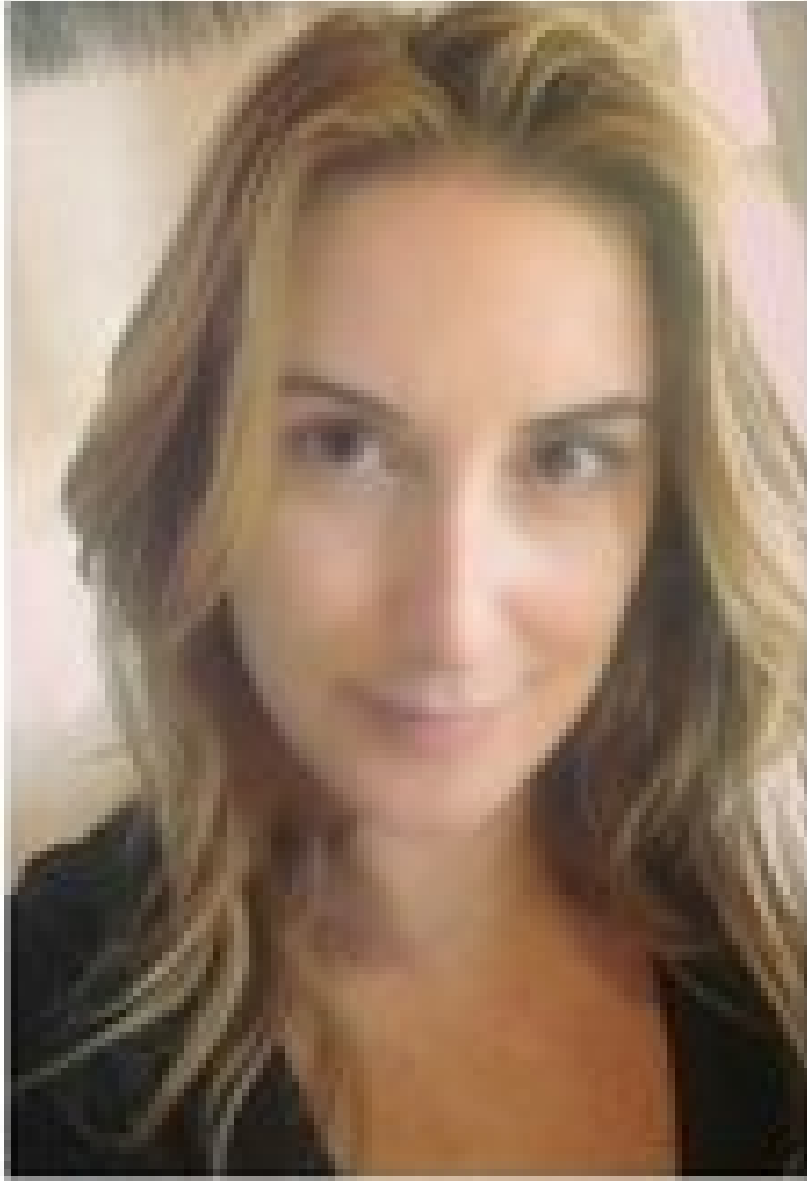


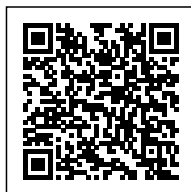
LAW FIRMS SHOULD BE SPEEDY, EFFICIENT AND 'KEEP IT SIMPLE'

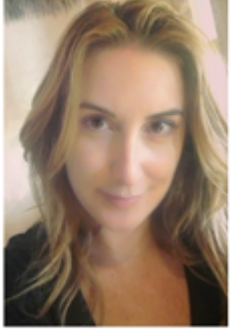
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Huawei Portugal's Andreia Collard says the 'attitude' of the external lawyer who is the main point of contact is important as it is key to fostering a good relationship

External law firms can add value by keeping in-house legal teams up to date with new legislation, providing workshops and research papers on specific issues, and by assessing how certain issues could affect the different industries and sectors in which the client operates, says Andreia Collard, head of legal at Huawei Portugal.

With regard to her preferences when selecting legal advisers, Collard says that she is less likely to engage law firms that provide overly long briefings or give her advice that is too theoretical. This is because it goes against her mantra of "keeping things simple". Collard is also unlikely to use law firms that take a long time to respond, because, in addition to a practical approach, speed and efficiency are crucial when it comes to resolving legal issues, she says.

Cause of frustration

It is also vital that external counsel demonstrate an in-depth understanding of their clients' business, and not just focus on the relevant laws, according to Collard. She adds that this is the greatest cause of frustration when dealing with an external law firm, in addition to the provision of advice that is excessively legal, rather than business-focused. In terms of the qualities that are desired, flexibility is another key attribute when looking for external advisers, according to Collard.

Cultural fit

Portugal is a market in which Huawei, a Global telecommunications equipment and services company with headquarters in China, performs particularly strongly. In 2017, it reported a significant increase in sales in Portugal, a country where it continues growing especially in the "consumer devices market", according to Collard. She adds Huawei's process for selecting external law firms is fairly complex. "Personally, I value the pairing of the law firm's service culture with the company's business culture when making a final decision," she says. However, Collard does point out that she values the experience and expertise of the specific lawyer in question more than the firm itself. She explains: "Anyone who says that the attitude of the principal lawyer – who is the main point of contact – doesn't make a difference may not be speaking the whole truth, as the attitude is what fosters a good relationship between a firm and its client."

Be pragmatic

However, despite the company's strict law firm selection process, Collard says she does have a preferred firm. She declines to reveal its identity, but says it has achieved its preferred status on the

basis of many years of consistently good service provided to the company. Meanwhile, Collard also identifies pragmatism as one of the essential qualities that she looks for when selecting an external counsel. "They must see the practical side and keep it simple," she explains.

One of the major issues keeping Huawei's in-house legal team busy at the moment is the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which is widely viewed as the biggest change in private data regulation in the last twenty years. The GDPR is designed to harmonise data privacy laws across Europe, as well as protect and empower EU citizens' in relation to data privacy, and reshape the way organisations across the region approach the subject of data protection. The GDPR was approved by the European Parliament in 2016 and is scheduled to come into effect in May, after which non-compliance will result in the imposition of heavy fines.

Multi-tasking

The new regulation extends the scope of EU data protection law to all foreign companies processing EU residents' data. The GDPR will also usher in a new set of digital rights for EU citizens. This new legislation will be a key focus of Huawei's in-house team in the coming year, according to Collard.

Meanwhile, Collard says the teams' main focus is innovation, while the biggest challenge she faces as an in-house lawyer is dealing with the wide variety of issues that arise on a day-to-day basis, and which are all completely different. However, she adds that the challenge is ensuring all the issues are handled, and resolved, at the same time. But she adds: "It's a challenge that I enjoy."

Andreia Collard is head of legal at Huawei Portugal