

THE BIG QUESTION

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Skills outside the classroom

In order to mark the launch of Iberian Lawyer's new service for students – [Ticket2Law.com](#) – law firm managers share their advice on how young lawyers can make themselves more employable in a difficult economic environment and tougher recruitment market:

Have firms' demands changed as a result of the economic difficulties at hand and

what study, skills and experience do young lawyers need?

'We seek out talent and creativity in the young lawyers we hire and, above all, we seek those looking to pursue a professional career in which ongoing training and the creation of added value for clients lie at the heart of their activities.'

Fernando Vives, Co-Managing Partner, Garrigues

'We fundamentally look for two things, first, the quality of the letter of application and the level of care with which it was written. If an applicant does not bother to spend enough time and effort putting together a good letter of application he/she does not meet the quality standards of the firm, second, we look for international experience and an indication that the applicant would be willing to relocate to an overseas office if the opportunity is presented. Lawyers with an international mindset and mobility are critical to Miranda.'

Rui Amendoeira, Managing Partner, Miranda

'Get a broad knowledge of law and then find out the specific subject of law you have a special aptitude for and concentrate on that. Knowledge may be acquired, but talent is natural. I have seen many lawyers advising on M&A transactions who are involuntarily perceived as deal breakers because of their lack of negotiation skills. Avoid the temptation of becoming an insolvency lawyer just because that is what the market currently demands. The economic cycle will continue and a new bullish period will follow.'

Pedro Rueda, Partner, Araoz & Rueda



'What we look for at entry level is the potential to become first-class legal practitioners. To show us such potential I would advise law students not only to excel in study but also to train in teamworking, complete placements at corporates and law firms, study in other complementary areas, plus study in different (and good!) universities through Erasmus or Masters degrees.'

Ignacio Ojanguren, Managing Partner, Clifford Chance, Madrid

'In my opinion, a student who wants to become a lawyer has a world of opportunities, even today! There's a real possibility of having a successful career, but the door is only open to the best, and more important than law school grades is the development of rare skills which are relevant in the marketplace, professional experience abroad or an LL.M in the UK or the USA are, for instance, good alternatives.'

Rui Medeiros, Co-Managing Partner, Sérvulo & Associados



"In a climate where the majority of firms are reducing their trainee intake, it is ever more important for law graduates to stand out among their peers. Academic achievement is of course a factor in choosing prospective trainees, but not the only factor – our firm looks for language skills, work experience (in the legal field or out of it) and outside interests that show a wellrounded personality."

Nuno Galvão Teles, Head of Corporate, MLGTS

"Good grades in law studies and a command of English are still the entry keys to recruiting processes. Additionally, business studies or specific Masters degrees or experience in the public sector, depending on the area of practice, would be high on the list. Then the ability to work in teams, communication skills and the initiative make the cut.'

Fernando de las Cuevas, Head of Corporate, Gómez-Acebo & Pombo



'Students should aim to be 'complete' lawyers; with great technical knowledge and excellent language skills, but also with deeply rooted principles, who care about culture, about the world they live in and social environment. But they should also strengthen their 'soft skills, which will enable them to lead teams, to assume responsibilities and to achieve excellence in their career.'

Luis de Carlos, Co-Managing Partner, Uría Menéndez