

8. Symposium “German Desk Lateinamerika”

How to make best use of legal directories

Discussion points prepared by Hermann Knott in consultation with Norman Clark

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What directories should be considered?

- International directories:
 - Chambers: Puts emphasis on client satisfaction, the nature of the transactions, and, to a lesser extent, reputation among other law firms in the market
 - IFLR: Emphasizes deal size (for financially related practice areas)
 - Legal 500: Perhaps less influential in Latin America, but often consulted in Europe and Middle East. It appears to be easier to obtain a first ranking in this directory
 - Who's Who Legal: Strong in Africa
 - Best Lawyers: US based, not strong with regard to Latin America

What directories should be considered?

- Local directories for Latin America
 - Latin Lawyer 250: Widely consulted within Latin America, but less so outside the region
 - Local chapters of international directories – applying the same criteria as described above:
 - Chambers Latin America: High reputation on an international scale
 - IFLR Latin America
 - Legal 500 Latin America

Why seeking an entry in directories?

- Enhance reputation of the firm
- Promote strong practice groups
- Promote practice leaders
- With corporate clients an entry in the directory does improve chances to become short-listed, but the selection of lawyers for a particular mandate is then usually made by direct pitch
- Once the initial entry has been obtained the goal is to move up in the rankings. Client and peer recommendations can be helpful apart from objective improvements (clients, team)

Who should seek an entry – only larger firms?

- No, it is worth the effort for smaller firms as well as competitors also have registered
- In countries in which there is a strong presence by foreign law firms (e.g. Argentina) Chambers often has a separate category for local law firms. As noted above, smaller firms seem to have a good chance of being recommended in Legal 500

What are the steps to be taken to achieve a successful directory entry?

- In case of an initial entry of the firm: Research on the criteria and information on which the directory bases its decision whom to consider for entry
- Collect the required (and desired) information and documents – apart from collecting internally available information it is important to obtain client feedback and ask them to be prepared to be interviewed by telephone by a representative of the directory
- For subsequent entries it is important to continuously monitor which information may be relevant for the next submission
- It is very important, especially with Chambers, to list the accomplishments of more than one partner in a practice area (or, in one-partner practice areas, more than one lawyer)

What are the steps to be taken to achieve a successful directory entry?

- Align the collection and storing of information to the requirements of the directories
- Agree with clients that their names and specific projects may be mentioned to third parties
- Mentioning rankings on letter head and e-Mail footers – tricky issues if the firm is not ranked within the top two tiers because it may be (indirectly) promoting the firms which are ranked higher

Conclusion

- Yes, entries in directories are worth the effort, but should be well prepared –
A weak submission can hurt a strong firm
- Providing externally verified/verifiable information is an important success factor
- Always remember that a listing in a directory is never a substitute for ongoing feedback directly from the clients

Your contacts



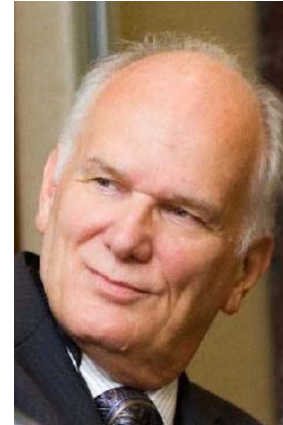
Dr. Hermann Knott, LL.M. (UPenn)
Rechtsanwalt, Attorney-at-Law (New York) / Partner

**Andersen Rechtsanwaltsgesellschaft
Steuerberatungsgesellschaft mbH**

Ottoplatz 1
50679 Köln
Germany

Hermann.Knott@AndersenTaxLegal.de

Tel: +49 221 88835 502
Fax: +49 221 88835 999
Mobil: +49 151 264 59 502
www.andersentaxlegal.de



Norman K. Clark, LL.M.
Attorney-at-Law (Pennsylvania) / Managing Principal

Walker Clark LLC
Fort Myers, Florida
USA

Norman.Clark@walkerclark.com

Tel: +1 305 432 9860
Fax: +1 941 866 2609
Mobil: +1 239 297 7808
www.walkerclark.com