



ARTICLE

AUGUST DEBOUZY IS SUCCESSFULLY GROWING ITS LAW BUSINESS

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Emmanuelle Barbara



The business law firm saw its revenue climb 6% in 2016, to €52.2 million.

Co-founder together with Olivier Debouzy of the law firm named after its two founding partners in 1995, Gilles August takes no offense as having his firm referred to as a “*law business*”. In fact, he goes one better by suggesting the term himself, as though to better underscore the originality of the enterprise on which this graduate of the prestigious business school, Essec, and his partner from the National School of Administration (who passed away in 2010), embarked upon leaving Salès, Vincent & Georges, a prominent law firm in its heyday. This entrepreneurial adventure was also in the spotlight this year, as August Debouzy won two awards, a bit over a month ago, in the fifth edition of the Palmarès des Avocats awards organized by “Le Monde du droit” magazine, in the “Law Firm of the Year” category, an award it had already obtained in 2015, and in the “French Law Firm of the Year” category.

Three guiding principles

For Gilles August, this recognition is the result of twenty years of continuous growth based on the three guiding principles the firm has followed since its creation: maintaining strong diversity in terms of attorney education and training, reflecting the diverse background of the two founders; growing a strong international client base (45% of the firm’s clients today are of foreign origin) and, lastly, providing a full-service business offering.

It has come a long way since its founders had the intuition, back in 2005, that the path to success went through employment law. In 20 years, the firm – which has only dropped admiralty law and rural leases from its practice areas – has gone from 6 to 28 partners, from 3 to 5,881 clients, and multiplied by twenty its annual revenue, to €52,2 million in 2016 (+6% from the previous year). It is now staffed by 220 persons, including 130 attorneys.

Back in 1998, the founders set up a managing partner and executive officer role not to be filled by them, and created the functions of director general and secretary general. “*Some firms have a profit-center focus, August Debouzy wanted to look past that*”, explains Patrick Ramon, secretary general. For Emmanuelle Barbara, managing partner, the firm has come up with an optimal organization for the pooling of resources and sharing of the benefits of growth.
