

# RECRUITMENT QUESTIONNAIRE & ROAD MAP

## Issues & Questions to Consider as You Plan Recruiting Needs

### **PART I: ESTABLISHING A SOLID LAW FIRM IDENTITY**

#### **A. BRANDING THE FIRM: CORPORATE INTROSPECTION AS THE BASIS FOR A SOLID BRAND**

1. What is the firm's core identity? What examples are available to support the core message? (This is critical: a law firm cannot market effectively to others until it has defined itself internally. It is not enough to tell students that a firm is a "general practice" firm)
2. Identify the three fastest growing practice groups at the firm.
3. What are the 'bread and butter' practice areas of the firm? What is it about the way the firm practices in these core areas that distinguishes it from other competitors?
4. Does the firm have any practice areas that are emerging, unique, or might be of particular interest to students?
5. Who are the firm's representative clients? Why would a young attorney want to work with these types of clients?
6. Beyond the issue of grades and law review, what types of students seem to do best at the firm?
7. What are 1-2 words that one could use to describe the firm (be specific: 'collegial' does not count)

#### **B. DEFINE THE FIRM'S HIRING GOALS**

1. What specific hiring goals does the firm have? (is the firm seeking to increase the total number of students from a particular school, improve diversity, or boost its image in a particular practice area?) Be specific in terms of goals so that progress can be accurately measured.
2. Which schools does the firm want to target and why? Does the culture of the school/students fit with the firm's culture?
3. What is the timeline for achieving specific recruitment goals? What does a successful recruitment picture look like, given any external/market constraints?

#### **C. GETTING TO KNOW TARGET LAW SCHOOLS**

1. What is the school's philosophy regarding recruitment? Is the firm's message in line with the school's recruitment agenda?
2. Identify the key groups that communicate with students (career center, student affairs, the Dean, faculty, diversity director, student groups). What programs does each department do, and what message do they seek to communicate? How do various departments work together on large school projects? What role, if any, can law firms have in the process? (This may require several meetings with various groups at the school).
3. Make sure the firm's current law school participation/sponsorship is in line with recruitment goals (for example, law firms who want to improve diversity may wish to sponsor diverse student groups, but those who wish to improve their standing within a practice group may favor having a partner serve as an adjunct professor, or may want to serve on a panel emphasizing that practice group).
4. In what other ways can attorneys become involved with the school? Has the firm tried them all in the past? If so, what was the result?
5. **Key:** is the firm's message in line with the school's core message? (If not, consider whether this is the right school for recruiting purposes, or how to streamline the law firm message)
6. Who are the student leaders? Which students have "sway" within the student body?
7. How do students obtain information (do they check their mailboxes? Read emails? Use online resources?)
8. Has the firm appropriately leveraged existing student relationships?

## II. ASSEMBLING THE PLAN

### A. STRATEGY & IMPLEMENTATION

1. Does the firm website succinctly and accurately communicate the firm's core message? Can a newcomer to the site communicate the core points in 30 seconds or less? If not, the message needs to be streamlined (test it out).
2. Reduce the amount of paper products that are being distributed to students. Provide a simple, streamlined message that can be communicated in **five points or less**.
3. Does the firm's message explain how it is different from its competitors, and why it should matter to students? (having a wide range of client types, for example can insulate against economic downturns in one sector, and can provide young attorneys with a wide range of work).
4. Is the core message consistent within the firm, regardless of who is doing the recruiting? Is it communicated both verbally and via the actions of both attorneys and staff?
5. Is the firm being honest about its strengths, weaknesses and culture? Does the message resonate as true?

6. How is the firm communicating any messages so that they stand out to the student body?
7. Has the firm's message been updated to account for challenging economic times (has the firm explained why and how it will remain financially secure?) Does the firm have a method for communicating openly with students about difficult issues?
8. Ask summer associates what they think of the firm, and how that image differed from the message they heard during the recruitment process. If class is large, consider an anonymous survey to encourage honesty and openness. Surveying of current attorneys is also advised.
9. Is the firm's financial allocation at each school in line with its image and objectives? Has financial outlay been adjusted to reflect current economic times?
10. Which of the firm's attorneys has been recruited from the school in question during the past five years? How did the firm reach them, and what are their thoughts about the firm's recruitment process?
11. Who is being sent to recruit at each school; is this person appropriate for the role? Have the recruiting teams been involved in developing the message and setting the recruitment agenda?
12. Throwing money at a problem does not always work - consider alternate ways to get the job done (i.e. a dynamic attorney who can participate and connect with students, etc.). Although there are expensive ways to participate, there are usually many programs that are inexpensive or free, and can still have a significant impact.
13. Be sure to respond to all phone calls and emails in a timely manner!

## **B. MEETING WITH THE CAREER CENTER**

1. Who are the members of the Career Center, and what role does each person play? What kinds of relationships does the firm have with members of the Career Center? (repeat this process with other organizations within the law school)
2. How does the Career Center communicate with the student body?
3. What are the profiles of Career Center staff? Are they attorneys? What did they do professionally prior to entering career services?
4. Does the firm provide Career Center staff with an understanding of core practice areas, emerging trends, and new business objectives in the same way that it does for clients? If not, why not?
5. Frame questions to achieve substantive responses (for example, asking "what is the firm's reputation on campus" is not likely to yield an in-depth response)
6. Does the Career Center know the firm's core message? If not, then make sure that it is communicated.

7. Be mindful of the setting when bringing up difficult subjects. Consider a one on one meeting or phone call to supplement larger, more formal group meetings.
8. Provide a list of alumni who wish to get involved in programming events. If the firm has a particular goal in mind, make sure the list is reflective of that goal (i.e. corporate partners and associates to build a strong transactional presence, etc.).
9. Request a list of all applicable programs that are organized through the Career Center.
10. Is there a team at the firm who is dedicated to that school? If so, identify them in writing to the Career Center, and describe their respective roles.
11. During the meeting, take care to direct questions to everyone at the table; the key decision makers do not always hold the highest title.
12. Make sure the Career Center understands how the firm's recruiting department is structured.
13. Share recruiting tactics you have used in the past, and what has worked, as well as what has not.
14. Know the nature of the target school, including their strengths and what they are aiming to achieve.
15. Ask: what techniques have other employers used to improve their recruitment success at the school? Why did it seem to work?
16. If it appears that the firm is doing all the "right things" but it is not working, then it is time to have an in depth conversation with Career Center staff. Something may not be working - the message, the target, or even the firm's market position relative to what it is trying to do.