firms present in this area.

**The application of technology, the digital transformation as a whole, is a mandatory step for any firm that wants to move forward. What stage are you at? Have you incorporated any AI or Machine Learning system that makes you a pioneer or gives you value-added as a firm for your clients?**

The digital transformation of our firm has been taking place for quite some years now, and we have effectively added artificial intelligence systems to our service offer.

Specifically, some of the innovative products for the coordination and centralisation of services (with special relevance when it has an international presence) have very innovative technological elements that offer the possibility for the client to take advantage of all the information in a very simple and efficient way (generated in any jurisdiction or area of activity).

Likewise, in recent years, Eversheds Sutherland has developed highly efficient technological solutions in our international transactional and contentious areas, allowing very effective management of existing operations and processes in those areas.

Finally, thanks to the most innovative technological tools, we are strengthening and sharing the commercial information that we have about our clients, as well as the areas of knowledge management.

**In-house clients are increasingly demanding more specialised services, especially in certain**

**sectors such as Renewable Energies, which is leading to the emergence of numerous micro-specialised legal boutiques. Do you consider them to be competitors?**

Our sector specialisation strategy in alignment with Eversheds Sutherland globally is essential within our strategy as a firm. In the specific case of renewable energies, Eversheds Sutherland has been in recent years a leading international company, which is why we are increasingly strengthening our specific energy department.

I believe that a boutique will always have an advantage in terms of its offer and specialisation, but we are very fortunate to be able to combine this specialisation with our global leadership and with great specialists, not only in Spain but also internationally.

**Corporate lawyers are also becoming more demanding, setting new requirements for sustainability, diversity and equality when selecting their referral firms. What are your plans in this regard?**

From the internal point of view, these policies also have a crucial place in our strategy as an international firm. In our office, we can offer competitive advantages in all these matters, and thus we prove it in many of our international pitches.

Our plan is to systematise in the most optimal way the fulfilment of these requirements.

I would also like to add that we also have specific departments to offer legal advice on these matters to our clients.

**You have also been named Lawyer of the Year in the Restructuring/Reorganisations category of the Iberian Lawyer Labour Awards 2021. Professionally, would you say you are living a "sweet moment"?**

I am very grateful to Iberian Lawyer for this award. It is a subject that I enjoy very much in my professional development and, indeed, in recent years we have been selected from many clients to support them in such delicate situations for the future of their organisation, which is also an advantage to have their confidence.

I cannot answer the "sweet moment" without the approval of my wife, who is also very expert in Reorganisations (laughs).

**Summarise in one sentence these first months as managing partner of Eversheds España.**

The confirmation of the consolidation of a large meritocratic law firm as a collective professional firm service.

By Desiré Vidal

To read the full interview on issue number 107 click [here](#)