

**BRANCHING OUT: SUCCESS STRATEGIES FOR
OPENING OR RECRUITING TO GROW A NEW
OFFICE**
NALP ANNUAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE
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BRANCHING OUT: SUCCESS STRATEGIES

Panel Introduction:

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(Moderator)

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INITIAL STEPS FOR ACQUIRING AN OFFICE OR SIGNIFICANT GROUP

- Identify group (practice area(s) / # of people joining)
- Run conflicts report for show stoppers
- Prepare offer letters (work with accounting on excel charts with financial data)
- Send/receive LPQs
- Are you acquiring/utilizing existing office space or is there a need to locate new office space?
- If needed, reserve hotel space or temporary office space as soon as possible and make sure you make arrangements for a fully functioning business center

All the steps above need to occur while simultaneously putting together a Project Team that consists of Sr. Management at the firm and a variety of administrative departments.



PROJECT TEAM – COMMUNICATION IS KEY

- Organize your Project Team as soon as possible and have daily/weekly meetings (depending on how much time you have before acquisition) to talk about progress being made and to ensure everyone understands all aspects of the process

**Make sure there is one administrative person who is the liaison to the Managing Partner involved with the acquisition (“the keeper of the information”).*

- Offer Letters (Identify who is going to oversee section)
 - Partner Offer Letters – Attorney Recruitment / Managing Partner
 - Associate Offer Letters – Attorney Recruitment / Hiring Partner
 - Staff Offer Letters – HR



PROJECT TEAM SHOULD REPRESENT THE FOLLOWING DEPARTMENTS/RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Attorney Resources & Recruitment Department
- Human Resources – Current and New
- Business Development
- Benefits
- Administration
- IS/Technology Hardware
- IS/Technology Training
- Conflicts
- Accounting
- Library
- Office Services
- Facilities
- Records/Docket
- Secretaries
- Travel
- Real Estate



NEW OFFICE OPENING – ADMINISTRATIVE CHECKLIST FOR PRE -ARRIVAL THROUGH DAY 1

- Draft bios ready to review
- Prepare press release – both external and internal
- Photos (may need to arrange for on-site photographer)
- Order business cards
- Obtain billing #s
- Conflict memos
- HR paperwork (benefits information)
- Business Development materials
- Professional Development materials
- Organize separate orientation schedules (Partners / Associates / Staff)
- Order schwag with firm name
- Organize a welcome dinner (invite list, restaurant reservations, invitation, place cards, name tags)
- Collect countersigned offer letters
- Collect signed partnership agreements, proof of resignation docs, proof of law school graduation



FIRST DAY ORIENTATION

- 1st impressions are important
- Make it as seamless as possible
- Organize a thorough orientation into the firm
- Important to separate orientations – know your audience
 - Partners
 - Associates
 - Staff
- Administrative Department Overviews – Involve Sr. Management / Chiefs / Directors



ADDITIONAL ITEMS THE ATTORNEY RESOURCES & RECRUITMENT DEPARTMENT NEED TO CONSIDER

- Add Hiring Committee member(s)
- Add Summer Committee member(s)
- Distribute OCI dates and determine whether you need to add more schools
- Decide if new office needs to be added to existing OCI schedules
- Announcement of new office to incoming associates/summer associates (if timing warrants)
- Add / train appropriate person on recruiting database
- Add appropriate people to outlook groups
- Add new office to NALP Membership
- Submit NALP Form
- Join Local City Group Association
- Create budget and explain submittal process (add appropriate approvers)
- Add to departmental phone list and monthly call list
- Create an Attorney New Hires and Terms distribution list for new office
- Inform new group of policies (i.e bar fees are paid by firm)
- Add contact info to website “Careers” section



ORGANIZE AN INTEGRATION TEAM FOR NEW OFFICE OR GROUP

- Team should consist of:
 - Global Managing Partner
 - Practice Area Leaders (from current firm)
 - Senior Leaders from acquired Firm/ Group
 - Director of Recruitment
 - Director of Business Development
 - Director of Administration from acquired Firm / Group



INTEGRATION TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Integration Team is responsible for the following goals:
 - Ensure effective integration of the new attorneys into the firm wide practice(s)
 - Offer new office capabilities to existing firm clients
 - Develop opportunities to cross-sell their clients on other firm services
 - Develop other relevant practice specialties in the new office
 - Identify growth opportunities
 - Interview / Select a preferred search firm in the new geographic location and educate them on your firm



INTEGRATION TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES - CONTINUED

- Plan Initial Integration Team Meeting(s) – in person
- Create an Action Items Checklist from the Integration Team Meeting
- Follow Up with Status Updates
 - Report on cross selling
 - Educational Series (practice area education)
 - Plan for integration visits
 - Marketing collateral
 - Recruiting
 - Secondments



- What are the Firm's goals in hiring a lateral partner?
 - Strategic needs?
 - Department
 - Office
 - Firm
 - Short terms goals?
 - Transition of existing clients to new firm
 - Ability to complete offering of services in office/firm
 - Add credibility to office/firm
 - Long term goals?
 - Business sector expansion
 - Attract other talent to new office
 - Geographic need to be in market

- Differences between hiring a lateral partner vs. group of partners vs. all or portion of entire office or firm
 - Strategic goals
 - Conflicts of interest
 - “Extra” partners
 - Market impact
 - Administrative process

- Considerations in hiring a lateral partner?
 - Business
 - How much business has the partner generated in the past three years?
 - How much business do we believe is portable in the first twelve months?
 - How much business do we believe that a candidate can generate over the next four years?
 - How many hours has the candidate billed over the past three years?
 - What is the candidate's hourly rate?
 - How does the hourly rate at current firm compare to hourly rates in Firm

- What are the candidates personal characteristics?
 - What is the candidate’s professional reputation among lawyers and potential clients?
 - Chambers
 - Leading Lawyers
 - Others
 - Synergy with existing clients
 - What is the candidate’s rapport with partners in the offices and departments in which the candidate would work?
 - Experience with existing partners
 - Synergy with existing practice
 - Has new partner met with all existing partners in office/firm
 - Potential/actual conflicts of interest

Strategic Perspective

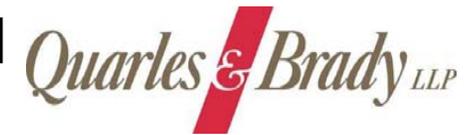
- Why does the candidate want to join our Firm?
 - Limited potential for advancement at current firm
 - Conflicts with existing clients at current firm
 - Broader/different platform at Firm
 - Different firm cultures
 - Rejoining former colleagues
- Impact on associates?
 - Desire/ability to bring associates from current firm
 - Ability to use existing associates at Firm
- Search fee or cost to the Firm?
 - For individual partners
 - For associates
- Equity Level in Firm?
 - Bonus
 - Guaranteed payments

- Capital Contribution – what is it?
 - Requirements for Firm
 - Timing and process to get capital out of current firm
- Professional and personal conduct issues?
- Process
 - How long does it take to recruit a lateral partner?
 - Four to Six months or longer
 - Why does it take so long?
 - Solicitation of associates/staff from prior firm?
 - Partnership agreement/restrictions on solicitation
 - Annual salary
 - Signing bonuses

Strategic Perspective

- Contacting old clients
 - When?
 - What can be said?
 - How do you transfer clients to new firm?
 - Engagement letters
 - Conflict waiver letters
 - Attorney liens for past due fees and expenses
- Transferring client files/contacts

Lateral Partner Recruiting – Differences and Challenges by Firm



- Work with practice groups to identify strategic hiring goals
- Things to consider:
 - Determine if there is a need to do succession planning
 - Is there work from existing clients that is not being done?
 - Identify and communicate to search firms if there are leadership opportunities, if applicable
- Develop marketing materials for clients
- Develop materials to be shared with search firms: Lateral Partner Profiles (job description, include major clients)

Successful Strategies Regarding the Hiring of Individual Attorneys/Smaller Groups



- If you are new to the firm, consider the following:
 - Educate the local and national market about the new office
 - Remain visible in your city group, as applicable:
 - NALP
 - Diversity Organizations
 - Other
 - Meet face to face with search firms

- Communicate the firm's plan to the attorneys in that office and engage them in the recruiting process
- Once practice group needs have been determined, decide which search firms are the best source of candidates
 - Invite those search firms to meet with firm leaders
 - Once the meeting with firm leaders has been scheduled, prepare a meeting agenda
 - Identify which partners have been hired through which search firm
 - Prepare supporting documentation
- Host calls with practice group leaders and search firms to further describe the firm

Growing an Office Outside of the One in Which you Work



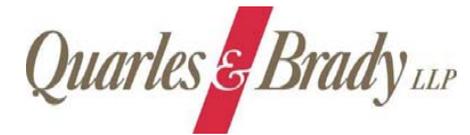
- Determine which search firms have the best reputation in the other market
- Develop marketing materials:
 - Identify lateral partner successes
 - Prepare announcement template/press release
- Set reasonable goals and articulate them to firm leadership
- Post-transition efforts:
 - Attend business planning meetings
 - Determine ROI (return on investment)
 - Review number of new matters opened by lateral partners

Overcoming the Challenge of Creating a Culture for the New Office



- Integration of lateral partners into firm is key
- Encourage firm leaders to be present in new office:
 - Provide offices for firm leadership to work in new office
 - Invite firm leaders to attend client business development events in new city
 - Invite firm leaders to attend office parties/events in new office
- Encourage lateral partners to work with attorneys in other offices
- Educate lateral partners on work being done by other attorneys in firm to encourage cross-selling
- Educate firm on lateral partner practice to encourage integration

Successful Practices Related to Partner Integration/On-Boarding



- Sample Client Engagement Letter
- Partner integration Checklist
- Select and train liaison to the lateral partner
- Develop marketing materials for new lateral partners describing the firm's practice areas to assist them in marketing the new firm's to the lateral partner's clients

Conclusion

- Thank you for attending
- Please contact any of the presenters if you have any questions regarding the topics discussed today



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