

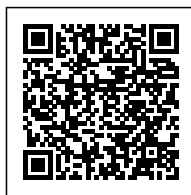
# VODAFONE ESPAÑA: CONNECTING THE WORLD

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Pedro José Peña, Company Secretary and Director of Legal at Vodafone España, explains how he is developing excellence in his legal team.

Over the last 20 years, Vodafone has become one of the world's largest mobile communications operators with over 179 million customers and interests in network operators across more than 25 countries.

Pedro José Peña, Director jurídico de Vodafone España, tiene como objetivo conseguir la excelencia dentro de su equipo. Su contribución en la empresa consiste principalmente en identificar riesgos y asegurarse del cumplimiento de las normas. Cuando selecciona a abogados externos, Peña tiende a seleccionar mediante un proceso informal. Para él, lo más importante es el conocimiento técnicojurídico que aportan. Para que exista una relación fructuosa entre cliente y abogado, considera que debe haber claridad respecto a las tareas encomendadas y sinceridad sobre la capacidad para llevarlas a cabo con éxito. Peña estima que el mercado de las telecomunicaciones

está fuerte y augura buenos tiempos para aquellos abogados especializados en el sector.

Vodafone España's Company Secretary and Director of Legal, Pedro José Peña, has an important role to play in this success. As well as having responsibility for all the day-to-day legal issues, he sits on the company's board and is instrumental in its business strategy.

A graduate of the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, and attorney of the Spanish Parliament (on leave), he has a Masters in Law from the University of Columbia in New York, and his career path has included time with New York law firm Sidley & Austin, as well as senior roles at Renfe and Jazztel.

In his more than twenty years as a lawyer, Peña has witnessed significant changes, not least the increasing importance of a role such as his within an organisation. He sees his key contribution at Vodafone as identifying areas of potential risk and ensuring compliance.

"I believe that in-house legal departments have an important role to play," he explains, "in particular to make sure that the companies act according to the law, to offer practical realistic solutions to business' problems, as well as to focus on priorities according to the business strategic moves, helping analyse, plan and develop solutions that require a strong knowledge of the internal functioning of the business."

Internally, this translates into a focus on the independence and reliability of advice that he and his team provides.

He manages a team of 18 lawyers organised into two departments; "business" which handles contractual and commercial matters, dealing with clients, agents, distributors and providers, employment issues, data protection, IP, publicity, criminal and related matters; and "regulation", which deals with the rights and obligations of the company as a telecommunications entity, compliance, regulation and interconnection agreements, amongst others.

Peña regards managing a good and efficient team as his greatest challenge, and he puts a great deal of emphasis on individual and group development.

"I aim to inspire, motivate and recognise good work, encouraging personal development," he says. "I am trying to develop them as lawyers. There is no way we can contribute to the company with rigorous legal work, commitment to quality and efficiency if the lawyers lack motivation and levels of performance to deliver those services with the "excellence" required." He sees continual improvement of individuals and team performance, alongside recognition, reward and involving staff in achieving company objectives, as key elements to optimise any company's legal department.

It is no surprise that the global nature of Vodafone's business is a central element of his work.

"An important part of the legal work in Vodafone comes from belonging to a multinational group, with very integrated functions as we are aiming for global profit using the critical mass available."

As a result, almost half of the legal team regularly attend legal workshops and take part in global projects on areas such as multilateral agreements or regulation amongst group companies.

When it comes to choosing external advisors, Peña works with an informal panel of law firms. He says that the most important issue when selecting lawyers is their legal expertise. After that, he looks for a firm which has the depth of resources and full service capability. Cost and the extent of the existing relationship with the firm are other factors that will influence his decision.

Peña is generally very impressed with the firms he uses, particularly with their legal knowledge, and commercial understanding as well as their client and project management skills. However, he feels that there is room for improvement for some firms with regard to costs.


He believes the key to successful lawyer-client relations is for both parties to have a real understanding of what is required on both sides. "As a preliminary step, the company needs to have

a clear idea what they are looking for from external lawyers. It is necessary to make sure that there is a need, and once that is agreed then you can instruct them clearly."

At the same time, he believes external lawyers have to respond honestly about their capacity to meet requirements.

"Assuming both parties agree what the requirements are and the capacity is, normally there is no reason for anything to go wrong," he says.

Looking to the future, he predicts many changes and challenges, most of them driven by the pace of change in the telecommunications sector.

"The telecommunications sector is very fast paced with fast developing technology and dynamic  businesses, which presents huge challenges for operators of every size and type," he says. However, he believes that the amount of change in the telecommunications sector is all positive news for lawyers. "All of these challenges present, without a doubt, a wide range of opportunities for law firms specialised in the communications sector."