

« Former global head of Andersen Legal sets up Paris boutique »
PEOPLE AND FIRMS

People and firms

Former global head of Andersen Legal sets up Paris boutique

Patrick Bignon, ex-global head of EY Law and former worldwide managing partner of Andersen Legal, has launched a new legal management and tax consultancy firm in Paris.

Law Management Consulting primarily advises international law firms, professional services firms and multinationals with substantial legal departments in the French and European markets.

Bignon has identified international legal management services as being in high demand. "This is a time of change in the European legal market and there are great opportunities for law firms willing to seize them," he said, in an interview with *International Tax Review*. "In France in particular, law firms are seeing a period of consolidation and an emphasis on strategic and client development."

He described how his firm tailors its services for large multinationals. "I am working in the context of Sarbanes Oxley and the *Loi sur La Sécurité Financière*, France's financial security law, on the positioning of the legal function and good corporate governance," he said. "Also the performance of the tax department and its relationship with management, as well as risk management." His firm also provides services to a tax or legal department's internal competencies and budget.

The *Loi sur La Sécurité Financière*, France's version of the Sarbanes-Oxley legislation in the US, is one of the most stringent laws of its kind in the world and has required the big four professional services firms to separate from their legal branches. "In-house legal departments are dealing with new regulations on corporate governance stemming from the *Loi sur La Sécurité Financière*, France's financial security law, and increasing pressure to keep costs low," explained Bignon.

As worldwide managing partner of Andersen Legal, Bignon worked on the development of the firm's growth through strategic mergers with several European law firms. In 2002 Ernst & Young approached Bignon to become their global head of EY Law, where he successfully



Patrick Bignon: sees new opportunities for tax departments

integrated 19 former Andersen Legal firms into the EY Law alliance and was responsible for 2,200 lawyers in 34 member firms in 34 countries.

According to Bignon, there is growing interest in France, mainly from international law firms, such as Baker & McKenzie, in experienced international tax advisers. SC

KPMG puts focus on Irish tax advice

KPMG, an accounting, tax and advisory firm, has set up an Ireland Tax Centre of Excellence to help US companies with operations in Ireland and those that are thinking of setting up a base there. The centre of excellence will also provide tax services to Irish companies that have invested in the US.

Pat O'Brien, a tax partner in the Dublin office of KPMG, has moved to New York to take charge of the new unit. He will work with KPMG's 15 other international tax centres of excellence in assisting multinational clients with their cross-border operations and structures.

"The centre will make it easier to facilitate those companies who want to put something into

News in brief

Altria hires Nestlé's international tax counsel

Fabio De Angelis has moved to Altria as senior European tax counsel, where he will be responsible for Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Africa and the company's duty free business worldwide. For the last five years he has been international tax counsel for Nestlé. De Angelis is the current president of the European chapter of the Tax Executives' Institute.

Cravath hires new tax partner

Andrew Needham, a former tax partner at Willie Farr & Gallagher, has become Cravath, Swaine & Moore's first lateral hire for 62 years. His move is the first time since 1943 that Cravath, Swaine & Moore has recruited a partner from outside the firm. Needham has advised clients including Zurich Insurance Company, Midamerican Energy Holdings and Teva Pharmaceuticals. He will join his new firm on April 4 2005.

Canadian firm starts a transfer pricing practice

Cole & Partners, a Canadian business valuation and financial litigation firm, has started a transfer-pricing practice with the hire of David Kemp from KPMG. Kemp has 13 years' experience advising multinational enterprises on transfer-pricing planning, documentation and dispute resolution.

Former EY partner extends his career

Peter Spori, a new tax consultant at Prager Dreyfuss, the Swiss law firm, said that he left Ernst & Young because he wanted to keep working. The big four accounting firm has a retirement age of 60 for its partners. But Spori, who is approaching that age, revealed in an interview with *International Tax Review* that he wanted to keep working.

Europe," said O'Brien, in an interview with *ITR Week*. "The key is for US clients to find a central resource. Ireland is now completing the loop in [KPMG's] European network of centres of excellence."

O'Brien said the enactment of the US Jobs Creation Act in October 2004 was not the reason for the establishment of the Irish centre. "I wish I could say we were that responsive. The Jobs Creation Act was a nice kick-start, but [the centre] was not prompted by it."

A specialist in advising on international leasing structures, O'Brien has been with KPMG since 1979. He has a particular focus on aircraft financing. RC