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Juan Picón

A 'GIANT' OF THE LEGAL
PROFESSION

Value for money

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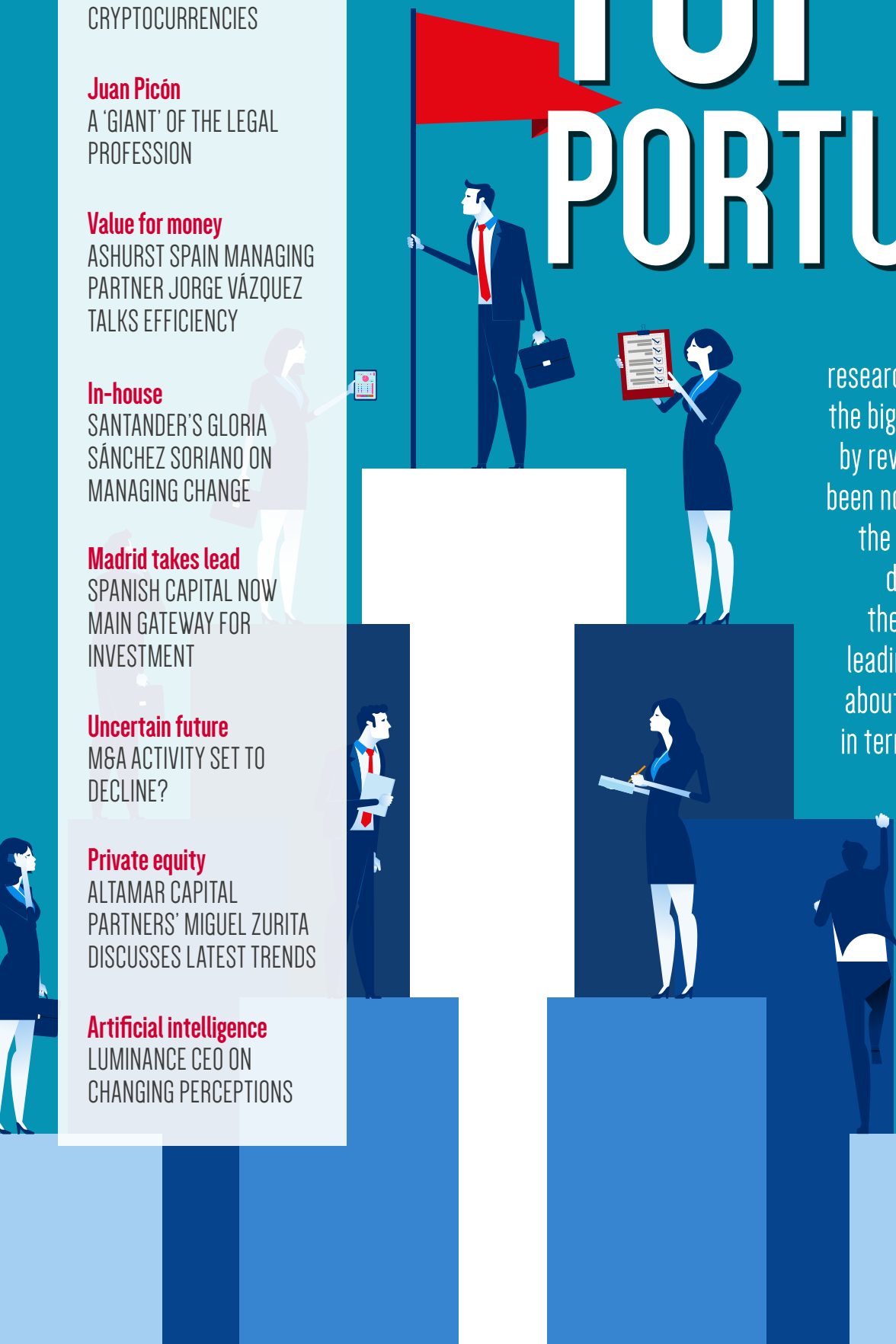
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Iberian Lawyer TOP 30 PORTUGAL

In a pioneering piece of research, Iberian Lawyer reveals the biggest law firms in Portugal by revenue – though firms have been notoriously secretive about the income they generate, we disclose information about the finances of the country's leading firms as well as details about the top performing firms in terms of revenue per partner and revenue per lawyer





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TIME TO SPEAK UP

Clients urged to improve channels of communication with external counsel in order to better articulate their requirements and help law firms understand their business

It's good to talk. Unfortunately, however, it seems that in-house legal departments and the external lawyers they work with are not talking enough. This was one of the conclusions of the recent *Iberian Lawyer Legal Day* event held in Lisbon. Clients were urged to take the time to invite their external lawyers to their offices in order to ensure that they fully understand what they need from their legal service suppliers. Clients were also urged to demand that their external legal advisers provide them with concise, and easily understandable, legal opinions. The message was: If you can't understand the legal advice provided by your lawyer, it's time to change your lawyer. Attendees at the session on legal management – where speakers included CCA Law managing partner **Domingos Cruz** and **Mafalda Mascarenhas Garcia**, IBM Lead Counsel for EU Cloud Code of Conduct – heard that a lack of communication between clients and external counsel is a common problem. There is a view that the roles of in-house

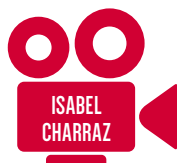


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lawyers have changed, and now they are much more knowledgeable about what they require from external legal advisers. Consequently, it was argued that arranging meetings with external counsel would not only enable in-house lawyers to fully explain what they need from law firms, but also help external lawyers to get a better understanding of their clients' business. When it comes to the legal advice external lawyers provide it must be clear and easy to digest. "If you don't understand your lawyer's legal opinion, change them," said PLMJ partner **Bruno Ferreira**. Another participant said that clients needed to "stop being fooled by law firms that are not adding value".

'FEELING AFRAID'

While using technology can improve legal management in that it can facilitate more cooperation between professionals, it is important that the automation of processes is managed correctly, attendees heard. **Gloria Sanchez**, legal department head of transformation at Banco Santander, said when training people in the automation of contracts, for example, it is important to involve employees in the development of new automated processes as this reduces the chances of them "feeling afraid" of the new technology. "Involve them in the decision-making process and involve them in the design process," she said.

Meanwhile, in-house lawyers' relationship with other parts of the business can be blighted by the 'silo mentality', argued **Luís Graça Rodrigues**, legal manager for Portugal and Lusophone Africa at Indra. To overcome this problem, in-house counsel have to "prove to them [the other members of the organisation], that you know their business," Graça Rodrigues explained. "They have to know us and they have to trust us," he added.

'CUSTOMER-CENTRICITY IS VITAL'

Being client-focussed is crucial for in-house lawyers. In the session on how



digitalisation is transforming business sectors – in which speakers included Antas da Cunha Ecija managing partner **Fernando Antas da Cunha**, Ecija IT/IP manager **Cristina Villasante**, AmRest Holding corporate affairs director **Jaime Tarrero Martos** and Tabaqueira director general **Miguel Matos** – it was stressed that "customer-centricity" is fundamental. Meanwhile, **André Nobre**, head of legal and compliance at PME Investimentos, said that clients need to use digitalisation as an opportunity to "update their own business model". He added: "Digitalisation is a way for a business to change its whole mindset – you can re-think the business from the start and look at what opportunities digitalisation could bring their business." With regard to the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), data breaches are a key concern for in-house lawyers, according to **Isabel Charraz**, country legal counsel at Citibank Portugal. "Cybersecurity is a major issue, in particular how we manage data breaches and protect information," she explained.

The Iberian Lawyer Legal Day event was held in Lisbon at the offices of Tabaqueira. The event was sponsored by Antas da Cunha Ecija, CCA Law, CMS Rui Pena & Arnaut and PLMJ.