

Member Spotlight: **Hervé de Kervasdoué**

Why Hervé de Kervasdoué believes the human story is critical to a successful deal



Hervé advises companies, whether listed or not, in their strategic operations, such as sales, mergers, acquisitions and fund raisings, especially in the media, internet, luxury, sports and biotechnology sectors. He also advises investment funds or top executives in connection with their fundraisings. He is recognized by the "Best Lawyers in France" Guide for the "Corporate" practice since 2013.

The real estate department of BG2V is recommended among the best law firms in France in the ranking conducted by *Le Point* in collaboration with the independent institute of inquiry *Statista*.

The law for Hervé de Kervasdoué is about the human story behind the legal headlines. As a specialist in M&As, he always looks for the story behind the person behind the deal. For him it's key to unlocking the underlying value of an acquisition.

As a self-confessed entrepreneur, Hervé's business sweet spot is start-ups and mid-market deals. He likes to understand the drivers behind them, what value acquisitions bring to a developing business – and then the years of consolidation and growth as the deal bears fruit. As an avid reader of science fiction novels, Hervé admits he thrives on stories, drama and resolutions – things that keep readers (or in this case lawyers) coming back for more.

"I like to follow the stories of people because it's all about human beings; they're behind all this and you can't forget that" he says. "They've all got hopes, dreams and the will to succeed. They want to develop their businesses and I really love being part of that story."

"I'm not always a huge fan of advising large corporates where you tend to generate a lot of paperwork. I usually prefer to work directly with the entrepreneur behind the business; for small and mid-sized companies, including start-ups. That's often more motivating."

Taking the broader view of the business

It's also why Hervé prefers corporate law and M&As. It allows him to take a broad overview of the whole business from governance and taxes to labour issues and intellectual property. It's part of the reason why he joined BG2V four years ago as a young law firm that could play a key role offering a suite of services to aspiring businesses.

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"What we're doing at BG2V is giving clients a full range of services," Hervé adds. "So, let's say I'm working on a deal, and it needs a certain kind of specialty service. I'll go to the partner in charge who will be able to offer that niche kind of service. Obviously, at the same time I'm always following up to see how it's going with my client, so they know I'm still at least monitoring the work for them."

Since Hervé joined BG2V, the firm has more than double its size and grown to 13 partners and more than 40 associates. Along with corporate law, the practice handles litigation, tax and employment law, insolvencies and restructuring,

IP, compliance, real estate and even criminal law. A host of services under one legal umbrella. What's particularly unusual about the team at BG2V is that almost all the partners have studied or worked in the United States and many partners have a business Master degree from a prestigious business school. Hervé was trained in English common law at Cornell University, New York, where he passed the Bar exam.

A French-Anglo-Saxon legal hybrid

"With BG2V I wanted to contribute to the development of a different kind of law firm," Hervé says. "I wanted to have a mix of the good elements of the French legal system and practices and the American or Anglo-Saxon way of doing things. We are trying to take the best of both worlds. I think it's a good approach, trying to serve our clients with a high degree of excellence, but maybe less of a system where you push the associates day and night, which is not really my approach."

Unsurprisingly, this hybrid French-Anglo approach significantly helps with cross-border transactions. Hervé and his colleagues are perfectly placed to explain the nuances of French law to Americans eager to enter the French market, while explaining to French firms that are either doing a joint venture with a US firm in France or eyeing the US market for an acquisition.

"Basically, we like to think that we can build a bridge into those two jurisdictions and beyond rather than see cross-border work as an obstacle," Hervé says.

Following in his grandfather's footsteps

Growing up, Hervé had not really looked at the law as his vocation for the future. His initial inclination was to go to business school, which was a more natural fit for his entrepreneurial

flair. After some thought, however, he decided on law, following in his grandfather's footsteps: "My grandfather was a traditional French lawyer and I thought I'd never end up doing that. But after high school, I hesitated between doing whatever you need to do to get to business school and studying the law. Eventually I saw that studying law was a good starting point because the law touches everything."

"I wanted to have a mix of the good elements of the French legal system and practices and the American or Anglo-Saxon way of doing things. I've tried to take the best of both worlds."

After he left college, Hervé worked as an intern in several different law firms and it was this experience that eventually prompted him to eschew the larger law firms in favour of smaller practices – although he admits experience in the big firms was invaluable: "After my Masters Degree, I decided to continue in law and did three internships, one in an American firm, one in a big French firm, and one in a small French firm."

Never a dull moment

At Hogan Lovells in the US, Hervé was impressed by the work ethic of the lawyers, the quality of the work and the way the lawyers dealt with their clients and overcame day-to-day challenges. The idea of seeing law as a constant challenge piqued his interest, particularly as "I'm someone who gets bored easily – and the nice thing with this job is you never get bored", Hervé laughs.

His experience working at Hogan Lovells gave Hervé the groundwork for understanding the Anglo-Saxon legal framework, which has become part of his appeal to overseas clients.

Nevertheless, he admits his innate sense of independence resulted in his move onwards. And following work experience with E&Y, and French law firms, DDG and Redlink, Hervé decided to join BG2V.

Since joining BG2V, Hervé has continued to work on major deals for his many clients. These include the 100% stake in Paris Saint Germain football Club by Qatar Sports Investments in 2011 and a number of deals for long running client M6, which is a major private French TV network.

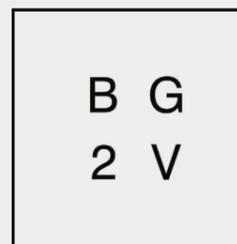
IR Global and the wider network

Meanwhile, Hervé makes the most his US legal experience and admits that these days 50% of the deals he works on are with English-speaking clients, US and UK. This international flavour has been given a boost by membership of IR Global: "IR Global has helped us to select the right people for transactions across Europe and North America. We can use people, say, in England to work with us on a deal thanks to IR Global. You need good friends everywhere if you want to help your clients to do the right deal."

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When he's not helping to run BG2V or travelling to the US or around Europe on business, Hervé spends his time with family and friends, reading his science fiction novels and enjoying his life living on a river island just 30 minutes from the centre of Paris.

He explains: "Yes, I live on an island in the river. It's not a bad spot," he smiles. "Away from my work I like to do a lot of rowing, along with golfing and skiing in the winter. It keeps me busy – it's never boring."



Avocats Associés

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IR Global's exclusive advisor for Mergers & Acquisitions in France since 2017.

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BG2V lawyers have been trained in large international law firms and are active in the key areas of business law: Corporate / M & A, Litigation, Real Estate, Criminal Law, Tax Law, Labor Law, Intellectual Property / new technologies, Bankruptcy.