

ZAHORÍ MARTÍNEZ: "NEW FORMS OF TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT ARE BEING DEVELOPED"

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Zahorí Martínez studied law in Mexico and discovered that her passion was legal consulting for the development of infrastructures with an impact on society. She studied in Spain, worked at Deloitte and joined Siemens in 2013. Since 2018 she has been General Counsel of Siemens Mobility Spain. Interviewed by Iberian Lawyer, she talks about her career, her role as General Counsel and her expectations for 2022.



How did you get started in the legal profession?

My approach was from an early age, my paternal grandfather and my uncle studied Law and my father, although he studied business administration, is a lawyer at heart (laughs). Debate was always encouraged in my home. I studied Law in Mexico and my first job was in a corporate law firm. From the very first moment I was attracted to preventive advice in the corporate sector. In the last year of my degree, I joined another firm where I found my passion: legal consultancy for the development of infrastructures with an impact on society.

You worked in a law firm in Mexico and then in Spain. What was that transition like?

When I finished my degree, I continued in the firm and focused on infrastructure projects, advising the public administration. My career plan was to go to Spain, do a master's degree and then a secondment. In the end I did my LLM in Business Law and when I finished, the opportunity arose to join the Public Law Department of Deloitte Abogados.

And the change to the in-house world?

I moved from a law firm in Mexico to Spain. Law is very local, so I had to homologate my degree. After 8 years in law firms, I felt the need to complement my vision with a business perspective. This coincided with the opportunity to join Siemens. It was perfect for me as I love public procurement, I am passionate about infrastructure and Siemens is a multinational and innovative company, a place where employees are proud to work.

What is a day as Legal Director at Siemens Mobility Spain like?

You need to be able to manage and respond very quickly and accurately. It is essential to know the business in depth, to have a complete perspective of the business and the life cycle of a project, and to anticipate needs. My main role is to advise and generate strategies that translate the business vision into reality, solving tactical legal problems and defining high-impact goals.

How many people are on the legal team?

The team consists of seven people of different nationalities. All of them with extensive experience. These qualities, together with the diversity we have, enrich the team, allowing us to have different perspectives when managing projects. All this under the strategic vision and leadership of our Legal headquarters.

When selecting a person for your team, what do you take into account?

That they have solid knowledge and know how to apply it. That they have principles and values congruent with the company. Being part of a legal team is about compliance, about ensuring the

legality of operations. It is very important that they understand the importance of building synergies and delivering added value from our function, more than as a support area, as a strategic partner, as a business partner.

DIGITALISATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

At a time of constant technological evolution, how is the digitization process at Siemens Mobility and what impact does it have on the legal team?

Siemens was founded 175 years ago, thanks to the innovative mindset of Werner von Siemens and Johann Georg Halske. Change, adaptation, and innovation itself are part of the company's DNA. But how does digitalisation come into play when it comes to rail infrastructure? Through the application of cloud solutions for traffic control, the use of big data for predictive maintenance, or the development of intelligent platforms that manage and connect different means of transport. From Legal, it is not enough to have specialised knowledge in the field, it is necessary to understand technological trends, the economic context of the sector, apply tech solutions to be more efficient, use clear language (avoiding legalese), and always put users at the centre.

How does the department work?

We are made up of specialist lawyers and contract management experts. The team sits together with the business to understand its needs so that we can be proactive. It is important not only to identify risks, but also mitigation mechanisms and opportunities within the applicable legal framework.

How did the pandemic affect these two years?

Covid was the greatest expression of how legislation had to move at a faster pace than reality itself. From the legal side, we followed up on the regulations and their impact on the business, with the aim of providing an immediate response, being able to face the challenges and propose a strategy for the future. The pandemic accelerated the fourth industrial revolution that we were already experiencing, making the impact of digitalisation more evident in all sectors.

They say that crises always bring opportunities....

We now have a flexible, hybrid system of working. We go to the office two or three days a week and the rest of the week we do a permanent home office in the future. During Covid we demonstrated an exceptional capacity for collaborative work.

What are the priorities for Siemens Mobility Spain in 2022?

With a clear and corporate vision, our management is guiding us to work on smart and sustainable infrastructures, applying new technologies, improving the passenger experience. From Legal we accompany throughout the process to achieve these priorities.

What do you love most about your work?

Knowing that what I do every day has an impact on society. When I think that in 30 years the number of passengers using rail transport is going to multiply and that what I am doing has a visible result which is going to be - not only transporting that number of people but doing it in a sustainable way - it gives me enormous satisfaction.

I'm interested in what you say about sustainability, at a time when there seems to be a greater awareness...

Sustainability is setting all the priorities. If we don't have a world, there is no business, no matter how good you are. Siemens has made commitments to meet outward and inward sustainability targets in

the development of our solutions, helping to make product life cycles longer, recycling higher and energy use lower. Technology should not only provide comfort, but also wellbeing. We must look for business models that harness these benefits for the benefit of the entire planet.

What are the dynamics of working with external consultants?

We try to outsource as little as possible. We try to be an autonomous department. However, sometimes there are specialised matters by subject matter or that require a dedication of time that exceeds our capacity, and in these cases, we outsource, as is often the case with litigation.

What three things would you say a lawyer aspiring to become a Legal Director should have?

Integrity. As a legal director you must ensure that the rules are followed, that transactions are done within the framework of legality. Discipline and perseverance. To be the best business partner you must be in constant training to keep up with the pace of the business. Passion, as a motivation to work, applying the law with the aim of improving people's lives. And I would add one more, having a flexible and adaptable mindset that fits the world we are living in, a VUCA world.

By Florencia Gagliardi

To read the full interview on issue number 112 click [here](#).