

Meet the Professionals – The candid confession of the youngest partner at GNP Guia Naghi & Partners: “It wasn’t talent that got me here, but hard work and the luck of being in the right environment” | A conversation with Tudor Nacev about cultivating excellence, pioneering the pharma practice, and working on high-impact projects



Tudor Nacev, partner at GNP Guia Naghi & Partners, is one of those professionals whose trajectory was built on a solid foundation of work, trust, and genuine mentorship. From the start of his career, he worked side by side with Manuela Guia and Bianca Naghi, who would become his colleagues and mentors at the firm, as well as professional benchmarks on his path to performance. His promotions at every seniority level were not merely formal acknowledgments, but signs of steady growth and ownership. With a strong specialization in the pharma industry and ambitious plans in public procurement, Tudor sees the future of the legal profession as a balance between technical excellence and a humane organizational culture. In a candid conversation—relevant to any lawyer at the beginning of the road or on the verge of reinvention—BizLawyer sketched both the detailed profile of a passionate professional and the picture of a law firm that operates more like a school of legal thought than a mere service provider.

First steps: loyalty to the team and solid values

Tudor Nacev recalls clearly that all the defining moments of his career are closely tied to the team in which he grew. While still in law school, he did an internship at a Big Four firm, where he met Manuela Guia, who later became one of the most important figures in his career, as well as Bianca Naghi, who would go on to support his professional development.

“I’ve worked with the team and colleagues I’m with today since the very beginning—since I graduated,” the lawyer interviewed by BizLawyer recalls.

It mattered—and helped—that he started his career in a Big Four, a professional environment that covers many disciplines and teaches you rigor; you absorb the corporate style, which is important to understand.

“These are multinationals that operate with the same corporate style, and we overlap in values, in our way of thinking, and in interdisciplinary work. You learn to work with people from other areas,” Tudor Nacev points out.

This explains why the firm now covers many disciplines and can thus deliver complex projects.

“From the start I worked with Manuela and Bianca. They were my mentors and taught me everything I know. When I left that Big Four together with them, it wasn’t a break for me—it was a natural continuation,” explains the youngest partner at GNP.

This continuity was one of the pillars on which he built his career. Even when he reached manager level in a

hierarchical system like the Big Four, he chose to follow the team that had given him constant support and trust. “If I had stayed there without them, that would have been the real change for me.”

Another essential moment was the encouragement to step outside his comfort zone. In 2017–2018, his mentors pushed him to start interacting more—and directly—with clients. “It was difficult for me at the time. But Manuela and Bianca kept insisting and helped me. It was an accelerated learning curve.”

Promotion—a new role, the same values

For Tudor Nacev, promotion to partner at GNP Guia Naghi & Partners was not a turning point, but rather a natural transition to a new level of responsibility. Within the team, the change was felt through greater emphasis on autonomy and collective involvement.

“In my team I try to encourage independence more and more, and in the other teams I try to get more involved together with the other partner colleagues,” he explains.

“I’m involved in developing and training people—not only in my team, but across the firm. We try to grow together,” adds Tudor Nacev.

The relationship with clients remained essentially the same but evolved in depth. Tudor notes that interactions have expanded beyond the strict framework of projects, moving toward personal familiarity and natural loyalty: “We’ve started to go out and connect outside specific projects.”

Despite the new title, he feels the client relationship has remained authentic and close: “I don’t know if anything has changed in their perception. But the relationships have deepened and become stronger.”

And the interaction has become more complex. “We talk more and more about strategy, not just technical details.”

Beyond titles, his working style has stayed true to the values instilled by his mentors: trust, decentralization, and accountability. “My values and working style come from Manuela and Bianca, who have passed them on to all our colleagues.”

Promotion was not a redefinition of his position, but the recognition of a role already assumed over time—one in which strategy replaces technicality and coordination takes the place of direct execution.

Ambitious objectives and sincere gratitude

In his new role as partner, Tudor Nacev has two clear directions he wants to strengthen. The first concerns organizational culture: the active involvement of senior colleagues in firm decisions. “We’re trying to prepare them and give them the context to better understand things and to take on more responsibility. I went through the same process; I know how important it is.”

The second concerns professional development: expanding a dedicated team in public procurement. “Until now I focused a lot on pharma, but that team is already mature. Now I want us to build something similar in public procurement, together with the litigation team.”

Looking back, Tudor feels privileged to have grown in an environment that trusted him even when he lacked full experience. “I received positive feedback and constant encouragement. I still ask myself why they bet on me. When I started with pharma, Manuela could have hired someone already trained, but she chose to let me develop

that area.”

He speaks candidly about the impact of his mentors and acknowledges that his development was different from that of peers in the same generation. “I look around and see how much I benefited from this trust. And yes, I feel lucky to have had the chance to grow alongside Manuela, Bianca, and Otilia (Otilia Vîlcu, Partner at GNP—Ed.).”

With modesty, he admits he still wrestles with inner questions—whether he is the right person, whether he deserves his place. But in the end, he says: “It seems they thought I was. And for that, I thank them.”

Mentorship—a perfect mix of trust and responsibility, exacting standards and patience

One of GNP’s cultural cornerstones is its focus on mentorship. Tudor is acutely aware of the privilege of learning from professionals who gave him confidence even when he didn’t have complete experience.

“I received positive feedback and was encouraged to take things on. Sometimes I wondered why. I thought maybe I wasn’t ready. But they gave me credit and trusted me,” the lawyer interviewed by *BizLawyer* confesses.

He frankly acknowledges that he did not grow professionally by sheer individual effort. On the contrary, his development was possible thanks to a team that supported him consistently and shaped him through demanding yet genuine mentorship. “For me, it wasn’t individual growth at all. I grew within a team that encouraged me to become who I am.”

What made the difference was not just the support, but the nature of the feedback: honest, sometimes tough, yet always constructive. “I’ve always appreciated hard honesty. I was told directly: this isn’t good; that needs to be different. And I didn’t see it as stress, but as a chance to learn.”

This balance between guidance and freedom was, he says, essential. His mentors encouraged him to try, to make mistakes, to see what he would do “according to his own judgment.” It was a perfect mix of trust and responsibility, of exacting standards and patience. “Without those moments when someone told me what I hadn’t done well—but also let me test things—I wouldn’t be here. Their role was absolutely decisive.”

Today, Tudor tries to replicate the same approach with new generations of lawyers, though he admits it isn’t always easy. Perhaps generations have changed. Perhaps, he says modestly, he has yet to fully develop the same mentoring vocation. But the model remains clear: leadership grounded in honesty, trust, and continuous learning. In turn, he has become a mentor to younger lawyers at the firm. He speaks with pride about a manager on his team who is appreciated by clients and who has adopted his working style. “I’m happier when clients say they’re doing very well than when they praise me.”

He speaks of his mentors—Manuela, Bianca, and Otilia—with deep gratitude. “Without them, I wouldn’t be here. They shaped me through honesty, trust, and the freedom to make mistakes and learn.”

His mentors guided him with well-measured discipline: they pushed him toward autonomy but always kept the door open for questions; they told him what needed improvement and praised him even when he thought he didn’t deserve it. “I’ve always been told things bluntly, without gloves,” the lawyer says.

Although there were moments of frustration—some projects succeeded, others didn’t—the relationship of trust with his mentors allowed him to see criticism as a growth tool, not a source of stress. In his view, this kind of honesty and pedagogy is rare: many of his university colleagues, brilliant in class, did not benefit from such support and could not sustain their careers at the same level.

Specialization in pharma and an opening toward public procurement

Tudor Nacev specialized in pharmaceutical law—a field in which he was a pioneer within the team. “No one was doing pharma at the time, and Manuela decided I should handle it. She could have hired someone experienced, but she chose to train me.”

It was a strategic decision, but also a personal one. “She says it was justified. Honestly, I think it was a gesture of trust.”

One of Tudor’s flagship projects was Romania’s first Direct to Pharmacy (DtP) model, in which manufacturers sold directly to pharmacies without distributors. “It was an innovation, a complicated project, but with major impact. People still talk about it today.”

Another landmark project: the public procurement contract for gene therapy. “The medicine cost a few million euros. It was for a child awaiting treatment, so the client (a pharmaceutical producer) was under intense time pressure. It was the fourth—and last—sleepless night of my career.”

At the same time, Tudor now coordinates the development of a team specialized in public procurement. “We’re already working on this. It’s a strategic direction; we’re collaborating with the litigation team, and we want to have a steady practice next year.”

GNP, a school for exacting lawyers

GNP’s culture is one of high standards—but also openness. Tudor acknowledges that not everyone fits this style. “We mostly hire graduates. It’s easier to grow someone into our style than to adapt them.”

About the firm’s culture, he says: “We’re nerds. Every project is treated as the most important. We like complicated, non-repetitive matters. We’re not about volume work, but about strategy and innovation.”

GNP fosters client loyalty and provides long-term advice. “We get to know each other very well. They don’t come back to us for routine matters, but for new challenges.”

His recommendation for a young lawyer considering joining GNP? “To keep an open mind, be patient, and want to learn. Not to think that being good in school is enough. You learn the profession over time.”

Asked how much is talent and how much is hard work in this profession, Tudor answers frankly: “Even if someone else might label me differently, I don’t think I was talented. Everything I achieved came from work and from the luck of having grown in the right environment. Work is essential.”