

Former LCA innovation head launches 'human centric' legal design and innovation consultancy

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The former head of innovation at Milan law firm LCA Studio Legale, Marco Imperiale, has launched a consultancy focused on legal design, innovation and legal wellbeing. Imperial

An Interview with Marco Imperiale, Founder and Managing Director at Better Ipsum

By LBW Editorial Dept.



So first of all, why Better Ipsum?

Like most of the beautiful things, it started off by chance. I was working on my personal website with a friend of mine who is a designer, and I noticed the classic Lorem Ipsum template.

Then my perfectionist instinct came in, and I thought, am I able to make it better? I stopped for a moment, and I noticed that the name Better Ipsum was everything I was looking for. Latin, but international. Catchy sounding. Easy to remember. I checked for previous uses with trademark specialists, and they gave me the green light, so here we are.

The logo, as you can imagine, is related to the Fibonacci sequence and the golden ratio.

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Introducing Better Ipsum, a
consultancy dedicated to a
human-centric legal approach

BY SSI

Better Ipsum is the first international consultancy totally
human-centric approach in the legal field. At

International Lead Launches
Better Ipsum

September 5, 2023, 4:28 PM EDT
Marco Imperiale, who most recently served as head of
an law firm LCA, announced on Monday the launch of a new
based on legal design,....

My obsession for Leonardo, renaissance, and
objective parameters of beauty is a good part
of my personal and professional background.

Can you tell us about your team?

We are an interdisciplinary, international
team, of lawyers, designers, psychologists, and
experts of digital transformation. The majority
of us are women, and it is an element I stress
every time I can.

As for now, we are fully remote, which means
that we work from wherever we want. Just to
give you an example, a member of our team
lives in the United States but is Sweden-based,
while another one lives in the United King-
dom. Moreover, we are working on a free vaca-

tion policy. I asked myself what kind of com-
pany I would have performed the best, and I
tried to implement this kind of approach in
Better Ipsum. I also have to say that all our
decisions are the consequence of long conver-
sations about pros/cons of every aspect.

From a practical perspective, some of us are
part of a core team, while others are joining on
a project basis. The idea is to share best prac-
tices, improve our methodology, and create a
unique approach for a positive evolution of the
legal field.

That said, we are currently in a phase of ex-
pansion, so write us if you think you have the
willingness and the capability to join our mis-
sion!

professione e Mercato

Better Ipsum, la prima realtà
internazionale dedicata a un approccio legale
umanocentrico

settembre 2023

Why humancentrism?

Because I believe that the legal world and the legal profession are facing a revolution, and it is totally up to us to understand if it is going to be an evolution or an involvement. The use of technology, which should be our best ally, is becoming for some of us an enemy or something to be afraid of, and the waves of exponential innovation, which should represent an element of excitement, are creating frictions and communication barriers.

Moreover, in all these years in the legal work, I noticed that most of the innovation work tends to focus too much on the tools, and too less on the adoption. Lawyers are not taught how to speak with developers, designers, and engineers, and we are pretending them to be fully performant on new and complex technologies. Moreover, we forget that their mind is already focused on several tasks, including billing hours, replying to hundreds of email, managing the resources, developing the client base, etc.. Maybe some of them, and I think about legal professionals in the IT or privacy field, are more into legal tech and innovation, but what about the others? I guess it's time to stress the human touch...

What kind of services you are providing?

It's a wide amount. Basically, everything related to human-centrism. Legal Design, of course. But also legal innovation, legal well-being, and ESG in the legal field.

From workshops to pure consulting, from tools to bespoke services, we aim to be a long time-partner for those who are committed to ride the wave of innovation.

Our goal is becoming the one-stop shop regarding performance improvement, better processes, and sustainable living in law firms, legal fields, and institutions. The kind of player you would ask for reflections on added value brought to the clients, team purpose/focus, and engagement of the Gen Z, but also for social reports, internal policies, and support for digital transformation. As you can imagine, I could go on.

Just to provide you an example, the last requests we have received are a work on client feedback, a legal design project, and a mindfulness seminar. The combo sounds unusual, but if you scratch the surface, you'll see a clear connection among all the dots.

Why do you think that the legal world is missing the human element?

This is not an easy answer, and it would probably take me an entire university course to analyze all its nuances.

A part of that is related to the way legal work is developed. Billable hours, law firm structure, internal and external pressure, difficult tasks that require thoughtful advice in a short amount of time, lack of preparation regarding non-legal skills.

Another part is related to lawyers' mindset. We are pessimists, distrustful, backward thinking, and ontologically adverse to innovation. We complain about stress, but we consider it a necessary part of our lives. Burnout is something to be proud, sleeping disorders are the norm, and our main goal is being busy, rather than focused.

Then we have several other issues. A general fear of the unknown, a feeling that something has to change but the incapacity to intervene on that, difficulties to understand the next trends in the legal profession and what will be the legal services of the future...

If you mix all these aspects together, you have undeniably a killer combo.

You have multiple experiences in the legal field. What are the main differences between being a lawyer, a head of innovation and a consultant?

I guess there is a quick way to answer it and a more articulate one.

If you want the short answer, in one case you are acting from the inside, and in the other one, you are acting from the outside. Moreover, as a law firm professional you are working for only one player on a full-time basis, while in the other one, you can have a majority of players on a part-time basis.

That said, and if you want to dig deeper, the analysis can be more articulated.

First of all, it is a matter of perception. As a law firm player, other lawyers will see you as a competitor, and it will be very hard for them to share their insights, which you truly need to improve processes. I also have to say that the perspective radically changes when law firms become not just competitors or colleagues, but a revenue stream.

Secondly, in-house teams will always be skeptical about lawyers providing legal tech tools, legal design projects, or ESG work to law

firms. It is not even a matter of offer quality, because great lawyers can provide top-notch services even in fields like legal design, ESG, or legal tech, but if your core business is different, it is quite difficult to be perceived as a credible player.

Lastly, I guess that there is an element of commitment. When I became obsessed with the evolution of the legal field, I did not have problems stopping working as a full-time lawyer to become a head of innovation. And now, that I see the need for a broader intervention, I did not have problems quitting my law firm job to start a consultancy and work from the outside. If you really believe in something, you need to go all in and risk. As a Harvard professor told me, showing can be better than telling.

How things are going so far?

We have been lucky enough to get significant traction, despite the recent start. I guess that all the work done in previous years can make us stand out in terms of reputation, quality, and vision.

In a short timeframe, and also checking the numbers, we will evaluate if opening business units in UK, US, Middle East, and Asia. A part of me believes that – despite the cultural and practical differences – lawyers tend to face similar challenges.

That said, we are already able, through our net of consultants and specialists, to provide services in all the major jurisdictions. The idea was starting already with an international mindset, an international array of clients, and an international vibe. I guess we are perfectly on track.

And how about your future plans?

Apart that promoting Better Ipsum, working with clients on challenging projects, and hopefully improving the legal business and the legal profession, I would like to stress the value factor.

We aim to attract and work with clients who share our values, our mission, and who are ready to walk the walk with us. Hopefully, we will only work with players that are truly committed in making the extra step in terms of innovation and sustainability. And this is why we are also working to become a benefit corporation.

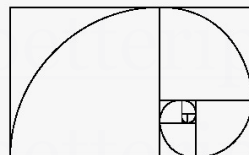
Final notes?

Well, I guess that most of the professionals in the legal world are experiencing that something needs to change. An easy answer would be, quoting Jerry Maguire: *“Call us, and help us to help you”*.

But that’s just marketing. My hope is that all the professionals of the legal field, including law students, will become agents of change. As professionals, and – even better – as human beings. To me, that would be even more satisfying than founding a successful and remunerative business.

About the Interviewee

Marco is the founder and managing director of [Better Ipsum](#), a consultancy focused on legal design, legal innovation, and legal well-being. He is also a frequent keynote speaker (100+ national and international events). A true legal design and innovation pioneer, Marco wrote (with Barbara de Muro) the first Italian book on legal design and lectured the course on legal design at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. At Harvard, where he graduated as Fulbright Scholar, he also worked as visiting researcher.



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