

African Corporate Excellence **Awards 2015**

Interview Questionnaire with Maitre Abdellah Bakkali

1. Tell us about your company, your clients and the services you offer.

Bakkali Law Firm is a commercial, corporate, banking & finance law firm covering both contentious and non-contentious. Our clients range from successful business individuals to multinationals and foreign governments.

2. How does it feel to be an award winner and to what do you most owe this success?

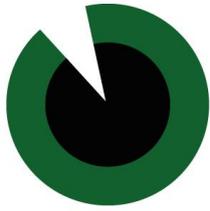
We are delighted and honoured with this award and are grateful to the panel and those who voted for us. Our success is always down to the talent and quality of our members and support staff for their hard work, dedication, diligence and creativity that underpin our firm's culture and ethos. We will cherish this award for years to come. African continent is full of challenges and opportunities and from that stem hunger to succeed, hard work and above all creativity. We are grateful and thank you.

3. How important do you believe awards like this to be, both to individual businesses like yourselves and in your wider industry?

Awards of this kind are both a privilege and a reminder that in every industry sector there are entities that stand out of the crowd because of how they operate. What cannot be ignored is that these entities work tirelessly to benefit their clients/customers and by doing so advance further the standards of the industry sector.

4. What techniques do you employ to ensure you remain at the top of your industry?

We try to be innovative and creative in the substance of our work whilst keeping with our tradition. Our business exists to provide business solutions to complex legal issues. In general terms, our work is based on our know-how and that is what our clients generally come for. The key strategic element here has been about developing specialist industry sector expertise. Our advisory desk is second to none and we pride ourselves with the efficiency and speed we operate. Such expertise is based on a number of pillars including practice areas, continuous professional development and participation in national and international forums & exchanges. Currently three of our members are preparing PhDs and our senior partner is (among other jurisprudence work) a permanent contributor to 'the World Justice Project Rule of Law Index'. All our members and staff are required to participate in professional activities.



African Corporate Excellence Awards 2015

5. Since your establishment in 1938 what changes have you seen to the legal market and how have you adapted to these? How does your long history help your firm to better support your clients?

Sometimes we see our firm as a guide to legal development in Morocco. The firm started operating at the time when Morocco was partly under the international administration in Tangier and the rest of the country under the French and Spanish control. We are now in an era of global economy where economic power rests with corporation and the role of the state is simply to facilitate the best working platform/environment for economic growth. As a firm, our long history brings with it specialist expertise that enable us in providing advice often to complex legal issues. Over the years, the firm had to modernise with time to accommodate market trends & clients' requirements and with that had to adopt new ways and working practices.

6. What areas have you focused on and what challenges have you overcome to be named for this award?

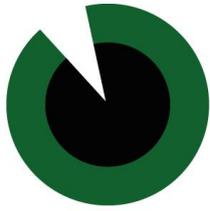
Over many years, the firm focused on servicing its key clients, based on reputation and repeat business. In 1990, our firm rebranded under new leadership but maintained its core traditions. Last decade saw the firm focusing on developing its core activities and modelling itself on continental structures and building a modern firm. In this process, we had the privilege of working with a number of international and prominent firms, exchanging best practices and sometime learning the hard way about modernising our processes, as they had to fit our jurisdictional requirement and market needs. It has been a long road and it is only a work in progress. Re-engineering is a continuous exercise and there is always a better and efficient way of delivering our services. We also learned that it is important to be more proactive with clients and creative in business development.

7. How do you stay ahead of your competitors in a fast paced business environment?

We focus on giving our clients time to understand their business and their needs. We see that as critical and time saving in the long run. In short, passion, dedication, flexibility, reliability and above all specialist knowledge are the key drivers.

8. Tell us about your overriding philosophy when it comes to your clients. What do you see as the most vital areas to focus on when it comes to providing the best possible service?

Our overriding philosophy is about providing good and sound legal work that money can best buy. Speed and efficiency are what most foreign clients want and we are equipped to do that. Best interest of client always comes first and we are outcome focused and result driven. For instance, two weeks ago, at 11.20 am, we received an email from a multinational client with HQ in Europe and offices in Morocco. Their business is marine technology and services a number of



African Corporate Excellence **Awards 2015**

private businesses and the Royal Marines in Morocco. The client needed advice and documentation to be ready for the following morning for an important meeting in Europe. After a number of exchanges of emails and phone calls, everything was ready at 4 am and client called us at 12.30 thanking us for our work.

9. Tell us about the culture within your firm and the things you do to maintain and develop it. How does it influence your interactions with and results achieved for your clients?

We work in a collegiate and collaborative environment where we support each other and everyone is very important to the firm. Even some of our past trainees are still on payroll years after they left and set up on their own. We encourage them to be successful by giving them work and support entrepreneurial culture.

Learning and professional development together with sharing best practises provide strong foundation for our collective success as a key to a happy and hard working practice. This approach is translated when dealing with clients as we treat them all as very very important. After all, we are in the business of servicing our clients' legal needs. Passion for what we do with flexibility to accommodate our clients is part of our tools.

10. How does your firm maintain strong relationships with your clients? How important is this to ensuring you remain at the top of your industry?

Strong relationships are built on trust and reputation and more importantly on reliability and results. Our dedication and attention we afford our clients business keep us close to them. Regular and specific communications on crucial business matters are very valuable to directors and senior managers. Early morning networking meetings are also important as these give clients the opportunity to talk and share as well as highlight new trends and opportunities. Some clients have been with the firm for over 50 years

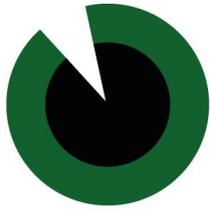
11. What sets you apart from your competitors and peers and how do you use this differentiation to your advantage?

We always have respect for our peers & competitors alike and tend to share best practices and assist whenever possible. However, We go a mile further for our clients and believe in the principle that if you do not look after your clients someone else will. Our passion, dedication, flexibility, reliability, outcome focus are the key attribute and assets that we pride ourselves to have.

12. What have been the most prevalent trends in your industry over the past 12 months?

Most commercial firms tend to reorganise their business to stay competitive.

13. What does the future hold for your firm?



African Corporate Excellence **Awards 2015**

In short terms, we are focusing on growing our business and our network. Certain new areas in banking and finance are going to be very interesting and welcoming development. The key point for us is to position ourselves to take advantage of these developments. In the long run, our strategy is to prepare the next generation that will lead the firm forward.

Please complete the following details:

Company: Bakkali Law Firm

Name: Abdellah Bakkali, Majida Bakkali and Younes Bakkali

Email: abdellah@bakkalilawfirm.com

Web Address: www.bakkalilawfirm.com

Address: 11 Khalid Ibn Oualid

Tangier, 90010

Telephone: (+212) 539370950

(+212) 539932778

Fax: (+212) 539935581

Thank you.