

RECRUITMENT POSES 'SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES' FOR LAW FIRMS - FIND

Posted on 03/03/2015



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It is now crucial that every lawyer within a law firm is able to offer more than simply technical ability, says Filipa Mendes Pinto, partner at Lisbon recruiter FIND.

"Lawyers – even at the earliest stages of their career – must be able to work well in a team, have 'client care' skills and show potential as a future rainmaker," she adds. Consequently, it is vital law firms use more precision than ever when selecting new recruits. "Understanding this approach, and acting in accordance, will certainly make a difference," Mendes Pinto says.

But lateral hires can pose significant challenges for law firms, as Mendes Pinto points out.

"Depending, of course, on the seniority of lawyers, the biggest challenge is the capacity to ensure a successful integration process, which can involve combining different cultures," she says. What are law firms' key considerations when making lateral hires? "Law firms naturally present very specific considerations regarding the recruitment process and the profile itself," explains Mendes Pinto. She adds the most common requirements include a "solid academic background", relevant professional

experience, but also “soft skills” such as teamwork, the ability to be client-focused – including the capacity to “think global” – and a commercially oriented approach.

Mendes Pinto says law firms are increasingly turning to recruitment agencies to help them choose candidates. However, she adds firms need to be “confident in the recruiter’s knowledge of the market” as well as their understanding of the “law firm’s DNA”. Mendes Pinto says: “This makes a huge difference for firms and candidates, if this is the case, the recruiter becomes a strategic partner and will play a more important role in the firm’s decision-making.” Indeed, according to Mendes Pinto, more firms now believe using recruitment agencies will help them make better choices, “even at partnership level”.