

# The Internationalization of the Practice of Law

edited by Jens Drolshammer, Michael Pfeifer

NEW PUBLICATION

As we enter the 21st century, the legal profession – that is the work of attorneys, in-house legal counsels, and other legal advisors – is changing rapidly. The division of labour between single practitioners and small local law firms on the one hand, and larger, national and international law firms on the other is becoming more and more extreme. While the big firms pick up literally all commercial law cases and accounts, they are under powerful competitive pressure from their domestic peers and from foreign firms to be ever more international and ever more professional. The impact of this ‘internationalization’ of the practice of law on the way attorneys are working today, the way they have to organize their offices, the quantity and quality of continuing education they require, and the way law should be taught in law school in the first place, has hardly been examined in a systematic way up to now.

The present volume brings together the results of an international research project coordinated by Jens Drolshammer and Michael Pfeifer. The editors, both of whom are attorneys and permanent adjunct professors at well-known law schools, invited a number of pre-eminent representatives of the legal profession and some very well-known and experienced law professors to share their views on the ongoing internationalization of the legal profession and what it means for the education and practice of law in the 21st century. The contributions cover the topic from many different angles: managing an international law firm, different approaches in Europe and the USA, collaboration and strategic alliances between firms from different countries and legal systems, the legal profession in Japan and China, developments in international arbitration and mediation, the perspective of in-house legal counsel, the perspective of management and consultants, multidisciplinary practice, repercussions on education in law schools and in continuing education programmes, the benefit of having a diverse group of attorneys in a firm and the problems this may entail, and of course the impact of electronic media on the profession.

The internationalization of the legal profession raises many questions: The changes we experience or foresee, are they for the better? Are they for the benefit of the clients and their business? Or for the benefit of the lawyers? Or of society, the law, the international community as a whole? Are they inevitable? And: What may need to be done in order to secure a fair distribution of the benefits and a safe check against the perils? The essays in this book will not provide all the answers but they are sure to stimulate a debate and a more critical and proactive approach to a process that needs to be managed and not just endured.

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