



## Member Interview



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**Q:** Today we have a guest in our interview series who came to the UAE just five months ago. He works for Strohal Legal Group, and his name is Paul Nimmerfall. Welcome to our interview series.

**Paul:** Thank you so much for having me. Great to be here.

**Q:** Paul, as I just mentioned, you came to the UAE just a short time ago. What did you do before you came to the UAE?

**Paul:** I am an Austrian lawyer. I studied law in Vienna, Austria. I worked for a couple of years in one of the big Austrian commercial law firms called Schoenherr with major focus on Austria and Central Europe. Before I came to the UAE, I did my law exam and thought about a new adventure.

**Q:** So you came here without a job and you were just looking for a job, or did you already have an offer from the Strohal Legal Group?

**Paul:** It is a big coincidence, because if you would have asked me two or three years ago, if I could imagine coming here, I would probably have said no. My former boss Jakob Kisser

came here and joined Strohal Legal Group two years ago. I visited him as a tourist at that time and we were discussing whether it could be interesting for me. I had a job interview, signed the contract before coming here, and I came here to work for SLG.

**Q: What was your first impression when you started to work here? You do not live in Dubai; you live in Ras Al Khaimah.**

**Paul:** It was not too surprising, because I was there three times before. I did my “due diligence on the job” to know what is happening. Everything was quite overwhelming with many new people and a different work environment with different culture. We mainly speak English, but with Arabic, you have another very different language. Thus, I would say overwhelming, but not surprising.

**Q: You are here for just a few months. Is there anything that comes to your mind that you would say is very different and you would not have expected it.**

**Paul:** The weather is quite different. My plan was to join early summer, and if I would survive the summer months, I could stay for longer. People told me that it was a mild summer. I think I handled the temperatures quite well, but it is certainly completely different. Also completely different is the traffic that freaks me out a little bit when I go to Dubai. Also different from Austria, but not surprising, is that there are so many international people. It is a melting pot of different cultures and different nationalities. Those three cornerstones were the most different parts, although I believe there are many other things that are different to Austria.

**Q: What about for working perspective?**

**Paul:** Yeah, sure. From a working perspective, it is very different because I worked in a big international commercial law firm, and SLG is a boutique law firm focusing on the same areas that I did before, but it is a much smaller law firm. At the law firm, where I worked before, we had people that took care of administration and helped to prepare PowerPoint presentation as well as with the IT infrastructure. In SLG this does not exist. Whenever we need something in SLG, we need to take care about it ourselves. However, I was looking for this because as I wanted to have this experience and it is certainly a major difference to my life in Austria.

**Q: Can you introduce the Strohal Legal Group and tell us what your exact role is?**

**Paul:** I think most ABC members know Strohal Legal Group because Theodor Strohal was a founding member. Strohal Legal Group is an international commercial law firm focusing on business law and corporate law, mergers and acquisitions and energy law. We are also involved in emerging fields such as climate change law. Our main office is in the UAE, here in Ras Al Khaimah, although we think about opening an office in Dubai rather soon. The other offices are located in Singapore and Thailand. Due to the background of many of our

lawyers, we still have very close ties to Austria in particular, but also to other Central European countries.

**Q: *Talking about your specific role. What are you focusing on?***

**Paul:** Sure. My job title is Senior Legal Counselor. I am working as a lawyer and my responsibility is to provide good and accurate legal advice to the clients. It is a more senior position as I was doing before, so there are also tasks like taking care of personnel and the firm strategy. Hence, it is much more than just providing legal advice. I also work closely together with Theodor Strohal and Jakob Kissler.

**Q: *What kind of specific services would you be able to offer?***

**Paul:** We are lawyers, so it is legal advice. My particular focus is on the corporate mergers and acquisitions. I did that for a while in Austria and my specialty is renewable energy law and climate change law. Any person that has an interest in those areas or that needs legal advice or needs help can contact me any time, and I am happy to either have a discussion or provide advice on the topic or the industry. Coming back to one of your questions before about differences in the UAE. My feeling is that the work is much more market driven and industry focused. In addition to providing legal advice, clients who come here from Europe to US or Asian countries, they need advice on the local market, and they need advice on how things work here. Any question in those areas is highly welcome and I am happy to have any discussion on this.

**Q: *When you mentioned climate change and energy law, I had an association in my mind that says sustainability. Sustainability is one of the themes of the Expo 2020. Did you already visit the Expo?***

**Paul:** Yes, I did. I had no huge expectations but was pleasantly surprised. It is such a cool place and feels like a huge museum with a little exhibition for each country. I have visited the EXPO three times and every time it was such a great time. There are so many cool and open-minded people.

**Q: *Do you have a favorite pavilion? Can you recommend a pavilion?***

**Paul:** I hope you will excuse; Austria is only my second choice. In my eyes, Pakistan is fantastic. It is just the right mix between providing information, showing beautiful picture of the landscape and having nice people. It is something I did not expect, but Pakistan is the pavilion you should go I believe.

**Q: *Thank you. I will go to the Pakistani pavilion. Paul is there anything else you would like to add at the end of this interview?***

**Paul:** I want to thank you for the invitation and for everything; you and other ABC board members are doing here for Austrian community. Especially for people who come here quite recently. It is very helpful, and you gave me a very nice introduction. Thank you for everything you do and thank you for having me. I guess nothing more to add from my side

**Q:** *Paul thank you very much for the interview.*

**Paul:** Thank you so much