

BUILDING AN INTERNATIONAL LEGAL WORKFORCE



WORLD DOMINATION

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Does the practice of law have to have borders? Of course, not, given the new global, multi-disciplinary marketplace in which lawyers are increasingly functioning.

But to build an international legal team means successfully navigating the challenging factors of different time zones, team collaboration, and cultural distinctions that might at first be hard to work with or, at the very least, be misunderstood. Utilizing the latest advances in communication and team technology, the hurdles of global team diversity are giving way to smooth operations management allowing for a broad reach to clients and legal talent.

Natural Problem Solvers

Lawyers, of course, are known to be natural problem solvers. They bring to the table years of education, acquired skillsets, and real-world experience. But now more than ever, the other side of that table—facing clients or team members—means the other side of the ocean. However, it is not just a geographical divide separating the American global law practitioner from their colleagues and clients, but rather ways of doing business, notions of quality control, performance deadlines, and often language. Therefore, before expanding your firm's team to include overseas staff, it is critical that you 'do your homework', in order to learn cultural nuances...lest they become nuisances.

Tearing Down Language Barriers

Although English is commonly referred to as the 'international language' or the 'language of business', it is essential to remember that English is not the mother tongue for many of the people you will be working with. Even if you do not become fluent in the lingua loci, at least familiarize yourself with some basic level of communication in the foreign language to lessen that particular hiccup in staff cohesiveness. This will facilitate communication with clients and colleagues and show that you are sincerely interested in engaging with their language and culture.

Adopting Common Policies

Cultural differences affect work principles and styles. What may be expected in your American office might be unheard of among foreign staff. Everything from what is considered business dress to what is acceptable as business etiquette can be as different as east to west. By adopting a firm-wide set of guidelines and standard policies—with input from staff on both sides of the ocean—you will be able to set the tone of your cross-cultural firm. Everything from punctuality to shift responsibilities and management styles should, ideally, be 'plug and play' so that staff assigned to any branch globally will fit right into the 'office culture' and be able to hit the ground running while there. Your quality control and delivery standards metrics should be universal to achieve unity and synergy across your entire operation. However, the notion of inter-office integration should not be considered as something to get acquainted with for those traveling to the foreign office; rather, it should be so well blended into your firm's culture that all of your online conferencing sessions and other collaborative endeavors will function seamlessly—as if the other party is in the same room. That being said, there is no ignoring that achieving such symmetry is no easy task given the fundamental cultural distinctions that each of us, based on our various backgrounds, are

Executive Summary

› The Issue

How to build a thriving international legal team.

› The Gravamen

Establishing a firm-wide culture that integrates your international team's disparate and diverse cultures is extremely important to the success of firm globalization.

› The Path Forward

Take the time and effort to reduce all divides as much as possible, whether linguistic, cultural or otherwise, to lessen the distinction of an 'other' among your team members.

engrained with and bring to the table.

Accommodating the Time Zone Issue

If there is one big 'elephant in the room' when setting up and staffing an overseas office, it is the issue of different time zones. While scheduling conferences for 4:00 PM, close to the end of your day, might work immensely well for the ten people attending in New York, do you want to call that meeting for your overseas staff when it is already 11:00 PM by them? Hardly. Finding a time for firm-wide conferences can eliminate both annoyances and the pressures of late-night meetings for your overseas participants. And, of course, it is critical that when invitations go out for a meeting with the time designated, the notice identifies which time zone the start time refers to.

Connecting and Staying Connected

If there is one lesson learned in the COVID-19 remote work and virtual attendance experience, it is that technology can be your best friend. And your worst enemy. Whether connecting via Zoom®, Microsoft Teams®, or any other online meeting platform, unification of your domestic office and your foreign offices can only work with solid, reliable connectivity. Accordingly, this is one area where you do not want to skimp on set-up or maintenance expenses. Your data line will be your lifeline, and whether it is functioning for a

remote deposition, document review, or strategic planning, neither your staff nor your clients will be very forgiving over poor connections, screen freezes, or garbled 'underwater' voice communication.

In particular, 'test your tech' before that important meeting with a client or opposing counsel, lest unwelcome hardware, software, or service provider problem creeps in at the wrong time.

Building a Client-Facing Team

Although 'client-facing' generally refers to those team members who directly interact with your clients, the best practice is to consider all of your team members—regardless of where they are located—as 'client-facing.' Sounds strange? Not really. From the first impression made by the receptionist who answers the phone in your domestic or foreign office to the paralegal or associate sending a routine communication asking for documents from a client, each person who in any way communicates with a client or colleague is, at that moment, the face of your firm. Lawyers who practice the 'full-time client-facing' doctrine will likely see that firm discipline yields exceptional results.

Action

1 Learn:
Study the culture, habits, business etiquette, and expectations of your overseas clients and the overseas staff you will be working with.

2 Adopt:
Think out of the 'American box' and adopt firm-wide policies that result in a personal style of your firm that has benefitted from input contributed cross-culturally.

3 Sensitivity:
From accommodation for time zone differences to calendaring for local holidays, show sensitivity towards and an understanding of what is expected among your overseas staff.

4 Invest in Tech:
Find out what the real needs are in both your domestic office and foreign office for operating seamlessly without unwanted technical glitches getting in the way of your global collaboration efforts.



Further Reading

1. <https://www.lawpracticetoday.org/article/collaborating-across-cultures-how-to-handle-the-p pressures-of-delivering-seamless-service/>
2. <https://lawgro.com/software/multi-user-legal-software-law-firms/>
3. <https://backdocket.com/2020/07/20/remote-for-law-firms/>
4. <https://www.bizjournals.com/bizjournals/news/2020/01/17/law-firms-seeking-international-growth-must.html>
5. <https://www.attorneyatwork.com/tech-tips-teams-collaboration-tools/>





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After receiving his Juris Doctor degree from The John Marshall Law School in Chicago, Mr. Brochin served as an Administrative Law Judge with the Illinois Department of Labor for six years where he presided over cases dealing with job separation issues and matters pertaining to contested Unemployment Insurance claims. He also co-wrote the agency's administrative rules, and periodically served as a 'ghost writer' for Board of Review decisions.

Following that position, he was Director of Development for a Chicago-area non-profit college where he was responsible for High Net Worth donations to the institution. For the next eighteen years he practiced as a solo practitioner attorney with an emphasis in the fields of Real Estate law and Commercial Contracts transactions, and was an agent for several national title insurance agencies.

In 2003 he was recruited to head up a U.S. title insurance research office in Israel, a position he held for four years, and between 2007-2017 he participated in litigation support for several high-profile cases. He has taught Business Law as a faculty member of the Jerusalem College of Technology, and has authored a wide variety of legal White Papers and timely legal articles as a professional legal content writer for GPL clients. Separate from his legal writing, he has co-authored academic articles on Middle East security topics that have been published in peer-reviewed publications.



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William Anderson is Managing Director and Head of Law & Compliance. He leads the GreenPoint practice in providing regulatory, legal, and technology solutions to law firms, legal publishers, and in-house law departments around the world, overseeing our team of experienced US attorneys and data and technology experts. Will has over 25 years' experience working with corporations to improve the management of their legal and corporate compliance functions. Will began his legal career as a litigator with a predecessor firm to Drinker, Biddle LLP. He then served as in-house counsel to Andersen Consulting LLP, managing risk and working with outside counsel on active litigation involving the firm.

Will has leveraged his legal experience interpreting regulations and appearing before federal (DOJ, SEC, FTC) and state agencies (NYAG) to oversee research and other areas at Bear Stearns. In this capacity, he counseled analysts on regulatory risk and evolving compliance requirements. Will also consulted on the development of a proprietary tool to ensure effective documentation of compliance clearance of research reports. Will then went on to work in product development and content creation for a global online compliance development firm pioneering the dynamic updating of regulated firms' policies and procedures from online updates and resources. Will holds a Juris Doctorate with High Honors from the Washington University School of Law in Saint Louis and is admitted to state and federal bars. He lives in Pawling, NY, with his wife and daughter.



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- ▶ By virtue of our unique methods and a proven history of providing top-tier legal services to our clients, the GPESR team is capable of supporting a diverse client base both in the US and globally. From solo practitioners to AmLaw 100 firms, legal publishers, Fortune 1000 companies, and in-house law departments, our team offers legal staffing solutions to suit any business needs. GPESR provides skilled attorneys in either permanent placements or temporary contracts through a selective recruiting process. Adherence to quality, value, and flexibility are hallmarks of our offerings.
- ▶ Ensuring privacy and security of client data is a critical component of our business. GreenPoint has instituted rigorous physical, administrative, and technical safeguards to protect the integrity, security, and privacy of client data, all of which comply with the most stringent US and global standards and regulations.

About GreenPoint Law & Compliance

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- ▶ Our core team of experienced US attorneys is based in Israel and works US hours. The breadth of experience of our attorneys ensures high-quality, cost-effective results across a wide range of legal, compliance, and regulatory matters.
- ▶ GreenPoint's methodology and proven track record of achieving client objectives has resulted in a broad base of clients in the United States, ranging from Fortune 500 insurance companies to solo practitioners, law firms, in-house law departments, and legal publishers. GreenPoint attorneys are selectively recruited and deployed based on possessing demonstrable subject matter expertise covering a broad spectrum of substantive US laws and regulations. The work product of our attorneys is thoroughly vetted internally before delivery to client. Adherence to quality, value and flexibility is at the core of our foundation.

