

CORONAVIRUS, DOBRAUZ (PWC LEGAL): «IT WAS A LAWYER-CALLING»

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Switching to remote work and creating new social habits through virtual spaces: Covid-19 outbreak changed the way of working also for those who are more technologically prepared. Guenther Dobrauz, Partner at PwC Zurich and Leader of PwC Legal Switzerland, has taken part to Legalcommunity.ch initiative [«how are you coping with the pandemic?»](#). Specialized in LegalTech, Guenther tells us how, in his views, the pandemic will change the approach also for those who weren't originally positively disposed towards technology, but are now experiencing the benefits...

What was the first thing you've done when the pandemic exploded?

Everybody was surprised by this as nobody has experienced something like that before. The thing that impressed me most is that we managed to move everybody into home office within a day. We succeeded in continuing to work and to deliver. In any case, the performance of the IT infrastructure at PwC Switzerland allows all our staff to work from home at any time - even simultaneously - with full access to all PwC documents and materials. Additionally, we offer a huge degree of flexibility.

That clearly helped.

What are the main challenges and opportunities?

The positive side was that everybody saw the benefits of technology: we can still continue to work, collaborate and engage with our clients. The big challenge I personally see right now is that people are being isolated at home. They're missing their teams. We are "social animals" in the end. We like to engage with people. Honestly, I miss my team. I need to exchange thoughts, talk with them or bounce off ideas.

Human vs digital...

Most of our works is in multidisciplinary teams. Now, you can compensate for that with online video-meetings, but, again, I miss my team and real contacts. The good ideas and the great solutions usually come with meetings. When there are five people sitting in a room and everybody brings ideas to the table and we are just not completely used to creating that environment digitally. So, it's not black or white, digital or not digital. This situation will teach us to be even more flexible, technology-empowered, independent: this means that we choose when we do what.

So, how is being a lawyer in times of isolation?

As my grandfather used to say: legal profession is more about social engineering. It's about solving problems with people and for people. You can't do it in isolation, you still need human interaction. This pandemic shows us what is really essential, what is important, what is activity rather than achievement.

One initiative you put in place?

PwC is the biggest legal service provider in terms of geographical coverage. We managed to pull together datasets with essential information around Covid-19 impact in key areas in some 80+ territories to be available to our clients. This shows the strength of our network and the ability to continue to collaborate there even under most challenging circumstances. We got lots of questions that we usually answer with publications or events, but we managed to switch to online forms: the aim is bringing lots of information to different clients at the same time and this was very well received.

How has been the feedback so far?

We got a good feedback and that's good as we always have to remember the original meaning of lawyer, from Latin *advocatus*: someone you call upon in a moment of need. These times called many a lawyer to be at the side of clients and help them in a difficult moment. This makes me little proud, happy and also humble.