

Lateral Associate Recruiting:

The Hiring Process, Due Diligence, Retention, and Search Firm Relationships

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Learning Objective #1:

Understand the lifecycle of a potential lateral hire from start to finish

Learning Objective #2:

Get tips on background information and types of due diligence

Learning Objective #3:

Coordinating the offer process with a lateral hire



Learning Objective #4:

Coordinating the lateral associate follow-up process

Overview of the Lateral

Recruiting Cycle



1. Peter Partner: "We need to hire a lateral associate for our practice group" or "My wife's second cousin just graduated from law school. Give him a job."

2. Recruiter: "I have found the perfect mid-level associate for your litigation practice!"

Assessing the Need: Should we bring in a Lateral Associate?

Assess the current work available within the practice group and firm wide.

- Is there enough work to keep everybody busy?
- Where are we in relation to our projected budget?
- Is there work that is not being completed as efficiently as possible?

Assessing the Need (continued):

Are specific technical qualifications necessary for the project? If not, can we assign an associate from another practice group to the project?



Assessing the Need (continued):

Can we assign available work to staff attorneys or hire a few contract attorneys?

Get Approval

Once the need has been determined, get approval from all of the necessary people.

- Practice Group Head
- The Recruiting Chair

Who should we hire?

What does the "ideal" candidate look like?

- How much experience does the candidate need to have?
- What kind of background should the candidate have?
- What specific skills do we need the candidate to bring to our practice?

Notify all of the interested parties:

- Partners in the Practice Group
- Associates in the Practice Group
- Members of the Recruiting Committee

Where will we get resumes?

Resumes come in from various sources

- Recruiting Firms/Headhunters
- Associate Referrals
- Other Employee Referrals
- Clients/In House Counsel
- Self Apply



Disseminate Resumes

Of the resumes you receive, choose a few to disseminate to:

- Practice Group Head
- Members of the Recruiting Committee
- Partners in the Practice Group
- Senior Level associates in the Practice Group
- Mid-level and junior associates in the practice group.

Who will be in on the Interviews?

- Partners in the Practice Group
- Senior level associates in the practice group who will be directing some of the work
- Mid-level associates
- Other lateral associate hires who came to the firm previously and can give the candidate insight into the environment

Things to consider when choosing prospective interviewers:

- Has the candidate expressed interest in more than one practice group?
- Has the candidate expressed interest in working with any particular partners in the practice group or at the firm?
- Is this an employee referral?

Things to consider when choosing prospective interviewers (continued):

- How much experience does the candidate have?
- What kinds of experiences has the candidate had?
- Who might have the time to interview candidates?

Things to consider when choosing prospective interviewers (continued):

- Which members of the practice group have the best social skills?
- Which members of the group might not be as socially graceful as others?
- Who has something in common with this person?

Interview Day (s)

- Escort the candidate to the conference room
- Welcome the candidate with a strong handshake
- Fill out paperwork
- Business card of recruiting professional with contact information
- Office Tour

Who should take the candidate to lunch or dinner?

- An associate who also came to the firm as a lateral
- Associates who have something in common with the candidate
- Someone who has met the candidate earlier in the day
- People with whom the candidate could be working with on projects

After the Interview:

- Collect interview evaluations
- Synthesize evaluations into one short but thorough assessment about the comments of the interviewers
- Disseminate all of the evaluations and the assessment of the evaluations and a copy of the resume to the necessary parties

Once the Vote has been taken...

If you are working with a headhunter, notify that person that the firm is interested in making the offer. This is where the negotiating begins.



Conflicts

- Once the terms have been agreed upon, the offer letter goes out to the candidate containing details about the offer and the conflicts clearance process, background checks, etc.
- Conflicts can take a few weeks or a few days. Once conflicts have been cleared, notify partner or practice group head to contact recruiting firm to determine a definite start date.

An offer letter can consist of these elements:

- Conflicts Process/Forms
- Agreed upon salary
- Available benefits
- Relocation Policy
- Anticipated start date
- Information about what bars the person is expected to be a member of
- Information about taking a new bar exam
- What bar association dues are paid for by the firm?

Working with headhunters:

- Negotiate the terms of the contract as early in the recruiting process as possible.
- Once the recruiting firm knows you are interested in the candidate, the ball is in his court.

*Once the contract has been signed, there is not much room for negotiation with the recruiting firm/headhunter.

Due Diligence

- Conflicts
- Official Transcripts
- License to Practice/Certificate of Good Standing from the Bar

Electronic Due Diligence

- Google
- MySpace
- Facebook
- Publications



Background Checks

Be sure your law firm does its own background checks. Don't trust others (headhunters) to do them for you.

Transcripts

Official Transcripts from undergraduate and law schools.

Students have to give you permission to release their transcripts. It is a violation of FERPA regulations for the school to give you information about a student without his or her prior permission.

Announcing the arrival of a new lateral associate

- Firm wide
- Press release in the Legal Times and practice related publications
- Announce the arrival on the firm's web site

Orientation/On Boarding

- Accounting Department
- Office Tour
- Law Library
- IT
- Time entry
- Meeting the Secretary
- Welcome Breakfast or Happy Hour for everyone to meet the new lateral associate



Lateral Integration

Prior to the start date, send a marketing piece to everyone at the firm introducing the candidate. Describing the new associate's credentials, what they have worked on, and whom they will report to. Remind partners and senior associates that this person will be looking for work!

Lateral Integration (continued)

- Assign a mentoring partner
- Assign someone to take new associate to lunch on the first day
- Send the new associate to lunch with his or her secretary sometime during the first week
- Assign the new associate a “buddy” who can “show them the ropes” of how the office works on a daily basis

Lateral Integration (continued)

- Assign people from within the practice group and outside of the practice group to take the new associate to lunch every few days for the first few weeks
- Always check with the new associate every few days to see if they need anything.

Wrap Up & Questions



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Any Questions
or
Comments?

Recruitment, Integration,
and Retention isn't just
your job.....

Its Everybody's job!


