

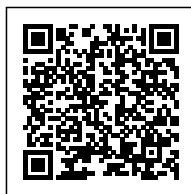
'WE WANT EXTERNAL LAWYERS WITH LOCAL KNOWLEDGE'

Posted on 29/01/2019



Category: [Uncategorized](#)

Tag: [cat-clientview](#)





If Eiffage Infraestructuras is seeking to enter a new foreign market, it wants to engage law firms that understand local laws, says Juan Diego Moreno



When requiring legal advice related to jurisdictions other than Spain, civil engineering and construction company Eiffage Infraestructuras prefers to engage external law firms with an extensive international presence, according to **Juan Diego Moreno, Senior In-house Legal Counsel** in the company's Seville office. "When we are dealing with a case outside Spain we will usually use a law firm with a global presence with which we have worked previously," he explains. "We reach out to our contact at an external law firm in Spain and have them put us in touch with their colleague in the country in question - this saved us the time of having to present ourselves as a company."

Moreno adds that technical knowledge and experience of handling the issues in question are important attributes that are desired in external lawyers, but in addition, it is also vital they understand the company's unique characteristics as well as the sector in which it operates. He continues: "We mainly use the services of external lawyers for issues requiring considerable technical specialisation or, on other occasions, when we have an excessive workload related to cases that end up in the courts."

Given the need for a relationship of trust as well as professionalism, and the sense of a "job well done", Moreno says the company has "long-lasting commercial relationships" with law firms. He adds that he prefers not to name the company's favourite law firms for reasons of confidentiality. Moreno says that, when choosing a law firm, the decision is based on the company's needs and the matter at hand. "We use local firms, when placing an emphasis on proximity, or large national or international firms that are able to put a team of specialists at our disposal," he explains.

Past relationship

The qualities Eiffage looks for include "professionalism and excellence", as well as a willingness to adapt to the demands of the client. "From our legal department, we control, supervise and direct all the processes that are externalised, and we have to have a fluent and direct relationship with the law firm in question, as well as a report on all the documentation generated during the legal process," he adds. "Obviously, past relationships and the experiences we have had with law firms count."

Moreno says Eiffage avoids using law firms that charge by the hour, with the company preferring to agree a fixed fee with the law firm beforehand. He adds that the main advantage of using external law firms is getting assistance with the company's day-to-day activities. "Often we can't dedicate the time required to just one file, the analysis of documents, studies and attending trials, for example, and that time-saving element is what external law firms offer."

Moreno adds that entering into a foreign market requires analysis, with the first phase carried out by the in-house team. He says that once that is completed, any potential problems are "taken care of by external lawyers that are knowledgeable of the local laws and norms".

'Fluid communication'

However, using an external law firm also brings some problems, Moreno says. "The main challenge is that the external law firm should adapt to our way of working," he explains. "Despite externalising affairs, we supervise the entire process, and this requires complicity from the law firm, not only in terms of fluid communication, but when comparing criteria and points of view."

Given the slow pace of legal processes, Moreno says it is vital the in-house team remains "on top of the case" in order to know whether there have been any developments. He adds that, in the majority of cases, "a court will take time to issue a verdict". Moreno continues: "We live in a globalised world in which 'here and now' is the theme of our day-to-day work. Everything moves very quickly and the speed with which a legal decision that affects the interests of the company is taken is key to our work."

Moreno says that, on occasions, due to a heavy workload, the company will opt to hire an external law firm, and that the expertise of external lawyers "together with the in-house lawyers' deep knowledge of the business creates a synergy that is of high added value for the company".