

Option Three: "Bring in the Lawyers"

You are probably thinking, "Why should I bother to use a lawyer for a supply chain problem?" The reason is there are times when legitimate legal leverage is necessary. Skilled lawyers by experience and training can provide your company with the specific kind of targeted leverage that is useful when confronting or trying to reverse a supply chain problem. In many foreign jurisdictions, the involvement of a lawyer can often accomplish what an individual company cannot do on its own.

Note: all lawyers and law firms are not the same. If you are an American company in need of a lawyer overseas to assist with a supply chain problem, you only have two realistic choices. The first is to retain one of the large American or European law firms that has offices in foreign countries and employs hundreds or sometimes thousands of lawyers. Many mega law firms are excellent, but I do not think that in a case of a supply chain problem in a foreign country that those firms should necessarily be your first call. The reason is that these massive global firms are not always as knowledgeable about specific local matters in foreign countries, because much of what these firms focus on is representing major multinational corporations with large-scale problems. Local matters are more likely to fall outside their scope of expertise.

Instead of approaching one of these multinational firms first, I recommend another path. There are law firms in every country around the world which operate independently and are staffed by lawyers who are nationals of that country. In my experience, these law firms can be particularly helpful in that they usually maintain extensive contacts with both local and national government officials. In other words, they are well connected—in the right way. Consider as an example the countries throughout Central and South America. Governmental structures throughout Central and South America are widely diverse, and not one is the same as

another. Because of the way most of their economies are set up, independent local law firms are well entrenched in understanding the impact of local laws and the role of government officials. Such firms can be highly adept at calling on their contacts, many of which are personal, to identify problems and suggest possible solutions. In short, they know who to call. For over twenty-five years, I have worked closely with law firms throughout Central and South America. I have repeatedly found that it was the independent law firms, not the global mega firms, that were the most adept in solving specific local problems.

What follows is a list of lawyers whom I know personally in Central and South America. Though they are from different countries throughout the region, they all share one thing in common: they are independent law firms staffed with lawyers (many of whom were trained in the United States) who specialize in solving commercial problems. Let me stress that this list is by no means meant to be exhaustive, but it gives some idea of the kind of independent law firms you might think about when investigating supply chain and other problems.

Mexico	Hugo Cuesta Leaño Cuesta Campos (Mexico City & Guadalajara)	<i>cuestacampos.com</i>
Central America	Ronald Lachner BLP (Costa Rica; Nicaragua; Honduras; El Salvador)	<i>blplegal.com</i>
Guatemala	Pedro P. Marroquín Pérez Marroquín, Pérez & Asociados, S.C. (Guatemala City)	<i>mra-legal.com</i>
Colombia	José Alejandro Torres Posse Herrera Ruiz (Bogotá)	<i>phrlegal.com</i>

Uruguay	Maria Elena de Posadas Trambauer Posadas, Posadas & Vecino (Montevideo)	<i>ppv.com.uy</i>
Peru	Alberto Varillas, Sr. Garcia Sayán Abogados (Lima)	<i>garciasayan.com.pe</i>
Argentina	Diego Botana Allende & Brea (Buenos Aires)	<i>allende.com</i>
Chile	Leonidas Prieto Prieto Abogados (Santiago)	<i>prieto.cl</i>
Paraguay	Francisco Peroni Clifton Peroni Sosa Tellechea Burt & Narvaja (Asunción)	<i>pstbn.com.py</i>
Brazil	Thomas B. Felsberg Felsberg Advogados (São Paulo)	<i>felsberg.com.br</i>
Ecuador	Diego F. Romero Romero Arteta Ponce Abogados (Quito)	<i>romeroartetapon ceabogados.com</i>
Panama	Eloy Alfaro Boyd Alemán, Cordero, Galindo & Lee (Panama City)	<i>alcogal.com</i>
Bolivia	Alonso Indacochea Indacochea & Asociados, Abogados Sociedad Civil (Santa Cruz)	<i>indacochea.com/en</i>

My advice: By consulting with independent local lawyers, you can learn quickly if an approach (either formal or informal) to higher-level government officials in a particular country is necessary to solve your problem, or if your problem is more of a commercial issue that can be resolved on a local level.