



SPOTLIGHT - KLEIN • WENNER

So long, KGA Avocats and Wenner. Hello, klein • wenner

It's official!

Long-standing partners KGA Avocats and Wenner and Pangea Net members have now joined forces to form a new, independent and multicultural firm ready to support its clients (and team of talents) better than ever.

Q - A few months in, what is your first reaction when thinking of the creation of your new structure?

Michèle Dauvois (MD): What strikes me is that although our strategy and ambition for klein • wenner is resolutely forward-looking, it's obvious that the humanist values and universal convictions instilled by our « founding fathers » Theo Klein and Wolfgang Wenner are very much at the heart of the way we work and behave ourselves.

Jean-François Davené (JFD): Absolutely! The imprint of these charismatic and visionary men is still very present. You see it on a daily basis within the teams and the way they handle their missions and interact amongst themselves. And interestingly it started way before the actual birth of klein • wenner. During the whole preparatory process of observation and then during the negotiation phase already, both firms' members were transparent, open minded, non-confrontational and welcoming. Confident in the future, in a way. I would say that the best way to qualify these first months is « smooth sailing ». Which wasn't obvious considering the restrictions imposed by the current global sanitary crisis!

Q - What role did Pangea play in your merger, if any?

JFD: Crucial! Pangea Net was the petri dish that made klein • wenner even possible. It offered a structure where over a stretch of a few years we managed to get acquainted on a personal and professional basis. Through the network's referrals and recurring events we were in a safe environment that allowed us – and encouraged us- to get to know each other and assess each other's quality of work, standards, ambition.

MD: In a way, we were in a best-friends situation from the outset thanks to the set-up offered by the Pangea Net network. Throughout the years, the teams got to know each other on all levels, partners, associates and support staff. We got to work, collaborate and create friendships. That's fairly unique.

JFD: To be quite honest, when at Wenner we initially heard that another French firm was looking to join Pangea Net a few years back, we were a bit miffed. I guess that we feared that the network's members might feel confused and embarrassed by this unusual situation and that it generates some stupid competition between KGA and us. And then we quickly realized that we were not in a position of competition, but rather collaboration. We had comparable values and expectations, and complementary areas of expertise.



MD: In a complex market such as ours, if you want to not just survive but thrive as an independent law firm and offer your clients the best services and your lawyers an exciting future, then you need to get creative. And team up with the right people. I believe that this is exactly what we've accomplished here.

Q - What motivated you to move forward with the creation of this common structure? Was best-friend status not enough?

JFD: At Wenner, we were torn between staying the great law firm that we were all these years - ideal clients relationships, great team spirits, almost no turn over in our staff, rewarding work environment - and getting our firm ready for the next steps on a tight market. When this opportunity with KGA started materializing, we decided to seize it as we knew deep down that we had to take an active part in growing strategically our firm with the right partner. And not be in a static position and wait for the market to impose growth on us, in a way that could have been detrimental to our values.

MD: I completely second what Jean-François just said. Our very concerns and expectations regarding this evolution were very similar.



QUICK FACTS

- 1963: **Wenner is founded in Paris by Wolfgang Wenner**
- 1978: **KGA Avocats is founded by Théo Klein**
- 2009: **Wenner joins Pangea Net**
- 2010: **KGA joins Pangea Net**
- 2021: **Merger as klein • wenner**
- Numbers: **45+ multicultural & multilingual lawyers**
- Head Office: **1**





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Q - Any reactions from your clients regarding this first step towards a merger, which sounds like a revolution for your 50 years old firms?

MD: I only get encouraging feedback from our clients. They get that klein • wenner gives them access to a wider range of services and we are in position to support them on all their projects. Our clients are very international in their mentality and in their business so our strong multiculturalism and multilingualism combined with a warm, human-scale approach sets up apart.

JFD: So far, it's been really supportive. I believe that our clients love seeing that their legal advisors are more than lawyers! We are also business oriented, forward thinking. Strategist, in a way.

Q - By way of conclusion, any advice you'd like to share with our Pangea colleagues and beyond who might be considering a similar step with their own business?

JFD: Think about your team members, your talents. You're doing this strategic move to create a stronger business case and strengthen your firm, but your pool of talents is the heart of your business. So they have to fully understand and support the project, and not feel threatened by it. It might take time and pedagogy but show them what benefits they'll get from this up leveling and make sure that you deliver on your promise! For example: can you create an internal training system that will benefit them and their career advancement? Are you adding more roadblock or simplifying their career advancement? Are you creating exciting alternatives to the holy grail that is partnership track?

MD: And think of your clients! How will this evolution contribute to the growth of their own business in terms of support in the context of their economic and technological changes and the evolution of the law? Show them the benefits clearly. Make the expertise and insights of your pool of talents easily available to them: participation in working groups, access to your expert articles, access conferences, etc. Be a strong presence that they can rely on.



KEYS CONTACTS



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