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June 2017

## Associate viewpoint

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Daniel Levi of [Estudio Beccar Varela \(/ll250/firms/1135165/estudio-beccar-varela\)](#) talks about the importance of finding the right balance between commercial empathy and flexibility, and the challenge of being the first lawyer in his family



### Quick facts

**Name:** Daniel Levi

**Law firm:** [Estudio Beccar Varela \(/ll250/firms/1135165/estudio-beccar-varela\)](#)

**Year qualified:** 2006

### Qualifications and universities:

Law degree, University of Buenos Aires (2006)

Master in Finance, University of CEMA (2011)

**Current department:** Corporate finance

**Why did you decide to train as a lawyer?**

When I began my legal studies, I was particularly interested in the political side - how politics changes and affects people's lives. As time went on, my interest in the economic consequences of law grew and I realised business law was what I wanted to do. The reasons I started training at the beginning looked very different by the end.

### **What were the biggest challenges you faced when trying to secure a position at a law firm?**

A general challenge was that I was the only lawyer in my family, and there weren't many people around me that were involved in law. It was a completely new world and I had to develop lots of skills that university couldn't give me.

### **Describe your law firm's culture in three words.**

"Always moving forward." [Estudio Beccar Varela \(/ll250/firms/1135165/estudio-beccar-varela\)](#) is a traditional Argentine firm that's over 120 years old, and despite this, it always manages to be top tier nationally. It is constantly looking ahead and pre-empts what is coming.

### **Tell us three things that your law firm does well for associates.**

The work atmosphere is friendly and relaxed, partners are very open and receptive, and the firm is supportive in letting associates build and pursue their own career projects. They are very open to new ideas and willing to listen.

### **What are the most enjoyable aspects of your job?**

I'm a team player and enjoy working with groups of people together to find solutions to our clients' problems, be they partners or junior associates.

### **What are the most challenging aspects?**

For me personally, it is finding the right balance between commercial empathy and flexibility that clients need, and the more conservative technical approach that the law profession demands from you. Clients want to go forward, and sometimes you have to be the bearer of bad news and highlight problems. In these situations, you have to be creative and find a feasible solution.

### **Tell us about something unusual or unexpected about your job.**

Law really puts you in places that you never expected to be. I recently finished a two-year experience in Brazil as a foreign associate. Everything was new. Learning Portuguese was a challenge and I had no friends or contacts when I arrived, but it proved to be an amazing experience. I was originally supposed to be there for six months, but stayed for almost two years.

### **What are you working on at the moment?**

I'm working on an M&A involving the sale of a financial institution, a project finance transaction for the development of a wind farm facility, as well as a public offering for redemption of certain corporate notes. On top of this, I'm trying to lobby for a Beccar Varela Brazilian desk with another colleague.

### **What are the top three items on your to do list today?**

I have a conference call to prepare the closing of a transaction and I have to review and finalise a presentation for a Japanese client who wants to make infrastructure investments in Argentina. After that I'm participating in a meeting for young professionals in the Argentine-Brazilian Chamber of Commerce.

**What time did you finish work yesterday?**

8pm - this is the regular time we finish. Sometimes we go later.

**Tell us the most exciting thing you have done as a lawyer to date.**

I fondly remember my first important financing transaction I coordinated on my own around six or seven years ago. It was for the construction of an industrial facility in Buenos Aires and was complex, involving a multinational client and a tough counterparty. I was young at the time and learned lots of things.

**What is most interesting to you about the practice area you are working in at present?**

This is an interesting moment for Argentina. After such a long economic crisis, investors are now showing interest. Lots of investment projects are appearing and I expect to be involved in many of these.

**What kind of non-legal training is important to you?**

Apart from learning foreign languages, I try to brush up on negotiation techniques. I studied negotiation in Harvard and also teach it.

**What's the most useful piece of advice your partner has given to you?**

Some time ago, a partner told me I had to always think of finding and building my own path, to not wait for others to open doors and tell you what to do. That stayed with me.

**Who has been most inspirational to you in your career and why?**

There isn't one particular person. I always feel much admiration for those who are brilliant yet low-profile professionals. Those who don't walk around like arrogant superstars.

**What was the last law firm social event you attended**

Yesterday we had the monthly happy hour event here at the firm with all the partners and associates. I also participated in the IBA Latin American event about M&A here in Buenos Aires.

**What do you like to do to relax?**

I am a big fan of Independiente and go to the stadium on the weekends to see matches. I also play football with my friends, play guitar and even indulge in some cooking.

**What advice would you give to someone who wants to pursue a career in law?**

I would say that they invest first in building good relationships with people. Apart from technical things, it's important to put emphasis on those.

**What is your view on millennials in the work place - will they change the legal profession?**

When I began working around 10 years ago, a job at a big law firm still felt like a privilege you had to really earn. Today, junior associates are considered talents, and firms offer benefits to retain them. In my view, we are bringing fresh air to the profession. We recognise the value of diversity and integration, as well as the value of taking risks in careers and life.

### **Where do you want to be in five years' time?**

In a personal sense, I would like to be building a family. Professionally, I would like to be consolidating my career in a top position and be a reference in the areas where I work.

Country :

Argentina