

Build for the future – the importance of HR in law firms

The effectiveness and success of a law firm's HR function can only be measured against the level of investment made in it, defends Maria Brito Goes and Filipa Mendes Pinto, partners at Lisbon-based specialist HR consultants Find.

In order for law firms to maximise the effectiveness of their Human Resources (HR) function, sufficient consideration should be given to the impact that its management will have on its potential for success, says Maria Brito Goes.

"Although the majority of Portuguese law firms are still small or medium size, it is nonetheless important to have someone such as a partner, a senior associate, or a dedicated professional in charge of HR matters," she says.

La eficacia y el éxito de la función que tienen los recursos humanos en un despacho se pueden medir según la cuantía de inversión y la capacidad de decisión de lo que se disponga, afirman Maria Brito Goes y Filipa Mendes Pinto, socias de RRHH consultants Find, con sede en Lisboa.

Such a development is essential to ensure the necessary level of responsibility for the recruitment process, she believes, but also to act as a credible link for internal and external coordination.

Structural changes can also aid a firm's ability to better manage the HR function, explains Filipa Mendes Pinto, having seen Find engaged in a number of consultative processes last year for law firm clients in Lisbon and elsewhere in Portugal.

"It is encouraging to see how firms are becoming more aware of the importance of investment in this field. For example, the implementation of HR as a dedicated area of operation, and the establishment of other



specialist areas to better support lawyers in practice."

Among the key emerging trends apparent as firms' seek to increase the effectiveness of their HR departments, and of their recruitment and development processes, Find highlights rising investment in training, and the transparency of the career prospects that are presented to lawyers.

But this is not enough on its own, they say. "Firms also need to incorporate objective tools to assess and reward their lawyers, and to improve the management of individual expectations and of internal communication. This is essential in order to better ensure the awareness even the youngest lawyers have in the distinct cultures of their firms."

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