

The Legal 500 Europe, Middle East & Africa 2019 edition

Interview with, to feature online at legal500.com
from April 2019 – April 2020

NAME: DARIUSZ SZCZEŚNIAK
JOB TITLE: MANAGING PARTNER
FIRM: DMS DeBenedetti Majewski Szczesniak

Intro line: *Managing Partner Dariusz Szczesniak talks about DMS's 15 years of experience and successes, as well as plans for future development*

1) What do you see as the main points that differentiate DMS from your competitors?

When we set up DMS in 2004, we had a vision of a law firm offering our clients expert legal services, primarily in the field of business law, covering private equity transactions, criminal law, litigation and arbitration, as well as in the area of bankruptcy and restructuring law.

During our 15 years of operation, we have not only managed to expand the scope of services we can offer, but also to materially strengthen them. Our success is from earning the trust of our clients, who come back to us or recommend us to others.

The idea underlying our work is to offer the highest quality comprehensive, legal services based on partnership. We wanted to build a practice with the legal knowledge and confidence to seek out solutions that are non-standard, innovative and far-reaching. We are always available to our clients; we listen to them carefully and make sure they are comfortable, safe and successful.

Even though we are not a global legal corporation, we do not have offices in other countries, we offer legal services to both Polish and international clients, individuals and the largest international companies. Thanks to our cross-border network of law firms cooperating with us internationally, our experience and the professional knowledge of the lawyers working with us, as well as our fluency in a number of foreign languages, we represent clients not only on the Polish market but also abroad.

2) Which practices do you see growing in the next 12 months? What are the drivers behind that?

Our experience and observation of the market show that we can expect further growth in some areas of our practice, such as those associated with GDPR. The entry into force of this new law in 2018, the need to implement its regulations to the business practices of entities operating on the market, as well as the potential for disputes in this area, is likely to generate increased demand for legal services connected with this field of law.

In particular in the first half of this year, we expect an increase in M&A transactions. Towards the end of the year and next year, we anticipate that the number of such transactions will drop off, while the demand related to restructuring services will increase.

In all these crucial areas we have managed to build a very strong position, offering comprehensive legal services of specialised lawyers with experience in the most complicated matters.

We are ready to work intensively in these areas in the months to come.

3) What's the main change you've made in the firm that will benefit clients?

It is our philosophy to invest in the quality of our services, so that we can offer our clients the greatest level of satisfaction.

Therefore, we strive to ensure that our lawyers increase their qualifications and we push to make the office administration ever more efficient. At the same time, we actively participate in the prestigious network Globalaw, which allows us to share experience with foreign law firms.

In our constant pursuit of optimising our services, we take part in rankings of legal services organised by the most recognised assessment bodies in the world.

I am extremely proud that DMS is recommended in the most important categories for us every year. This is a very valuable reward for our work, and also an important signal for our existing and potential clients.

4) Is technology changing the way you interact with your clients, and the services you can provide them?

Naturally – to a certain extent.

Modern technology makes our communication with clients from all over world considerably easier.

Technology means that the efficient provision of services by DMS, including transborder matters, does not constitute a problem.

The newest technologies are also used in the administration of the office – which consequently has a material effect improving the efficiency of our cooperation with clients. Everything happens fast, expeditiously, effectively, and with the highest level of accuracy.

This year, to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the opening of our law firm, we have decided to modernise our internet website. We wanted to make it more modern, visitor-friendly and easy to use on all mobile devices.

This is a part of our image, and one that often influences the decisions of potential clients whether or not to entrust their matters to us.

Nevertheless, despite all the benefits of modern technology, the legal services sector continues to be rather conservative. Not all innovative technological solutions, which make work in other professions so efficient, would find a place in a law firm. What is of the utmost importance for us is to maintain all the possible standards of confidentiality and safety of data, and to continue to treat hard copies of all the documents with due care.

5) Can you give us a practical example of how you have helped a client to add value to their business?

All the legal services rendered to our clients are aimed at ensuring them the expected assistance and solutions beneficial for their business.

Certainly, the best examples will be the M&A transactions in which we were involved – where our clients were the largest players on the insurance, foodstuffs and other markets, and they took

over shares in domestic entities, allowing our clients to materially strengthen their strategic position and increase market value.

There is no doubt that the number of such cases where our assistance led to our clients' success is considerable and continues to grow. This is why, among other reasons, our clients recommend DMS to others, since they know that they are recommending a reliable partner and advisor.

6) Are clients looking for stability and strategic direction from their law firms? Where do you see the firm in three years' time?

This is what, in my opinion, the profession of a lawyer is about – offering clients peace of mind and stability, as well as to seeking out the best and most strategic solutions to their problems.

DMS offers complex legal services to each client. We have extensive experience in representing the most demanding players on the market, in the key sectors of economy. Thanks to our knowledge of law of other jurisdictions, we are also satisfied that we can advise our clients on international markets as well.

We know what our clients expect from us and we meet these expectations in every aspect.

We undertake any effort to make our law firm both a wanted partner and trusted advisor for our clients, as well as being an attractive employer that guarantees professional development.

From the very beginning of its operation, DMS has focused on people with dedication and passion for their profession, and on ensuring a good atmosphere at work, and this is never going to change. These are the most fundamental conditions affecting our efficiency and satisfaction of the entire team. This, in turn, translates to our clients' satisfaction in what we do for them.

We will continue to develop and extend the scope of services we offer, as a strong team of the best professionals, combining experience with the ability to think innovatively and prospectively, and with the knowledge of how to find the best legal solutions for our clients. As long as we can do that, we are confident that our clients will continue to be happy entrusting their legal matters to us for years to come.