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1. Explain your current legal practice.

I practice in Mexico City as part of a small law firm based in Los Angeles. I generally handle two types of matters. The largest part of the practice consists of advising Mexican companies in their commercial transactions with American and other foreign partners and handling corporate work for Mexican clients with American subsidiaries. This part of the practice also involves counseling the Mexican clients on litigation matters in the United States, basically taking on the role of in-house counsel and coordinating with American litigation counsel.

I also handle some in-bound work for American individuals and companies with interests in Mexico, which largely consists of commercial transactions, trademark registrations and immigration work.

2. Who are your clients?

I work with a couple of large multi-national companies in the entertainment and pharmaceutical fields that provide the mainstay of my practice. I also work with mid-size companies with export oriented businesses and some individuals.

3. What role does technology play in the specific needs of having to apply U.S. law and/or interact with clients in a different country from where you work?

Thanks to the Internet, I have the same access to U.S. legal information that I would have if I practiced within the United States and I can coordinate with American colleagues pretty much in the same way as if I were working down the hall. This is crucially important to my ability to provide a high level of legal services to my clients while at the same time being located close to them. Most of my communication with clients is also through e-mail or videoconference, so technology is crucial there as well.

4. What is the most surprising difference you have encountered between the laws of the U.S. and the country where you currently practice?

A good deal of substantive Mexican law is actually heavily influenced by U.S. and international law and practice, especially in the commercial and IP areas, so the difference in the substance of legal norms is not as great as you might think. The chief difference I've encountered is in the procedural arena, where you can run into an emphasis of form over

substance in the courts that can be really frustrating for lawyers or business persons from abroad. The result is that I have to warn people that the outcome of disputes will often turn on technical issues that have little to do with the facts of the case. As a practical matter, I feel that this gives the defendant a built-in advantage as compared to litigating the same dispute in a U.S. form. Another big difference is in administrative procedures, which can sometimes be agonizingly slow.

5. How did you bridge the cultural differences on the practice of law in the U.S. and in the place where you currently practice?

Well, I married a Mexican attorney, which is one way to go about it, I suppose. In general, I've found that there's more of a friendship component to attorney-client relationships here than in the U.S., which I actually find to be one of the more pleasant aspects of practicing in Mexico.

6. Based on your personal experience, please share a word of advice to the solo and small firm practitioners in the U.S. on how to better interact with foreign attorneys, both as opposing counsel and as co-counsel.

In general, I'd say that in Mexico (as in other countries), Americans tend to come across as too direct and too quick to get down to business. It's definitely a mistake to sit down to lunch and start talking about the business at hand before the food has even been ordered. First take the time to get to know the other person and have them feel comfortable with you. Business can wait until after the main course is finished.

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