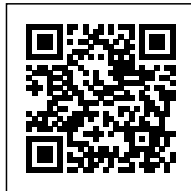


# TRENDSETTERS

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**A small law firm in Braga that is at the centre of a cutting-edge ‘hybrid lawyer’ project is also working on a ground-breaking football transfer using blockchain – Iberian Lawyer spoke to Vieira Advogados managing partner Nuno da Silva Vieira about his pioneering work**



What will the lawyer of the future look like? Vieira Advogados, a ten-lawyer firm from Braga in Portugal may soon come up with one of the most definitive answers to this question. Vieira Advogados is currently working on a project with US company sa.global – a global partner of Microsoft – which aims to develop the model of what Vieira Advogados managing partner Nuno da Silva Vieira (pictured) calls the “hybrid lawyer”. While some market observers talk of artificial intelligence (AI) replacing some

lawyers, Da Silva Vieira stresses that the project with sa.global works from the premise of “augmented intelligence”, that is empowering lawyers with AI, rather than replacing them. “The hybrid lawyer will, for example, use sophisticated algorithms to reduce the cost of transactions,” Da Silva Vieira explains.

Da Silva Vieira is not your typical lawyer. He views himself as an entrepreneur as well as a legal practitioner. In 2017, he completed the innovation and entrepreneurship programme at IESE Business School. And a quick look at Vieira Advogados website reveals that, while ostensibly he is the managing partner, he describes himself as “the kickstarter”. It is this entrepreneurial drive – coupled with a level of technological know-how which sets him apart from most lawyers – that has resulted in Da Silva Vieira becoming involved in some pioneering work.

### **Law firm of the future**

Currently in the pipeline are plans to open a new office two years from now. But Da Silva Vieira doesn't want it to be an average office. “We want it to be a model of the legal office of the future with the best technology and the best practices,” he explains. Such best practices will include the use of smart contracts. “People think smart contracts will remove the need for lawyers, but you will always need lawyers to define the rules,” Da Silva Vieira says. “What happens if data is wrong? Lawyers need to be ready.”

Vieira Advogados has also advised on some pioneering blockchain sports sponsorship deals in recent months. In July this year, the firm advised blockchain technology company Kick Soccer Coin on a sponsorship deal with Spanish football club Deportivo Leganês. As a result of the deal, the Kick Soccer Coin logo will appear on the sleeve of Club Deportivo Leganês' official shirts. Kick Soccer Coin is a cryptocurrency that fans can use to purchase football merchandise. Last month, Vieira Advogados advised the same company on another sponsorship deal, this time with the Portuguese football club Estoril Praia.

### **Transfer talk**

However, the firm is currently working on what could be one of the most ground-breaking transactions ever. It is currently working to facilitate a deal that will involve a professional football club in England's Premier League buying a player using blockchain. The plan is for the transfer to be completed next year. “It will be the first soccer player transfer using blockchain,” Da Silva Vieira says.

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