

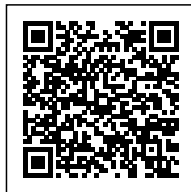
DISCOVERING ADVESTRA: THE NEW 'SMALL BIG' LAW FIRM

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by alessio foderi

Founded in 2020, Advestra arrives in the Swiss legal market with the idea to have a corporate law firm combining the power of a big firm with the personal and lean approach of a small one. Based in Zurich, by the start of 2021, the team counts 20 professionals and already worked in important deals such as the advice to H.I.G. Capital on the sale of Infinigate to Bridgepoint. For practice areas they do not cover, they have teamed up with specialist law firms leading in their field to deliver



comprehensive services to clients. MAG has spoken with **Sandro Fehlmann** (SF - pictured left) and **Thomas Reutter** (TR - pictured above) to know more about this project...

Advestra is a brand-new firm...

SF: Advestra is a new firm, looking to combine the best of both worlds: the power, experience and expertise of a large firm and the agility and personal approach of a small one. Hence our slogan "*The small big law firm*". That said, the founding partners of Advestra were all previously partners and associates at a leading Swiss law firm, in that sense, we are a spin-off, too.

Why did you decide to launch the firm?

TR: Mostly, out of entrepreneurial spirit and ambition. We are a group of people driven by the aspiration to create the best services and solutions possible for our clients – and we are passionate about the law. We saw the opportunity to create something special in the Swiss legal market and went ahead with our plan.

Also, you launched the firm in a challenging moment...

SF: Even in a crisis, the legal sector will hardly run out of work, but the focus shifts and plenty of opportunities are still out there. Of course, marketing the firm would be easier if physical meetings and international travel were possible.

Do you feel there is a gap in the market?

SF: We are convinced that Advestra serves a demand in the market. Our team has outstanding legal skills, but we bring more than that to the table: for one, a clear understanding of the economic drivers of a transaction and its importance for our client – we look beyond the legal aspects. On the other hand, we show uncompromising drive to contribute to the successful execution of a deal as well as a hands-on attitude. And we enjoy working with our clients' teams!

You also count on a young team...

TR: Yes, it is worth mentioning, that four out of seven partners are below 40, i.e. the average age in the partnership is much lower than that of most corporate law firms, where the rainmakers tend to be in their mid to late fifties. This reflects on the culture of the firm and on how things are done.

But, at present, how is important to act as a team?

SF: The team is paramount to our success. The fact that most of the staff have known each other and have worked with each other before, has made the start of Advestra a lot easier. Especially given that we don't see each other as often with everyone working remotely due to the pandemic. Teamwork and mutual trust are a cornerstone of our work ethic, they are values we have all committed to.

How can Advestra answer to an ever-changing legal market landscape and new legal needs?

TR: Most importantly, by remaining flexible and agile. Before we launched the firm, we made sure to have a very clear picture of what the market looks for in a firm active in our practice areas, e.g. by making sure to understand what practice areas we would need to cover ourselves in order for clients to be happy to work with us. We are now well-positioned but must make sure to be able to adapt quickly, should it be required. This element of agility will remain essential throughout.

In what practice area are you specialized? And with which industries do you mostly collaborate?

TR: We advise clients on matters relating to Corporate M&A, Capital Markets, Finance, Financial Services and Tax. With regards to industry sectors, our experience mirrors the Swiss economy. Clients include financial institutions, pharmaceuticals and biotech companies, industrials, real estate and tech firms, to name a few. We also regularly advise international investment banks and PE firms.

What are the main objectives for the firm?

SF: In a first stage, we want to firmly establish our brand among the leading Swiss law firms. We are doing so, for one, by getting the word out that our firm has launched and explaining what we do and then also – and most importantly! – by giving our best for our clients to live up to our promise. The firm will grow, too – in fact, we are hiring.

TR: Many law firm names are powerful brands that work like platforms helping lawyers build their career. As for now, we don't have that at Advestra. We want to show that we can create such a platform with our firm.

Looking to the future: what journey you think Advestra will take?

SF: I am careful when it comes to looking into the crystal ball. However, I can say that the start of our firm has been promising. I am confident that Advestra will become a permanent fixture in the Swiss legal market when it comes to complex transactional work.

TR: Our firm has a team of exceptional lawyers, including, what I believe will be a next generation of leading business lawyers in Switzerland. We are therefore really well-positioned to make this venture a success.