



Photograph of El Morro fort by Luis A. Muñoz

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# **Become a Strategic Partner in Lateral Hiring**

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## **Program Goals**

- **Strategy** – Identifying lateral hiring needs and having constructive conversations
- **Criteria** – Establishing effective hiring criteria
- **Sourcing** – Locating qualified candidates
- **Protocols** – Identifying interviewing and offer procedures

## Strategy/Needs Assessment

- Profitability
- Utilization
- Productivity
- Leverage



## Needs Assessment

- Is this a long term need or a cyclical need?
- How many people are needed to sustain the department?
- Is there a possibility of using other associates (from other offices or complementary practice groups)?
- Could you use other professionals (legal assistants, patent agents)?

## Needs Assessment

- Does this position require a unique skill set?
- Is there enough work for another attorney without compromising the work load of any other fee earner?

## Strategy

- What will the candidate's billing rate be?
- What are the criteria for success in this group, at this level?
- How many other associates are in this class/group?
- Think about your firm's leverage and future business plan.
- Consider hiring a contract attorney.



## Profit Drivers

- **Utilization** – average hours of the attorneys in the group
- **Realization** – what percent of the standard value of hours worked is billed and collected
- **Leverage** – ratio of non-partner to partners in the group



## Case Study

*Your firm's litigation group has been very busy this past year. The litigation attorneys are all working at full capacity, and they have "borrowed" other associates from the labor and health law groups helping out. The practice group leader contacts you to hire an additional senior level litigation associate to help with the management of the workload and also supervise some of the junior associates.*

***Is this hire a no-brainer?***

## Hiring Procedures

- Communicate procedures to all attorneys.
- Communicate procedures to support staff.
- Identify one person as the “gatekeeper” to coordinate and oversee all lateral hiring.
- Develop uniform hiring standards.
- Create a lateral recruiting system.
- Set up an intake process that records all relevant details.

## Hiring Criteria

- Develop a standard list of firm required criteria.
- The “What, Why and Who” criteria
- If your firm has competency benchmarks, make sure that each candidate’s skill set are assessed against these benchmarks.
- Develop a list of competencies/attributes that characterize a successful lawyer at your firm.

## Sourcing



## Sourcing

- Let's talk about FREE first
  - Firm website
  - Current attorneys
  - Law School alumni counselors
  - Your colleagues at other firms
  - Diversity organizations such as the MCCA job board

## Sourcing continued

- Leopard Solutions
- Lateral Link
- Ideal Search
- Trade/Industry Associations
- Traditional Search Firms
  - Searchable Directory on NALSC website
- Specialty Search Firms
  - Intellectual Property

## Interviewing Protocols

- Include at least one lateral hire on the schedule.
- Include interviewers that have something in common with the candidate.
- Focus on workload.
- Don't forget about diversity.
- Make sure your interviewers know how to conduct an interview.
- Collect contemporaneous feedback.

## Offer Protocols

- Determine who will extend the offer verbally and when.
- Determine who has the authority to sign the offer letters.
- Will you begin the conflicts search before the candidate accepts?
- How long will the offer remain open?
- Who will follow-up with the candidate?



## Annual Audit

- Develop a year-in-review report
- Assess whether you want to continue agreements with all search firms
- Assess the successes of your lateral hires



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Questions?

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