

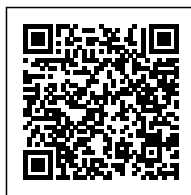
LOOKING AT THE ISSUES FROM ALL SIDES - GÓMEZ-ACEBO & POMBO

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Gonzalo Ulloa

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It is no longer enough to look at clients' intellectual property issues in isolation, lawyers must understand both the legal and industry contexts

Los clientes no quieren meras respuestas técnicas a sus asuntos de propiedad intelectual; quieren soluciones que tengan en cuenta tanto el contexto legal como el de la industria, dice Gonzalo Ulloa, Codirector del Departamento de Propiedad Intelectual y Tecnologías de la Información de Gómez-Acebo & Pombo en Madrid.

"Clients do not want merely technical answers to their intellectual property (IP) issues, they want solutions that take account of both the legal and industry context," says Gonzalo Ulloa, Co-Head of

the IP and Information Technology Department at Gómez-Acebo & Pombo in Madrid.

Lawyers often underestimate the sophistication and pace of innovation in the IP arena, as well as the breadth of expertise and awareness of clients' own in-house legal teams, he feels.

"There are any number of lawyers and other practitioners in the market that can give a specific answer to a specific question, but this is often not what is required. Clients want to know how similar issues have been handled elsewhere, in different industries or jurisdictions, and therefore what may lie over the horizon for them if they go down a particular path."

With over three decades' experience, Ulloa is well placed to reflect on the evolution of both legal services and client need. With ever greater convergence in the IT, communications and life sciences sectors, there is much more emphasis on understanding the regulatory, competition and commercial consequences that may now also impact on a particular issue.

"Trademark, patent, design and data protection challenges increasingly overlap and it is often not possible to see an issue in isolation in the legal or commercial sense. It is also no longer sufficient to reflect only on the clients' Spanish or Iberian situation – you have to address issues in line with their strategic needs, which means taking a pan-European or even global approach."

There are an increasing number of nuances in the way legal issues are approached, he says, in addition to developments such as the EU's efforts to harmonise trademark, copyright and potentially patent protection and enforcement.

The pace of technological change and the fierceness of competition in many industry sectors means that specialists have therefore to maintain a much broader understanding not only of legal developments, but also of the commercial pressures impacting on the clients' business. "Of course, the ability to take a specific industry approach is a luxury of the largest practice teams, but increasingly this is what clients demand. They want joined up solutions to their problems, they want you to help them look around corners."