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**PROGRESSING IN THE PROFESSION:
RISING TO THE “TOP” EITHER IN A
LAW FIRM OR STRIKING OUT ON
YOUR OWN**

THE ITALIAN EXPERIENCE

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this speech is to answer the following question submitted by UIA – Young Lawyers Commission – from the Italian point of view:

1- Progressing in the profession: rising to the “top” either in a Law firm or striking out on your own

The majority of young Italian lawyers (under 35) become associates of the law firm where they were trainees, receiving an increased wage for the legal services that they provide for the “*dominus*”, the senior partner they are working for.

Some of them become partners of the same legal office, normally as 30% shareholder.

The minority, mainly non-specialists general civil lawyers, try to strike out on their own, because it is easier for a young lawyer to collect mandates in the civil law field.

Criminal, labour, trade or administrative lawyers, on the other hand, need a bigger organisation and the “appeal” of the firm's reputation in order to work for public administration, companies or people requiring criminal assistance.

Normally, it takes almost ten years to become partner of a law firm.

The average monthly income for a young associate of a big law firm is between € 1.000 and 2.000 per month, 30% more in Milan or Rome.

In my own experience, after working for one year in the same law office where I did my training, I tried to start my own activity by sharing it with three more experienced lawyers (in their 40's -50's).

The result was a slow but constant increase of mandates and income, sharing with my colleagues some cases and collaborating in others.

The pros of working as a self-employed lawyer in Italy are the chance to manage time; the flexibility of collaboration and co-working experiences with other law firms; the low taxation rate (5%) for professionals under 35 declaring less than € 30.000 as annual gross income per year (about to move up to 15% for activities started after 2014).

The cons are the incertitude of the monthly income and the difficulty of collecting or managing challenging or important cases.

In conclusion, the best solution for a general civil lawyer is to try to strike out on his own as soon as possible, while the best for a specialized lawyer is to work five to ten years for a more experienced lawyer and build the required experience or reputation in order to achieve the trust of more demanding clients.

(Avv. Alberto MORIZIO)