

TALENT MANAGEMENT - URÍA MENÉNDEZ-PROENÇA DE CARVALHO

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The hiring and development of young lawyers is now a priority for Portuguese practices, says Duarte Garin, Managing Partner of Uría Menéndez-Proença de Carvalho.

During the boom years, law firms were hiring large groups of young lawyers, he says, and while firms such as Uría maintained those levels, others reduced their intake. “As such, there are now more candidates of quality but not as many openings, meaning lawyers need to be much more aware of their career development.”

Law firms are now looking at ways to attract this talent. Incentives include offering training in specialised practice sectors and the ability to work in an international network. Garin says that at any one time Uría has four or five Portuguese lawyers working in offices such as Madrid, São Paulo, New York and London.

Garin says that one critical factor for the process is to manage lawyers’ expectation from the start of their careers. “For

example, having thorough and clear appraisals help lawyers to understand how they are developing and the options for them." Not doing so will be of no benefit to the law firm or the lawyer, he adds.

A contributing factor in this shift in expectation is a greater emphasis on the so-called work-life balance. The culture has been changing in recent years, he says, and lawyers are looking for successful careers but ones that allow time for life outside of work.

"Candidates for traineeship have realistic expectations, and how they see themselves progressing in the firms is probably more realistic these days than it was a decade ago," says Garin. "That said, it is vital to have a career plan to present lawyers with how they are likely to progress in the firm and what is expected of them to achieve this."