

PESTALOZZI

ATTORNEYS AT LAW



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Ones to Watch for 2016: The Leading Tax Experts

Pestalozzi Attorneys at Law support international and domestic clients in all aspects of Swiss law from their offices in Zurich and Geneva. Nils Harbeke, Head of the firm's Tax Practice talks us through how they support clients in this complex area of law.

Pestalozzi was the first Swiss law firm to develop a high-end tax practice, making our firm pioneers in this area. Established over 100 years ago, Pestalozzi has one of the longest traditions among all Swiss law firms in cross-border work. Alongside offering tax advice the firm also provides project management services for cross-border tax work, which is a feature that many of our competitors do not offer.

The firm's client base includes companies among the world's top 100 biggest enterprises, and Pestalozzi represents not only an impressive number of the world's top 100 biggest companies but also a range of leading Swiss firms.

As the firm is a full service law firm we are able to provide tax and legal services as integrated services and apply a holistic approach.

For example, we are able to support joint venture structures where we cover tax efficient financing and repatriation alongside the required corporate work. In our cross-border sales manuals, we integrate both relevant tax and regulatory guidance. For our clients' global mobility programs we are able to cover tax along with immigration and employment.

What really sets the firm apart is that we are able to offer clients a dedicated relationship manager, who acts as a single point of contact, making sure that all required services are covered and supporting the client throughout the process.

Although much of our work is supporting clients through individual challenges, we have a number of ongoing relationships with our clients. In this case we alert the client of future changes and discuss our suggested solutions thereto, ensuring that they are communicated with constantly and fully supported whenever any major development occurs.

This approach is fundamental to our work, as we believe that tax advisors must provide clear guidance and have to show all possible routes to achieve the goal and must anticipate changes in the tax laws and tax practice. A tax advisor must assume responsibility as a business partner of the client.

In this respect, we are of the view that "consultancy" is the overarching roof under which tax advice is given. This means that whenever we undertake a project we always endeavour to understand the client's product offering and the client's position in the market, including a sense for recent developments, as well as gaining an awareness of the corporate culture of the client. All of these aspects are important pillars for providing sustainable tax advice.

Looking ahead to the future of the tax law industry, we believe that we will see even more demand for industry specific knowledge, and as such we as a business are looking to broaden the scope of available service offerings.

We also believe that the "traditional" tax and legal advisory industry will get closer to what is currently marketed as business "consultancy", and are adapting our business accordingly. The tax and legal advisory industry is about to undergo a fundamental industrialization process, and will become more digitalised in the future. Those who manage to research and develop new ways of automating simple tasks will stay ahead of the competition.

