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40 Under 40 2020

Clara Poglia



Age: 38

Firm: Schellenberg Wittmer

Job role: Partner

Location: Geneva

A significant case I've worked on:

One of the most exciting cases in recent years would be the criminal defence of a commodity trading company in the frame of alleged bribery payments made to African public officials. The case involved various interesting legal aspects such as internal investigations, international mutual legal assistance in criminal matters and compliance issues. Considering the sensitive topic, the defence work also had to focus on the reputational impacts of the case and the related media communication. A complex negotiation had to be initiated with the criminal authorities. Indeed, a very comprehensive range of expertise had to be put at the disposal of the client.

"In the context of a massive fraud case where Clara was representing one of the major victims, she had to travel from Switzerland to Costa Rica for the execution of a request in mutual legal assistance. This was a challenging business trip with limited time to be devoted to various investigating steps on-site. During the couple of hours of free time Clara enjoyed between two interviews, she went kayaking on a river infested with alligators and caimans! This was her way of relaxing. I vividly recall the picture she sent from her boat surrounded by these worrisome representatives of the crocodilian species. Simply stunning..."

Benjamin Borsodi

Partner at Schellenberg Wittmer

An important person in my career:

My grandmother was one of the first working women in my native and very conservative hometown. She was a quite stubborn and very opinionated person who taught me the need to challenge barriers and to set high professional goals. There is no doubt that her

insights have accompanied and influenced my career. Over the years, I had the chance to share paths with other inspiring individuals who have been key in my professional evolution. I think in particular of two senior lawyers who believed in me and transmitted to me their love for this incredible and challenging profession.

"Clara was involved in defending our company by investigating and then demonstrating a fraudulent scheme in a trading division. While the investigation was technically complex, pushing Clara out of her comfort zone, she eventually managed to convert a multifaceted system into comprehensible legal arguments, thanks to her efficient investigative capabilities and remarkable analytical skills. Having been her main contact during this mission, I really appreciated collaborating with Clara who pushed the investigation value into its maximum, which resulted in a solid and positive conclusion."

Simon Rublir

Head of group internal audit at Gunvor Group