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Bold New Frontiers: South Florida Litigators Are Partnering With Overseas Law Firms for Clients, Major Projects

"In some cases, partnering is extremely important as those firms understand the political climate, the local rules, and other intangibles in their respective countries. We have established relationships with such firms and look forward to continuing to work with them in this new venture," attorney Gonzalez said.

By Jasmine Floyd | August 25, 2021



(L-R) Hinshaw & Culbertson Miami partners Pedro E. Hernandez, Partner & Co-Chair Global Insurance Services Practice Group (Miami) and Ira Gonzalez, Partner (Miami) and Jerry Brodsky, a Miami partner and Director of the Latin American practice at Peckar & Abramson, P.C. Courtesy photos

South Florida law firms are joining forces with counterparts abroad to provide deeper resources to clients, share knowledge and address industry concerns.

Among them: Hinshaw & Culbertson Miami partners Ira Gonzalez and Pedro E. Hernandez, who also co-chairs the firm's global insurance services practice group; as well as Peckar & Abramson's Miami partner and director of the Latin American practice Jerry Brodsky.

Gonzalez, Hernandez and Brodsky view the partnering opportunity as a chance to not only collaborate with foreign law firms but to navigate challenging legal, economic, political and regulatory climates in Latin America while adding reliable and top local talent to their team, rather than competing against it.

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Gonzalez and Hernandez work with lawyers in Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, Argentina, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Panama and other Latin American and European countries on insurance disputes, litigation and coverage opinions that might have broad cross-border implications. Hinshaw also works with local attorneys who are licensed to practice in countries throughout Latin America.

Hinshaw & Culbertson views Latin America as one of the most diverse regions of the world, with plenty of opportunity for the legal sector, and Miami serves as a getaway to that and other major international markets, the attorney said.

“With our incredible alliance with United Kingdom-based law firm Reynolds Porter Chamberlain, we are engaging in this journey to represent insurance companies and all types of entities and companies with any legal matters that they may need help with in the U.S. and throughout Latin America,” Hernandez said. “Hinshaw and RPC currently have strong relationships with several law firms throughout Latin America.”

Hernandez said that he and Hinshaw and RPC have been approached by clients in the insurance industry for assistance with Latin American matters. He said the past year, the interest has increased significantly, driven by the client’s interest in insurance and litigation.

“Not to mention RPC has been providing legal services in many countries in Latin America for many years now. Therefore, our strong alliance has also necessitated and facilitated this move into Latin America,” Hernandez said.

Binding arbitration

Meanwhile, Peckar & Abramson’s Brodsky is a member of the law firm alliance Construlegal. The firm was co-founded in 2012 by the Comad law firm from Mexico, NPG Abogados from Peru and Peckar & Abramson from the U.S., to combine the knowledge, skills and experience of legal professionals across multiple borders.

Brodsky said the drive to do business in Latin America sparked when Construlegal clients saw an expansion in major international infrastructure and other mega projects throughout the region.

“Law firm members of Construlegal, often times from the countries where the project is located and where the international contractor is from, work together, joining resources and experience in order to provide legal support to clients throughout the life cycle of the project, including contracting, negotiations, project support, claim avoidance and dispute resolution,” Brodsky said.

The good news: like the U.S., many construction disputes in Latin America are resolved through private binding arbitration, Brodsky said.

“The use of dispute resolution boards is one of the strongest growth trends impacting the construction industry throughout Latin America,” he added.

Although risk comes with opportunities, Gonzalez states the main focus has been in the higher income countries, as he said more than 20 percent of U.S. per capita income comes from the higher populated countries in Latin America. Gonzalez said these countries are aggressively pursuing international trade and foreign investment.

“I believe the ever-changing and unstable political climates in certain countries certainly present some challenges. The increased trade and foreign investment, coupled with the uncertainty revolving around trade policies, naturally create opportunities to advise domestic and international clients involving international

disputes,” Gonzalez said. “Our local partnerships and international alliance with RPC positions Hinshaw to strategically capitalize on such opportunities, while understanding evolving diplomacy issues in target markets. We believe that we are prepared for this venture.”

Gonzalez, Hernandez and Brodsky feel the pandemic bolstered their practice.

“COVID-19 forced people to learn to be efficient and proficient working together remotely and virtually. Delivering top quality legal support and services in this manner are key components of the Construlegal model,” Brodsky said.

Hernandez also suggested the pandemic assisted to facilitate more interactions with Latin America clients via Zoom, which had not been commonplace.

Brodsky said his firm would continue forming strategic alliances with top local talent internationally to combine resources and experience, as well as improve the quality of the litigation skills and other services delivered to clients.

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