

Raising the bar – Meet our new partners and counsels for 2024

It's an exciting time at Lenz & Staehelin as the firm looks forward to 2024 with a series of new appointments. Two team members – Anja Affolter Marino and Rébecca Dorasamy – have been promoted to the firm's partnership. And five have been promoted to counsels: Barbara Abegg, Fabia Gnädinger, María Josefa Palmero-Areán, Leonard Vijverberg and Tatanja Vlk. The firm now has 49 partners and 16 counsels.

Published: 15 December 2023

Heini Rüdisühli, Deputy Managing Partner, said, "I'm delighted with the new appointments and congratulate each and every one of them. They've proven they have the talent, experience and drive to support our clients at the highest level."

Anja Affolter Marino Attorney at Law |

Zurich

Tell us about your career journey...

I joined Lenz & Staehelin as a trainee in 2012 and then as an associate in May 2014, after passing my bar exam. On my journey at L&S over the last decade, so much has happened on many levels. It's included challenges and opportunities, an intense learning curve and moments of success, balancing work and family life – and of course also the pandemic years. In every situation, though, I've had the privilege of working on inspiring mandates with great clients and fantastic colleagues.

What do you bring to your role?

Naturally, my role requires expertise in my field of activity (employment, immigration and pensions). In addition, I'm able to be both firm and empathetic when helping my clients to find the best solution for their problems.

What advice would you give others looking to develop in their role?

Take one step at a time, keep up the motivation and be prepared that your path will not always be straightforward. Above all, enjoy what you do and keep an open mind.

What do you enjoy doing away from work?

Most importantly, being with my family and friends. When I can, I also enjoy various kind of sports, cooking, travelling, reading, and arts and culture.

Rébecca

Dorasamy

Attorney at Law, LL.M., Certified Tax Expert | Geneva

Tell us about your career journey...

I've been with L&S since April 2012 – and always in the tax team. I joined because L&S is one of – if not the – most prestigious law firm and has an excellent tax team.

What do you bring to your role?

I specialise in international tax law – for example, complex restructurings of MNEs, dispute resolutions, estate planning and international mobility of individuals. Beyond the legal experience, I'd say I always bring an innovative viewpoint to the table.

What advice would you give others looking to develop in their role?

Be patient and enjoy the journey! I started as the only female tax lawyer of colour in the Geneva office and 11 years later made it to partnership. Even if it doesn't always seem like it, and your path feels bumpy, anything is possible when you truly enjoy what you are doing!

What do you enjoy doing away from work?

Traveling, cooking, yoga and reading – especially medieval fantasy books.

Barbara Abegg

Dr. iur., Attorney at Law, MJur, CAS in Arbitration | Zurich

Tell us about your career journey...

I've been with L&S for six years now. Before that, I completed a PhD at the University of Berne in IP which led to roles at two boutique IP law firms. I really enjoyed this, but I wanted to push myself further – so I applied for an MJur at the University of Oxford. At the time, this was ranked as the No.1 university in the world, so I was proud to be accepted. After this, I joined L&S... I may have joined late but it was the perfect move at the right time, and I've never regretted it!

What do you bring to your role?

My biggest strength is that I really love IP! For me, it's the best area of law. It's so interesting and diverse. What's more, it's creative and you can definitely think outside the box! I also have fun in my job.

What advice would you give others looking to develop in their role?

Firstly, I'd say believe in yourself. Everyone, but especially women, should trust themselves. Be open minded about where your career could go and always stay as you are – don't pretend to be someone else. You'll always find people who appreciate this.

What do you enjoy doing away from work?

I love running while listening to podcasts. I always go for a run when I'm abroad to discover a new city. I'm also a foodie and enjoy trying out new restaurants and bars. I love nature and cold, rainy weather!

Fabia Gnädinger

Attorney at Law, Certified Tax Expert | Geneva

Tell us about your career journey...

I joined L&S in 2014 as an intern and, once I completed my bar exam, became an associate in 2016. I then became a Certified Tax Expert in 2021. I'm now based in the Geneva office and love the working environment. I'm very grateful I can work with an enthusiastic and supporting team, as well as alongside highly qualified lawyers in all fields of law.

What do you bring to your role?

I bring in-depth expertise and experience of both tax and civil law. This means I'm able to advise clients on their tax, matrimonial and estate planning, and propose solutions that

are adapted from the perspectives of both tax and civil law.

What's the most satisfying case you've worked on at L&S?

One of the most memorable was assisting a client in the Swiss estate of her late husband. Managing to find a settlement in a very emotional context between her and the rest of her family was very rewarding.

What do you enjoy doing away from work?

Sports. Travelling. And sharing good times with my friends and family.

María Josefa Palmero-Areán

Attorney at Law, Certified Tax Expert | Lausanne

Tell us about your career journey...

I've been working at L&S since 2010, mainly based in the Lausanne office. In 2012, I chose to focus on tax law and follow the certified tax expert specialisation. It was a tough decision as I knew it would be a big commitment, however I really wanted to take this



unique opportunity. In the second year of my training, I learned I was pregnant but, rather than stop, I paused for a year and got certification in 2016. I'm now a member of the Private Clients team, advising both individuals and companies around their wealth planning – particularly around tax law.

Why did you choose L&S – and what makes this firm different?

The firm has always had a very good reputation and this means we get opportunities to work on larger, more interesting projects. We're also always learning something new – we have great opportunities in all areas of law and always have excellent support.

What advice would you give others looking to develop in their role?

Three words: specialisation, endurance and perseverance.

What do you enjoy doing away from work?

Enjoying time with my husband and three daughters.

**Leonard
Vijverberg**
Attorney at Law,
LL.M.,

Registered Trust and Estate Practitioner | Geneva

Tell us about your career journey...

I've worked with L&S since 2007. I originally came to Switzerland from the Netherlands because my wife is Genevan. After a stint as an in-house counsel in a multinational, I longed for the days of having a more independent position and more challenging legal issues to deal with, and started at L&S. For a foreign lawyer, this has been an amazing opportunity to work in an internationally operating, high-quality Swiss law firm with fantastic files and clients.

What do you bring to your role?

With my experience as a foreign lawyer, I'm open to different views and different solutions with other jurisdictions. This is useful as legal matters tend to cross borders more and more.

What advice would you give others looking to develop in their role?

Do what you enjoy doing, do it well and, if you do that, you can be patient. Also, being a lawyer can be demanding and keeping a healthy balance is key.

What do you enjoy doing away from work?

I'm a keen runner and am participating in the Boston Marathon next year. I'm also interested in history; put me in front of a pile of rocks dating back centuries and I'm a happy man. And although I'm from the Low Countries, I love the Swiss mountains: hiking, trail running or just enjoying a Valaisan apéro with a view of snowy mountains.

Tatanja Vlk

Attorney at Law, LL.M., Certified Specialist SBA Inheritance Law | Zurich

Tell us about your career journey...

I've been with L&S for 21 years. I joined as a summer associate, then became a trainee, and an associate. L&S is made up of a group of outstanding, intelligent and interesting people – it's a pleasure to spend my working day with them.

What do you bring to your role?

Quite simply, I find solutions, which work.

What advice would you give others looking to develop in their role?

Appreciate when you get feedback on your work – especially if it's criticism. Someone is making an effort to help you to be an even better attorney.

What do you enjoy doing away from work?



It would have to be a Sunday roast with the extended family.

Anja Affolter Marino

Rébecca Dorasamy

Barbara Abegg

Fabia Gnädinger

María Josefa Palmero-Areán

Leonard Vijverberg

Tatanja Vlk