

Consultants Follow Law Firms' Footsteps with Transatlantic Deal

By Miriam Rozen
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Left to Right: Brad Hildebrandt and Tony Williams.

At least some law firms thought it was natural that Florida-based Hildebrandt Consulting and London-based Jomati Consultants would join forces.

Why?

Because they were the ones that helped prompt the new strategic alliance, which the companies first made public on Monday.

"Some of our clients suggested we do this," explained Brad Hildebrandt, who declined to identify which clients nudged him and Jomati founder Tony Williams to do the deal.

Law firm clients that "are exploring international options" pressed the idea, according to Williams, who previously served as a global managing partner for Clifford Chance and Anderson Legal before starting his consulting business in 2002.

A growing number of law firms are considering expanding globally both for opportunistic and defensive reasons, Williams said. As worldwide trade increases and the U.S. domestic legal market matures, the rest of the globe looks better to more law firms, he said. In addition, when a rival law firm adds a new office in a new city where an existing client operates, an attentive managing partner has to recognize the potential threat—and potentially respond by evaluating opening an office there too, Williams said.

Hildebrandt and Jomati, under their new arrangement, will operate as a joint venture whenever it best serves clients needs, both Williams and Hildebrandt said.

Jomati previously had an alliance with another law firm consultancy, Altman Weil, but that has ended, according to Williams and Cathy Roach, a spokesperson for Altman Weil. "We recently decided to part ways. We wish Tony nothing but the best in his new venture," Roach said in an email.

Hildebrandt and Jomati will jointly counsel law firm clients on "strategic development, international management structures, international remuneration systems and development of international

THE AMERICAN LAWYER

platforms, including new offices, strategic alliances, best friends relationships and mergers and acquisitions," according to a statement from the consultants.

In previous years, Hildebrandt and Williams have worked together with the same clients only on a "coincidental" basis, Hildebrandt said. For the past six months, however, he and Williams mapped out the strategic alliance, Hildebrandt said.

Is a full-fledged merger next for the companies? Both men adopted a wait-and-see answer.

"We'll do what's best for our clients," Williams said.

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