

Interview with a Corporate Member

Jonathan Sutton, solicitor and partner with **De Cotta Law**

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De Cotta Law is an international law firm with four offices in Spain. It does business with Spanish and non-Spanish nationals and businesses, including many UK nationals, in all areas and aspects of Spanish Law.

The company was established in 1983 by **John De Cotta** (English Barrister and Spanish lawyer) and **Jaime Santafé** (Spanish lawyer) in Madrid, and then moved to Málaga. They now have offices in Mijas Costa, Nerja, Coín and Tenerife.

The firm has a largely UK-centered client base in both the private and corporate sectors, serving over 4,000 clients throughout Spain.

How would you describe your activity?

The business started with one small office and two lawyers. It now has four offices and 25 staff helping people and companies with their legal matters all over Spain. We are a genuinely international firm with experience and expertise in dealing with cross-jurisdictional cases where one country's laws conflict with those of another.



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You have said that De Cotta Law is an international law firm, but what does that mean for your business and clients?

We have the advantage of having ten different nationalities amongst our staff, which allows us to cater for clients from many different countries. Our international lawyers and support staff have extensive experience in working in a Spanish environment, and work hand in hand with our team of Spanish lawyers. We also have many local and international contacts, and we work with experts in other fields. This is particularly useful for businesses who wish to set up in Spain. Furthermore, we are able to explain the complexities of dealing with Spanish bureaucracy to foreign clients from the private and corporate sectors.

We are getting closer to the end of the Brexit negotiations. Could this be an opportunity for De Cotta Law?

We are optimistic that business conditions are improving, and challenges such as Brexit could actually be a source of new and different work. We are positioning ourselves to be well-placed to provide advice to UK businesses who wish to establish their EU foothold in Spain, and to UK nationals who want to relocate here.

What value does the Chamber provide to De Cotta Law?

The British Chamber of Commerce is by far the most important organisation which promotes the interests of British companies. It also provides crucial support to Spanish companies who want to do business with Britain, British companies, British consumers, and the large British expatriate population in Spain.

We have been members of the Chamber for a long time, and have made many useful contacts

from the networking meetings. These have helped us to increase our network of local professionals and experts. Being part of the Chamber promotes our brand and makes us more prominent in the local and international market place.

If we had to choose three words to describe the Chamber, we would say it was 'Influential', 'Prestigious', and 'Well-run'.

How did the economic crisis affect your business? Did you change anything?

Obviously the level and value of property sales decreased during the crisis, although they are now moving in the right direction. Our firm had actually anticipated the crisis before it occurred, and had invested heavily in areas other than conveyancing such as litigation, insolvency, inheritance, and family law. These areas were not affected in the same way by the economic recession.