

NUNO CEREJEIRA NAMORA: “THREE GREATEST CHALLENGES ARE: MULTIDISCIPLINARITY, TALENT RETENTION AND THE PRESERVATION OF A CORPORATE IDENTITY”

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Cerejeira Namora, Marinho Falcão will celebrate its 30 year anniversary next year. For one of the founding partners and managing partner, Nuno Cerejeira Namora, it has been a near three decade journey. The lawyer began his professional career as a journalist for seven years while still a student at law school, before starting this project. During this interview, Cerejeira Namoria explains to Iberian lawyer that their path hasn't been exactly run-of-the-mill. The firm has its roots in Porto and then expanded to the capital and other parts of the country. Its strengths originated from the more traditional areas of Labour and Tax Law but have expanded to Privacy, Digital and Technology. A firm on the rise and one to watch.



Cerejeira Namora, Marinho Falcão will celebrate its 30 year anniversary next year. How much has the firm and your presence in Portugal changed since you founded the firm nearly 30 years ago?

It was not only the firm that experienced deep changes, the sector also witnessed a complete revolution during this period. Our presence changed progressively and we grew steadily over the years until we reached a stage where we were able to act nationwide and participate in international projects. The path of geographical expansion of the firm differs from the vast majority of Portuguese firms because it has done exactly the opposite: it was founded in Porto and has expanded its practice to the entire national territory, currently having offices in Lisbon and Funchal. The cornerstone was the professionalisation of the structures and the significant increase in the network response, as the lawyers gradually stopped being just lawyers and became real strategic partners of clients, both in preventive advice and in the planning of the various stages of their businesses and investments.

What initially attracted you to a career in the legal profession?

All young people who at an early stage think of following a profession have the innocent but pure dream of making justice, of defending the rights of the weakest against the strongest. I had two passions and I followed them both: journalism and law. In fact, my professional career began as a journalist for seven years while I was still a law student. I believe that this professional experience influenced and accentuated a special interest in research and the search for truth, as well as an intrinsic human need for social relationships, permanent interaction and adaptation to the most diverse realities.

Who were the biggest influences in your early career and what did they teach you?

I had no family predecessors in the Legal profession, but only in the judiciary. I never saw the magistrature as a path to follow because I did not have the skills or profile for the profession. There was not exactly a reference or an example that influenced me in choosing the profession to follow. I think what won me over was the competitiveness that the profession demands and the reliance on

constant struggle and Litigation.

What do you think are the biggest challenges law firm leaders are currently facing?

I believe that the three greatest challenges that firms and their leaders face are multidisciplinary, talent retention and the preservation of a corporate identity. Starting with the last one, it is undeniable that the departure or generational gap between the founders of organisations and the new professionals poses interesting challenges due to the difficulty in transmitting the message and the principles that were at the basis of the foundation to ensure its continuity. On the other hand, in a highly professionalised and competitive sector, naturally retaining talent is increasingly complex, requiring not only progressive salary policies, but also a clear commitment to other increasingly valued benefits to improve living conditions and balance with personal life. Finally, multidisciplinary - which is already an unavoidable reality in most EU Member States - will continue to be "the challenge", both due to the existing ethical and regulatory obstacles and to the growing market demands in this respect.

What has been the most valuable thing you have learned as managing partner?

Besides technical rigour, professionalism and the importance of compliance with ethical standards, as a leader of an organisation, I have realised that human resources management, motivation and the creation of personal relationships to strengthen team spirit are crucial for the success of an organisation. The formative moments, the entertaining events and the abstraction of work shared in teams are the key to pass the message to a team, to captivate them and keep them united, thus being better prepared for moments of high stress, pressure and total surrender to the common objectives. On the other hand, confidence and investment in young leaders for middle management is also a key moment for the future of organisations.

How do you think Cerejeira Namora, Marinho Falcão can and does differentiate itself from your main competitors?

It may sound cliché, but we truly believe that we differentiate ourselves by the relationships of trust we establish with our clients, who often become friends. It is obvious that the client seeks us out and trusts us for the quality and technical rigour, for the commitment we have to their issues and for the results we achieve. However, the relationships we establish are strong and go beyond the specific issue, always seeking a cross vision and oriented towards pragmatic results, necessarily with the certainty and legal security that is required. Last but not least, it is important to mention that although the firm gives priority to permanent and preventive counselling of its clients, the performance in the area of litigation continues to have a very relevant expression in the work of the firm, which litigates and represents its clients in court on a daily basis.

Which practice areas and sectors do you consider essential to the firm's future.

For historical reasons, the firm's legacy is inseparable from the Labour and Tax practice areas, which were the areas of expertise of the two founding partners. Nevertheless, we should also highlight the areas of Corporate, Public and Privacy, Digital and Technology with teams of recognised merit. Special mention should also be made of the permanent and continued advisory support provided on a daily basis to companies of all sizes, as the firm has always intended to position itself as a reliable and strategic partner of its clients, with whom it has daily contact and provides cross-practice legal assistance.

If you could turn back the clock to when you started as managing partner, what advice would you give to your youngsters?

Putting the firm's growth into perspective, I would advise my youngsters to anticipate the firm's growth earlier. Indeed, we were growing over the first 20 years, but I feel the plane has taken off at a

remarkable speed in the last decade. We have 20 years of affirmation and with ten we catapulted growth at national level. Today, going back in time, I would not make very different decisions (I have even learnt from mistakes), I would just perhaps anticipate them.

Where do you see the firm in five years?

I hope we all continue in good health. I would love to have all those who are now part of our team by my side, which would be an excellent sign. Furthermore, we have the strength and will to continue working with the ambition of maintaining the accelerated growth we have experienced in recent years, always in a sustained and totally independent manner. I believe that the firm will remain the same, with the same values and principles, with more professionals, more clients, more practice areas, but above all, with the same spirit of mission that defines us. We like challenges and we have already launched some for this year of celebrating our 30th anniversary. I hope to be here in five years with all the challenges overcome and projecting the future.

By Michael Heron

To read the full interview on issue number 108 click [here](#)