

■ BOSCH

*Francesc Dominguez*

# THE Lawyer's PERSONAL BRAND

Boost your professional career



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**"You need to practice in a law firm where you can develop the best version of yourself as a professional."**

Having the right partners and providers is also essential. Indeed, an excellent supplier or external advisor can provide enormous added value and mark a turning point for the firm or the lawyer.

On the other hand, mission, values and vision are also the basis for success. They are your DNA, and you need to define them correctly. Although many professionals do not pay attention to them or do not take the time to define them, I recommend that you do so. It's crucial.

**Marc:** What is meant by mission, vision, etc.?

**Paul:** Your **mission** as a professional is your *raison d'être*, your purpose, your function or role, your contribution to the market. In other words, it is a guide to who you are, what you do and what you shouldn't do; in short, how you want to achieve your goals. The quintessential rationale in professional life involves helping clients, providing additional value. Everyone has a mission in their personal and professional life. Spell them out concisely.

**Vision** is the direction, the "horizon" you are aiming for, the goals you want to achieve in the long term. It defines where you are going, where you want to be in a few years' time. It is imperative that you stick to your vision too.

**Your values** (what is important to you) and your mission is what really differentiates you from other lawyers. Together with your vision, they constitute the firm's or lawyer's DNA, and for many, their strategic advantage over competitors. They single you out; that is why you

need to invest the time in defining all three. In the case of a law firm, the clearer, more focused and powerful they are the better, because they also attract talent, as lawyers and support staff increasingly choose firms not just based on remuneration but on their values principally, and for their mission and vision. In fact, clients also choose on that same basis.

There is another important factor.

**Chiara:** Which one?

**Paul:** Strategic foresight: knowing what market you are in or, in other words, what the potential client is really hiring for and how you can achieve your goals.

**Hans:** Any other factors...?

**Paul:** Financial, material and time resources. Lastly, something that many professionals could improve on but don't: **changing habits**. For example, **eliminating all those activities that do not add value**, those that waste money, energy or time, and which could often be delegated or eliminated. Bad habits cause stagnation or make you ineffective or inefficient.

You need to adopt good habits: have a positive mindset, get enough sleep, exercise regularly according to your body constitution; practice meditation or relaxation techniques, eat healthily, be punctual, avoid delaying everything (procrastinating), plan the day or the week ahead, avoid impulsive behavior such as continually checking and answering emails or messages received through social media; delegate, etc.

You need to acquire habits that make it easier for you to achieve your goals. When lawyers attempt to relate habits and marketing, they often come up with multiple excuses at the mere sound of the word "marketing": "I don't have

time, I have other priorities", and so on. You find time if managing your personal brand is a priority.

**Chiara:** True.

**Paul:** You can learn to manage your time better, and you will find time if you consider marketing, that is, business generation, branding and client loyalty, a priority. As Jim Collins stated, "**the 'not-to-do' list is more important than the 'to-do' list.**" Take time to decide what to stop doing.

For example, educate clients about the duration of meetings (one hour maximum, with exceptions), check your mailbox less frequently and at stipulated times; avoid interruptions and, with few exceptions, do not give out your mobile phone number as frequent interruptions make you inefficient and you convey that your time is not valuable. You can also save time at home: watch less TV and Internet and wake up earlier. You know the saying...

**Chiara:** The early bird catches the worm.

**Paul:** And there are other skills that you can develop: when to delegate more and when to say no, in other words, learn not to get carried away.

**Chiara:** I often don't know how to say no.

**Paul:** Too much empathy can make it difficult to set boundaries in your relationships, to say no, to say what you think. You need to set boundaries in relationships and defend your interests. If you learn to say no, you will value yourself more, your time more, and so will others.

A few years ago, I underwent a behavioral study. One of my weaknesses, to do with my interest in helping those in need, was that I found it difficult to say no when others needed and requested my time or knowledge. More in particular, the study reflected that since I was so keen in

assisting others and settling conflict, readily giving up my time, knowledge and resources without expecting anything in return, others could think that I was too altruistic and that I was always going to be willing to give anything to anyone, in detriment to my own interest. As a result, others could think I was weak and take advantage.

**Chiara:** What did you do, Paul, in the face of that?

**Paul:** I acknowledged it and took measures to avoid a systematic abuse of it, because, as Aristotle said, "virtue is a mean between two extremes", it is about finding a reasonable balance. If you look around you, virtue is about balance, particularly in the Manichaeic times we live in.

**"Virtue is about finding balance."**

I acquired good habits to ponder whether to adopt that type of behavior or not. I still have a slight tendency to be altruistic, but now only with those I consider really need my help, treat me with respect and do not have the resources to pay me or are going through tough times. Also, in the case of loyal clients who I realize need certain services that are not included in the contract, I often choose not to time or invoice them for it.

**Chiara:** Thank you, Paul.

**Hans:** Other foundations of a successful career I suppose could be the use of information and technology. For example, the way in which you make use of the information or the technology you have, since they can make you more effective and efficient, more productive, have more clients, improve your client service and the firm.

**Paul:** Of course.



In this book Francesc Dominguez presents, in an entertaining and practical way, how competent lawyers can develop their full potential to achieve their goals and create a relevant space for themselves in the market. Or, if they already have it, to enhance it even further.

The book is aimed at all types of lawyers, from those practicing in small to medium sized and solo law firms, to those working as employees, partners, associates or juniors in a large law firm or a Big Four. It is also addressed to in-house lawyers and other professionals, such as economists, advisers or consultants.

An essential book for professionals who want to make a qualitative leap in their career. Enjoy!

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