

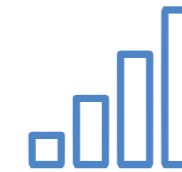
● *NautaDutilh*

# NautaDutilh: Misconceptions don't hold us back

**Jaap Jan Trommel, Chris Warner, and Petra Zijp detail the challenges facing firms in the Netherlands and why future competition won't revolve around price, but client experience**



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**How would you define your firm's culture and how important is that culture to you?**

Our culture is deeply rooted in the power of the collective and in these days that togetherness – within the partnership, among the fee earners and the staff – is what`s needed to help our clients be successful.

Clients are confronted with so many challenges – globalisation, innovation, the speed of business – that their issues and legal questions are more complex than ever. That calls for a multidisciplinary approach from our side, making the call for team work and the ability to work together louder than ever.

**What are the biggest challenges facing firms in the Netherlands?**

The war of talent is an ongoing struggle and investments in new technology is a constant challenge. The Netherlands is a small country, and people and money are less abundant than in the UK or the US. But as the saying goes, if you are not big and strong, you have to be smart.

For instance, we took the initiative to have 15 Dutch law firms join hands to fight cybercrime by exchanging information and experiences. Based on that success, we might team up in other fields too, because we're all dealing with the same issues.

**What still needs to happen to make the legal industry more inclusive?**

Compared to 20 years ago, the drive to have a more inclusive work floor has become much bigger. This is not only being pushed by developments in society, it's also because clients, who in general outperform law firms in this field, expect us to be more diverse.

But to make it even more inclusive, it's imperative we keep a close eye on the ratio between men and women. We must also speed up our efforts to attract more people with a different cultural background and continue to raise more awareness on the importance of being inclusive.

**How can law firms best encourage innovation?**

In our view it is best if this is institutionalised as well as stimulated throughout the firm as a whole. So anybody within the firm can pitch an idea. And to make the most of this grass roots approach, we have an Innovation Council installed, consisting of lawyers, consultants and other staff professionals. They evaluate the idea, test its usefulness and help bring it to the next level. This ensures creativity doesn't go to waste, but also a thorough vetting process of an idea before we start doing anything.



**“Global trends such as digitisation and increased regulation and supervision are changing the world our clients – and we – operate in, making it more complex”**

**How do you stand apart from the rest of the market?**

Our clients expect more from us than ‘just’ the delivery of excellent legal services. We are proud to be a full-service law firm, but simply being really good at practicing law is not enough. Our broad experience means that we always look at the context. Our focus is on how we can contribute to solving our clients’ business challenges.

We aim to deliver peace of mind, not just answering legal questions. We believe in doing that by putting our clients’ interests first, by seeking constructive and smart collaboration with our clients, and by constantly

adapting to ever-changing client needs in an ever-evolving world. It is our mindset, and our adaptive thinking, that really sets us apart.

**What do you think clients care most about?**

Putting our clients’ needs first also means that we regularly ask our clients for feedback. One of the questions we pose is when they feel cared for as a client. Their answers consistently show that, above all, clients value responsiveness, transparency, and proactivity.

By being available when clients need us, by proactively putting legal issues in our clients’ business context, and by

delivering on our promises we provide certainty – an important asset in a world that is rapidly changing – and show our clients that we care about their business needs.

**What is your one major prediction for the legal market?**

Global trends such as digitisation and increased regulation and supervision are changing the world our clients – and we – operate in, making it more complex. Of course, this also has an effect on the legal market. It makes it even more important for law firms to take an outside-in approach and constantly adapt your thinking.

If you look at top brands outside the legal world, there is one thing they are all obsessed about: winning the hearts and minds of the customer. That should be a top priority for every law firm too, because failing to meet the needs of clients will result in losing them. The future competition won’t revolve around price, it will revolve around client experience. ●