

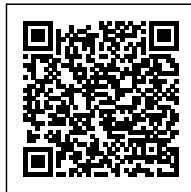
CHARLES ADAMS: “MY PROJECT FOR CLIFFORD CHANCE”

Posted on 14 February 2023



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MAG meets the global managing partner of law firm Magic Circle. “We want to be the legal point of reference for our international clients. We want to increasingly reinforce our image as a unified firm.”

What distinguishes the management of a law firm when it is an institution? The ability to be recognised (recognisability). Because in this type of organization, the leaders of the structure are a reflection of its history, its culture, as well as its values and principles. **Clifford Chance** has always had the goal of being a global law firm in mind. And this ambition, in the last year, has resulted in the election to the “throne” of global managing partner of one of the professionals who has most embodied in his career the pursuit of this goal.

Charles Adams was, for years, managing partner of the firm's Italian office; he then worked “on the ground” to grow the firm's presence in the United States, based in New York; after which he returned to Italy to be named, in 2018, managing partner for continental Europe; until he was named, in 2022, global managing partner.

Managing partner for the implementation of a project that aims to consolidate and grow the organization worldwide. “This is a law firm that aspires to be a world leader for a long time,” he tells MAG, during an interview at the firm's headquarters in via Broletto, in Milan, which since last May is also the official address of its global managing partner. (where also works, since last May, the global managing partner).

This is the first time since 1987, the year Clifford Chance was founded, that the head office is not in London. A detail, however, that speaks volumes about how the Magic Circle firm is determined to cement its image as a global law firm. "The idea is to have an organization of time such that "where I am" is not necessarily tied to "what I do for a living," says Adams, who has to manage its functions between offices in Europe, London and large-scale relocations that will periodically take it from the United States to Hong Kong via the Middle East.

Clifford Chance, as of January 2023, has 31 offices worldwide, around 600 partners out of a total of nearly 3,000 professionals and with turnover that, as of April 30, 2022, grew 8% year-on-year to £1.969 billion (about €2.3 billion). "We are coming from seven years of consecutive growth and in the last one we also exceeded £2 million profit per partner (pep)," Adams stresses. An important starting point for a development project that the lawyer outlines in the wake of continuity with what was done by his predecessors.

The most important thing? "We have managed to grow by following our strategy based on business diversification and a global approach. We want to be the legal point of reference for our international clientele. And in this regard, we intend to increasingly reinforce our image as a unified company."

Cultivating the firm's culture and ensuring that Clifford Chance's lawyers fit exactly to a certain idea of the profession. The market focus will ensure that the investment in talent and people is increasingly ingrained in the firm. "It's always been a feature of ours," says Adams, "but that doesn't mean we have any preclusion toward lateral hires. In the past year, 17 lateral hires have brought new partners into the firm. While internal promotions, also in the last financial year, amounted to 37: it was the firm's most copious round of appointments since 2007.

There will continue to be a need to turn laterally, to consolidate presence in strategic areas or grow in strategic sectors. "The U.S. is one of our priorities," continues the global managing partner, "we have already given important signals in this direction, raising the number of partners dealing with funds in the U.S. from 3 to 8 in a short time. This is the way we intend to move forward, making it clear that we are not interested in becoming a US firm, but want to preserve and grow our position in the US as a global firm." There are the new markets. "We have a significant presence in China about which we will have to think about how to take advantage of opportunities in light of the current global geopolitical situation. Then there are other markets with respect to which we have a selective view of growth-Japan, Australia, Singapore." And then there is Europe, which remains critical. At present, Clifford Chance's global business is split between the Americas, with 13%; Asia-Pacific, with 17.5%; the Middle East, with 3%; and Europe, with 66%, of which the UK accounts for just over half.

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