

A Boutique with a "Family Culture" Focused on Foreign Investment:

António Patrício and Bárbara Pestana, partners at Paxlegal, have reviewed the first three years of the boutique's activity. Speaking to *Advocatus*, they assure their intentions to remain a small structure, maintaining a "family culture" and close relationships with their clients. In the future, they plan to relocate their office, expand the team, and invest in a new area of practice.

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Photographs by Hugo Amaral

Founded in 2021, Paxlegal aims to maintain its status as a small organization with a "family-like culture" and close proximity to clients. However, there are already plans for an office

relocation, team expansion, and venturing into a new area of practice.

Reflecting positively on the initial years of operation, partners António Patrício and Bárbara Pestana acknowledge that after a challenging start, they were able to establish a business plan only in the last year.

"We started with a very small project, just António and myself as partners, and we had brought on two more interns. Consequently, we already had our clients. However, since we founded Paxlegal, there has been exponential growth in terms of workload, to the extent that we even moved offices and expanded our team. I would say we almost didn't have time to look at our firm and organize it the way we wanted," explains Bárbara Pestana.

The next step now is to focus more on restructuring the boutique's framework, which currently consists of nine lawyers. "We will be hiring two more lawyers soon and we are also considering relocating. We need a larger space," adds the partner.

Three years later, having "exceeded" expectations, the feedback they have received has been overwhelmingly positive, both from clients and colleagues in the industry. As a result, they are seeing clients come through referrals from others, which "means they are satisfied, and we have

had many referrals," emphasizes António Patrício.

The partner further explained that they collaborate with several migration agencies abroad and have formed an alliance with an American immigration law firm. This partnership allows them to expand their area of operation and increase their client base.

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Barbara Pestana, Partner at Paxlegal.

Regarding these partnerships, Bárbara Pestana explained that they operate on a basis of specific projects referred to them and vice versa. "The majority of our clientele is foreign. I would say 80% to 85% of our clients are foreign," she added. Paxlegal also has a Korean Desk that has allowed them to enter the Asian market.

THE NEXT STEP WILL BE IN TECHNOLOGY

"We aim to do more and better and position ourselves at the forefront in terms of innovation, knowledge, and excellence." This is a motto the boutique has embraced from day one. However, one thing is certain: innovation "is always ahead," no matter how much they strive to innovate.

"We are always chasing after innovation (laughs), but we have a very close relationship with our IT team, which helps us and even implements procedures for a faster response, automations, etc.," mentions Bárbara Pestana. However, partner António Patrício acknowledges that they manage to achieve a certain level of "excellence" in their results.

In addition to other factors, one specific area contributing to these results is foreign investment. From the outset, Paxlegal has focused on foreign investment, and despite the workload, they aim to maintain a "family culture," close client relationships, and avoid excessive growth.

"When we started the firm, we placed a strong emphasis on foreign investment. I think it was a good decision because the country has indeed attracted a lot of foreign citizens in recent years. Perhaps around 80% of our clientele is foreign," explained António Patrício. However, he also ensures that they have never abandoned traditional legal practice, such as private law.

"Now we are indeed considering investing in new areas, especially in a new technological area, but it is still early to discuss this topic," Bárbara Pestana elaborates.

One thing is certain, despite the fierce competition in Lisbon, the firm

does not feel 'suffocated' by the large law firms. "What we often experience is clients coming from big firms. They go there because they are referred to a senior lawyer or partner who is well-known and highly knowledgeable in the matter, whom they only meet in the first meeting, and then never again. They lose contact because they are handed over to juniors. Therefore, we have had many clients come to us because of this," notes António Patrício.