

INDONESIA'S YOUTH FACTOR

The growth of Indonesia's legal profession is opening the door for young professionals to reach the very pinnacle of the industry and emerge as true leaders.

BY ASIAN LEGAL BUSINESS

■ In unveiling its second annual list of top 10 rising stars in Indonesia's legal market, *Asian Legal Business* spoke to some of the young professionals that made it on the list about their perspective on the changes underway in the giant Southeast Asian market.

Hans Adiputra Kurniawan, senior associate at Walalangi & Partners, understands why the legal profession has emerged as a favourite choice for many young professionals in Indonesia.

"Attractive remuneration, training and opportunities to be seconded to foreign countries are the major elements driving the continuous growth of the legal profession," says Kurniawan.

"Recently, the legal industry in Indonesia has expanded in terms of number and size of firms, and variety of specialisations. Consideration needs to be made carefully based on thorough research on which law firm will be suitable to your character and career path and goals," he says.

"Another preferred option that I have seen recently in the market is to work as part of the legal team of start-up companies in line with the massive growth of technology-based start-up companies in Indonesia over the past three to four years," says Kurniawan.

There are myriad of such start-ups in Indonesia, with some of the best-known standouts such as Go-Jek, Grab, Tokopedia, Traveloka, and OVO growing rapidly.

Rizky Dwinanto, a partner at ADCO Law, agrees that the prospects for young legal professionals in Indonesia are good.

"The environment for young legal professionals is still and will always be attractive. Legal professionals are being offered a high earning potential and prestige while having the opportunity to work with people who are exceptionally smart and highly dedicated to their careers," said Dwinanto.

"The demand and needs for legal professionals will always exist and grow. With today's technologies, domestic and international business transactions are happening rapidly regardless of time and location, and legal professionals are needed in those transactions. After all, every transaction always involves finance, tax and legal aspects," he adds.

Even with all these opportunities, Allover Herling Mengko, a partner in the Jakarta office of law firm Sandiva, makes no bones about the environment for young legal professionals in the country, which he describes simply as "very competitive."

He is not alone in this assessment.

"Nowadays, we have been looking at growth of business and its variation in Indonesia. And along with it, the regulations imposed by the government toward such businesses. Therefore, it is logical that legal departments or staff with legal background are pivotal in many companies," says Ellrico Parulian Situmorang, a partner at Parulian Situmorang & Partners. "The demand for

such positions, whether within the legal department in a company or as a lawyer, is growing so far but the competition would also be tight."

RISING STARS

Those on *ALB's* list of rising stars are an accomplished lot that have paid their dues to get to where they are today and have laid the foundations to get even further in the future.

Mengko set up Sandiva after his previous firm closed. Sandiva started as a business consultancy before evolving into a law firm.

"I and three other partners decided to establish Sandiva business consultancy, which primarily focuses on insolvency and bankruptcy. After almost two years primarily focusing on insolvency and bankruptcy, we decided to establish a law firm which is Sandiva Legal Network. We now have 20 associates and six partners," Mengko says.

He points to the energy sector for some of his career highlights.

"I successfully assisted an independent power producer to obtain an environmental impact analysis for a 660 x 2MW power plant. I also represented Energi Tata Persada and Sumatera Persada Energy to reach the homologation of their settlement proposal with creditors," says Mengko.

He was appointed as the receiver for Dhiva Inter Sarana and successfully acted as an administrator for Indo Energy Alam in reaching homologation – the official approval – of its settlement proposal with creditors.

Some of Dwinanto's career highlights came early in his career.

"Earlier in my career, I had to simultaneously handle seven companies with extreme financial difficulties, and I managed to save them from bankruptcy," he says. "Another highlight of my career journey was when I successfully advocated a state-owned company on a global scope debt restructuring project. Those achievements came from tenacious dedication and constant hard work."

His experience is not dissimilar to the one experienced by Kurniawan, who joined Walalangi & Partners in late 2017. After stints at a law firm and a bank. Kurniawan had spent his first four and a half years as a lawyer with the founder and managing partner of the new firm. Returning to the law firm environment allowed Kurniawan to return to his professional roots when he had the chance to sink his teeth into projects involving a wide variety of industries.

"In the areas of banking and finance, I was involved in major syndication loans (including debt restructuring and power projects) and bond-issuances. I have been part of a team representing leading global banking and financial groups on major finance transactions, bond issuance, sophisticated fund-raising projects as well

as a number of major electricity projects in Indonesia," Kurniawan says of his career highlights.

"In terms of foreign direct investment and M&A, I have represented several Japanese trading companies in their investment plans in Indonesia in numerous projects and cross-border transactions, relating to plantation projects, the steel industry, various acquisition of shares, business and assets (land) as well as other practice areas of law, such as general mining, oil and gas, tourism, property, trading (including warehouse and e-commerce), fishery, and multi-finance industry."

Kurniawan was also recently recognised by *ALB* as one of the Best Young Lawyers of 2020 and listed in the '40 under 40' list.

Situmorang, of Parulian Situmorang & Partners, has also had his share of highlights in his varied career.

"In one office I learned about criminal litigation and client service, in another office I learned about commercial litigation and office management, and in another, I learned about corporate projects. From my point of view, I think it is hard to pinpoint the very highlight of my career to this extent," he says.

Still, there are a few cases and projects that stand out, including when Situmorang advised and represented a premium worldwide hotel chain, a global power tools

company, a global telecommunications company, an international paint company and one of the Big Four accounting firms.

CHALLENGES ABOUND

It is easy, looking at the highlights of Indonesia's rising legal stars, to overlook the often-difficult journey to the pinnacle of the profession.

Some of these young lawyers have steadily climbed the ranks of the profession, while others have chosen to blaze their path.

For those that strike out on their own, like Situmorang, the challenges can be found in managing day-to-day operations and keeping things afloat.

"We faced challenges during the growth of the office, and I understand that there are challenges in every level and area: challenges in managing the office (internally) and challenges in providing services to our client (externally)," he says.

For internal operations, it was about finding the right systems. "In managing the office, I believe that most of our challenges in these past years were solved through the systems that we employed. However, establishing and implementing systems also brings a challenge," says Situmorang.

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Beyond that, there is no shortcut to managing clients. It just boils down to getting to know your clients well and giving them the best you can.

"As to providing services to our client, I believe that every client has their tastes and preference. Therefore, we need to understand their respective needs to provide the best service. By understanding the needs of our client, we then can be more efficient and effective in providing our services to them," says Situmorang.

For some young legal professionals age itself can sometimes be a challenge. Some clients sometimes find young age a deterrent.

"Starting a private practice at a young age, one may end up being underestimated by clients. Most clients would underestimate your capability and experience due to your young age," says Mengko. "But with confidence and strong knowledge of the law, I managed to surpass this and prove that I am capable to handle the cases."

Kurniawan has faced similar issues.

"One of the main challenges I have been dealing with during my career as a lawyer relates to how to constantly deliver quality beyond the clients' expectations and to navigate them through their various challenging deals in Indonesia," says Kurniawan.

He cites support from his firm, particularly its

senior partners, as the main key in helping him overcome hurdles and exceed expectations.

Dealing with other people's preconceptions is one hurdle, yet the other challenges lie within. For Dwinanto, and likely for many other young legal professionals, that is the way to see yourself measuring up.

"The risk of being ineffective and inefficient is always there when you doubt your goals and abilities," says Dwinanto.

"It is important to keep going despite any obstacles or barriers, and to keep moving forward even if there is only 1 percent of viable progress. To have clarity with yourself is the best way to push your dedication to your goals."

PARTING WISDOM

Kurniawan suggests that young lawyers looking to make their mark in Indonesia think about building their resumes wisely and carefully.

"Choose your starting point law firm wisely, find as much as possible information of the targeted law firm, particularly in terms of career path, working culture, financial compensation, personal growth support (e.g. training, seminars and workshops), and the firm's plan toward its lawyers," he says.

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would obviously a better option to be considered, says Kurniawan.

And Situmorang also cautions young legal professionals to not turn up their noses at any assignment and to learn as much as they can from whatever comes their way.

"With regard to this, I can share from my own experience. I would advise the young lawyers not to be picky during the early years of their career. They can learn from whatever chores are given to them. Don't be too (quick) to assign or call yourself a 'litigator' or a 'corporate lawyer'," says Situmorang.

"Learn as much as possible whether it is litigation, corporate work or even any administrative chores in the office because you do not know what it may lead you to. Once you find your edge, your sweet spot, your strong point, only then, do not hesitate to explore it full throttle."

This approach could make it easier to spot one's preferred area of specialisation. Mengko believes it is necessary to find a niche to stand out in the sea of legal professionals. "Without having focused or specific legal knowledge, we will not stand out among the others," he says Mengko.

And regardless of whatever niche is eventually chosen, it is both necessary and smart to keep up to

date with technological trends. Digital tools will not only give young lawyers a boost, but it will also help them survive the changes to come.


"Familiarise (yourself) with the digital transformation in the legal sector. The digital transformation will give us young lawyers the advantage to excel in the legal sector," says Mengko.

Ultimately, it may come down to working both hard and smart to earn career dividends.

"Embrace all the challenges, particularly to work with constantly long office hours and high demands from clients," says Kurniawan. "Also, trust the process of your career and use your best endeavours when working on any kind of assignment given to you – it is important to show that you are a reliable and trustworthy lawyer even when dealing with a simple task or assignment."

Along with faith, patience is the key in the long run.

"There is no such thing as quick and instant results since the process is part of the journey. In my view, we achieve things when we value the process, not only the result," says Dwinanto.

"For lawyers looking to make their mark, be humble and be patient with everything you have to go through because that is part of the process towards your goals. The result will come along with your hard work." 



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INDONESIA'S RISING STARS 2020

THE LIST

The second annual list of Asian Legal Business Rising Stars in Indonesia includes a range of lawyers known for both their focus and range of expertise. All of them are young, some have set up their firms and at least one literally grew up in the courts and with the law. The list is in alphabetical order.

Hendra Setiawan Boen

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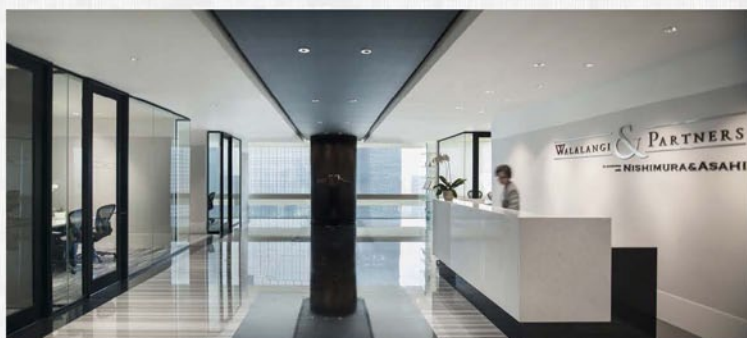


Hendra Setiawan Boen is a co-founder, principal, managing partner and head of the dispute resolution practice group and intellectual property practice group of Frans & Setiawan (F&S Law Office). Before establishing F&S Law Office, Hendra was a partner in an Indonesian based litigation law firm.

Hendra has extensive experience in commercial-litigation-related work, charter party and anti-monopoly disputes, and bankruptcy proceedings IP protection and cross-border international arbitration.

Hendra successfully defended a

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COVER STORY

key witness in the \$70 million high-profile cross-border litigation who blew the whistle on the witness' former employers' breach of fiduciary and statutory duties. The case won despite the former employer's relentless legal assaults and attempted criminalisation.

The Indonesian media considers Hendra as a key source of legal information and is constantly mentioned and approached for comments. He is also a prolific writer and has also published articles in national-scale media and a book on law.

During the 2019 Indonesian general election, Hendra coordinated the election campaign of and led a rigorous legal defence for Indonesian President Widodo and his vice-president, Islamic cleric Ma'ruf Amin against black campaigns in the mass media and social media.

"Hendra and I have been working together since our pupillage. Since then, Hendra always demonstrating professionalism and personal attention to all details. Hendra is knowledgeable and responsive, and is able to analyse and explain complex legal issues in ways that are easy to understand and provide practical advice and workable solutions to clients and his colleagues" says Jono Yeo, a former colleague who worked with Hendra in an Indonesian corporate firm.

Meidyna Budiarti

IABF LAW GROUP



Meidyna Budiarti is the sole female on this year's top 10 Rising Stars in Indonesia list.

She joined IABF Law Group as a senior associate and rose to the position of partner.

Before joining the firm, Budiarti spent some time in Singapore at RHT Law Asia and at ABNR Counsellors at Law.

Budiarti's primary practice areas are in M&A, banking & finance, and foreign investment. Some of her cases have been nominated as a finalist for the ALB Debt Market Deal of the Year category at the ALB Indonesia Law Awards.

During her career, Budiarti has advised on significant cases which include investments by a China payment application company through its subsidiary in Singapore to E2PAY Global Utama, an Indonesian fintech company that provides payment getaway services. She also took a key role in the Singapore IPO of a company involved in the plantation business.

"Meidyna has proved herself to be an invaluable team member on several

occasions where we sought her assistance to construct legal agreement with our China counterpart, assisting our company in negotiating the terms and formulating the agreement in a way that was acceptable to all parties involved. She demonstrated her integrity and objectivity by preserving the interests of all parties involved despite the fact that she was hired by my company in this event. She had proved her resourcefulness in terms of research and interpreting a few legal rules that we were not familiar with. In short, she is an exemplary model for the legal profession that she is currently embarking," says Rudy Danandjaja, chairman at E2Pay Global Utama.

Oscar Damarjati

HENDRA SOENARDI



With more than a decade of practice, Oscar Damarjati, specialises in corporate and M&A, project development and finance and fintech.

He was appointed partner at Hendra Soenardi at the young age of 32.



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During his career, he has represented Adaro Power in the \$4.2 billion financing of two 1,000MW power plants in Central Java which was named as Indonesia Deal of the Year at the ALB Indonesia Law Awards 2016 and the Project Finance Deal of the Year in Asia by International Financial Law Review and the Deal of the Year in Asia Pacific for Power by Project Finance and Infrastructure Journal in 2017.

He has also represented one of the largest palm oil plantation companies in Indonesia, energy companies and state-owned enterprises and notable start-up companies and venture capital companies engaging in TMT (including fintech) both in the fund raising and products development.

Denise Lioe, VP of Legal at GOJEK, praises Damarjati as “a well-rounded lawyer” with a deep understanding of the law, but still very solutions oriented.

Yudhistira Setiawan, VP of Corporate Legal and Litigation at PT Pengembangan Pariwisata Indonesia (Persero)/ITDC and president of the Indonesian Corporate Counsel Association adds: “He sometimes gives us an example in a simple way so that we can easily understand his advice. I can see that Oscar has a bright future ahead as he has the potential to be a prominent lawyer in the future, as he possesses good knowledge and great inter-personal skills, especially on how he

interacts with the client and convinces the client to opt the best solution in solving the legal matters.”

Rizky Dwinanto

ADISURYO DWINANTO & CO



A self-driven lawyer with a strong commercial sense, Rizky Dwinanto is a named partner at Adisuryo Dwinanto & Co (ADCO Law). He has more than 12 years of experience in corporate debt restructuring. Early in his career as a lawyer, he earned the trust of two state-owned enterprises that became retainer clients. He was also one of the contributors to the Doing Business project, an annual report produced by the World Bank.

With his dedication to pursue perfection, he successfully advocated PT Merpati Nusantara Airlines (MNA) on a complex debt-restructuring project with total debt of \$850 million. The project was almost global in scope and involved 1,200 domestic and foreign entities. Dwinanto also represented the MNA in various legal matters including the termination of its 1700 employees.

During his career, Dwinanto has been committed to finding the best solutions for his clients. He has successfully represented clients in several debt restructuring matters, including the Danar Hadi Group in a project involving total debt of nearly \$60 million and PT Tiga Pilar Sejahtera Food with total debt of \$160 million. His belief in focusing on process and results has helped his clients, including both executives and organizations, mitigate risk and clearly understand debt restructuring.

Frank Hutapea

HOTMAN PARIS & PARTNERS



Graduating from law schools in the UK and Indonesia, and obtaining Bachelor of Laws degrees in both countries, has prepared Frank for his career at Hotman

Paris & Partners, where he specialises in commercial litigation and bankruptcy.

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"Our firm has a history of defending debtors, now we are more known for advising banks and financial institutions," says Frank, who is a partner at Hotman Paris & Partners. He adds that they are also advising international companies in Indonesia prior into transactions, including the litigation implications of the contracts they are going into. "It is inconceivable to go into a contract not knowing the implications it may have if it ever goes into a dispute, especially under Indonesian law," he says.

Frank believes that relationship plays an important role in this business. He also states that maintaining a good relationship and open communication with the counterpart's counsel is key to his success, and says knowing what's best for the client is an important aspect. Even though his firm is known for high-profile court cases, he states that, in his years in litigation, there have been moments when winning a settlement is more favourable for the client than winning a court dispute.

Frank's extensive knowledge in litigation has been visible in the Sushi Tei dispute, and Grab's KPPU anti-monopoly investigation, to name a few.

He has spent time in an Indonesian firm known for its capital markets practice, an American corporate law firm in Singapore, and a QC barrister in London right after graduating from law school.

Hans Adiputra Kurniawan

WALALANGI & PARTNERS



Hans Adiputra Kurniawan joined Walalangi & Partners in 2017 and is now a senior associate. His joining of the firm was, in some ways, like coming full circle.

Walalangi & Partners was set up by the founder and managing partner of the law firm where he spent his first four and a half years as a lawyer.

He credits that experience as a good starting point for his rapid ascent in the profession following his cum laude predicate graduation from law school in 2010.

Working with some of the best lawyers in the Indonesian legal industry, Kurniawan gained exposure as well as extensive regulatory and practical knowledge while assisting clients in various banking and finance projects, FDI, M&A and other general corporate matters.

In late 2014, Kurniawan moved to one of the largest foreign banks in Indonesia as a transaction manager, where he worked with the corporate

trust and the loan agency team. He was involved in major syndication loans, project finance, business acquisition financing including financing and refinancing transaction for several leading telecommunication tower companies, shipping companies, gold and copper mining companies, oil and gas companies, and a greenfield ammonia production plant.

These experiences at law firms and banks helped supercharge Kurniawan's career. One of his career highlights was playing a key role in the business integration of the HSBC Jakarta Branch and Bank Ekonomi Raharja into a single banking entity, namely PT Bank HSBC Indonesia.

Yohanes Masengi

MAKARIM & TAIRA S



Yohanes Masengi is a partner in the corporate and commercial group at Makarim & Taira S. He is the youngest partner of his firm, achieving that milestone at the

age of 33. He has extensive experience and has represented prominent



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companies in a variety of proceedings and transactions in investment, project finance, mergers and acquisitions, joint ventures, infrastructure, power projects, insurance, ports, mergers and acquisitions, joint ventures, employment, and corporate restructuring.

Some of Masengi's career highlights include representing independent power producers in the development of some of the largest power projects in the country and representing employers in labour disputes and mass terminations due to redundancy and closure involving, in one occasion, more than 300 employees. He also represented a state-owned enterprise in arbitration at the Badan Arbitrase Nasional Indonesia (BANI) in a dispute over a construction insurance claim with local insurance companies.

Masengi has also provided legal assistance in renegotiating concessions and contracts with state-owned enterprises, providing legal assistance in the acquisition of land for one of the largest infrastructure projects in Indonesia, working in various joint ventures and the establishment of companies in the country.

Masengi also contributed to the book entitled Energy Projects for Practitioners, which is written in Japanese.

Clients have described Masengi as “detailed, practical and flexible in offering solutions as the landscape changes.”

Allova Herling Mengko

SANDIVA



Allover Herling Mengko, a founding partner at the law firm Sandiva, had a strong start to his legal career when he graduated in the top 10 of his cohort. He passed the first BAR exam held by PERADI, the Indonesian Advocates Association but he had to wait until reaching the minimum age requirement of 25 to be sworn in as an advocate.

He started his career at Hutabarat, Halim & Rekan. After just six months, he was admitted to Makarim & Taira S, one of the oldest corporate law firms in Indonesia.

During his time at Makarim, he handled matters that covered a range of areas including environmental law, construction law, land law and litigation.

After almost six years, he moved on to a position as legal manager in a retail

company and, a year later, he established S&H Attorneys At Law. It started with just one associate and had just three retainers as start-up clients, but the firm grew steadily and after a year he had five associates and three partners.

The firm handled both corporate work and litigation. In 2012, Mengko handled his first of many delays of payment and bankruptcy cases. After obtaining certification for receivers and administrators, he was appointed to handle a bankruptcy case, acting as the receiver nominated by Maybank Indonesia (previously known as Bank International Indonesia).

After five years, the partners of S&H Attorneys decided to close the firm. Mengko and three other partners decided to establish Sandiva as a business consultancy primarily focusing on insolvency and bankruptcy.

After two years it was set up as a law firm, which is now the Sandiva Legal Network. Sandiva today has six partners and 20 associates. "Allova was the in-charge lawyer when our company reached a Delay of Payment in 2012, he was able to handle the case until it settled for homologation which currently secures our business to run," says Taufik Wazar, CEO of Energi Tata Persada. "I personally endorse Allova when it comes to the field of this matter and wish him more success in the future."

HENDRA SOENARDI

Hendra Soenardi has handled some of the largest and most complex transactions and disputes in Indonesia. We value top quality work, commercial approach, problem solving spirit, complete and focused attention to client needs and team spirit.

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Joel Shen

CHRISTIAN TEO & PARTNERS



With 15 years of legal experience under his belt, Joel Shen, a foreign counsel at Christian Teo & Partners in Jakarta, has worked his way up to be regarded as one of the leading technology lawyers in Indonesia today.

Shen has particular expertise in technology, financial services, media, marketing and communications, food and beverage and consumer sectors. His clients are household names that include multinationals, technology majors, financial institutions, Indonesian conglomerates, Indonesian unicorns and some of the most prominent VC investors in Indonesia and the region.

Shen recently joined global law firm DWF as partner in their Singapore office and, prior to his role, has spent more than a decade in private practice in Singapore and English law firms. He is qualified in Singapore and the UK, and is a foreign registered lawyer in Indonesia. He divides his time between Jakarta and Singapore.

Shen is listed as a Notable Practitioner for Fintech and a Recommended Lawyer for Corporate M&A by several trade publications, and was recognized as the only non-Indonesian practitioner in *ALB's* inaugural Rising Stars in Indonesia list last year. Shen was also included in *ALB's* 40 Under 40 list for 2019 and was short-listed as Young Lawyer of the Year at *ALB* Indonesia Law Awards 2018.

Shen is a member of the governing council of the Singapore Chamber of Commerce in Indonesia, a faculty member of the Singapore Institute of Legal Education and a tutor of the Singapore bar course. He is also an adjunct lecturer at the University of Indonesia and Universitas Pelita Harapan.

Ellrico Parulian Situmorang


PARULIAN SITUMORANG
& PARTNERS



For Ellrico Parulian situmorang, a partner at Parulian Situmorang & Partners (PSP), the passion for law bloomed 16 years ago as a staff member in a legal aid office at

the University of Parahyangan, Bandung. Upon graduation, he joined Adnan Buyung Nasution & Partners, a law firm founded by a senior and highly regarded lawyer, the late Adnan Buyung Nasution. Ellrico considers himself lucky to have had the chance to work directly with Mr Buyung and credits that time as the foundation for his career trajectory. Ellrico continued his career in several other top-tier law firms before finally establishing his own practice.

The firm, which provides services in litigation and corporate work, has been appointed by many clients, multinationals and locals, to represent them in various forum. The mission of the firm, he says, is "to deliver excellence in providing solutions for our clients and constantly equip ourselves with the knowledge in order to maintain the highest quality of services." PSP is built on the twin values of integrity and excellence. "We practice law by adhering to the principles of maintaining personal integrity, independence and avoiding conflicts of interest," he says.

Ellrico, who considers himself a versatile self-starter, looks at a number of mandates as his career highlights including representing international companies that run the gamut of hotel chains, power tools makers, telecommunications, aviation, and a Big 4 accounting firm. 

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- Insolvency & Restructuring
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- Litigation & Dispute Resolution
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