

Making Your Laterals Stick: Best Practices for Lateral Integration

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We asked attendees to jot down the best practices in lateral integration at their firms throughout the presentation. These are the responses we collected.

- Invite new lawyers to join an industry group
- Make introductions in person, following announcement circulated via email on the first day of the new partner's arrival
- Assign a partner to serve as the new hire's "lateral partner sponsor" to assist with the transition
- Consistent messaging /onboarding materials across offices and follow up by practice group chair 30 days into joining
- Core group of partners that support the lateral-weekly meetings with this group along with business development liaison and practice manager; after several months move to monthly meetings
- Look for specific ways to integrate them (eg: appoint them as a mentor, invite them to serve on a committee, etc.)
- Internal meetings across practice groups/offices to determine synergies/opportunities to cross sell
- "Integration team" consisting of partners, practice group leader, marketing, HR – with recruiting point person serving as project manager to ensure team in connecting with and supporting lateral and inducing them to opportunities to measure "success" by tracking matters opened, client introductions turning into increased revenue, etc.
- Assign an integration liaison; develop an integration plan,; provide cross selling opportunities; hold all partner firm wide meetings.
- Assign lateral prior to his/her start to one of several "teams" (consisting of other lawyers in that practice group), all of whom will make it a point to reach out to the lateral in the first few days
- As a recruiting professional, you should check in with the attorney to see how they are doing, answer any outstanding questions and continue to be a resource and enhance the relationship
- Assign each incoming lateral (all levels including partners) a mentor. Conduct comprehensive orientation program, covering all key areas and introductions to key players at the firm. Integration contacts with lateral shortly after starting to touch base

- Survey laterals about their integration experience
- Develop an integration plan (eg, 120 days) before the lateral partner arrives) so everyone hits the ground running on day 1.
- Investing the time in integrating the lateral over a period of time beyond the two day orientation. Monthly follow up meetings, partner mentors, etc.
- Quarterly check in meetings with office leader, lateral partner recruiting liaison, and partner in charge of lateral integration. Review members plan, make attorney introductions, client introductions etc. hold quarterly meetings for 1-2 years.
- Lateral integration is key. Dedicate a champion for the lateral. Set up lunches for the lateral. Bi-monthly check-ins. Have quarterly “Welcome Lateral Happy Hours” Plan a lateral integration plan for at least the first 6 months for a new lateral.
- Organize an office breakfast 3 months after that person starts and have them put together a presentation about their life with pictures so everyone (including staff) can get to know them on a personal level.
- Welcome lunches with peer-associate and partner- unofficial mentors.
- Drink cart – the new attorney pairs with a member of their practice group and walks around the firm pushing a drink cart
- Have their professional development advisor (aka – 6 month buddy) also be a lateral so they can share what they learned about integration.
- At the 3-4 month mark, lunch with a small group of other laterals: “What I wish I’d known as a new lateral”
- Assigning 2 sponsors – one to focus on professional integration and another to focus on social integration
- Assign mentor and buddy in advance of start date and initiate contact before they walk in the door.
- Dinners with existing members of the group within the first few weeks.
- If practice can work across multiple offices, make sure that lateral attorney has a schedule to travel to and meet with attorneys in those other offices.
- Provide a ‘best practices’ memo on how to effectively transition out of their current firm to our firm.
- Assign mentor at appropriate level for new hire.
- Introduce lateral hire to network of other successful laterals at the firm.

- Assign point partner from initial interview through integration process to mentor new partner throughout.
- Check in regularly throughout the first year at the firm.
- Host lateral only receptions.
- Annual retreat for all lateral hires.
- Internal cross-selling of lateral to other practice groups.
- Get laterals in front of other groups to introduce practice via training.
- Fly lateral hire to main offices to meet partners and start developing cross-selling opportunities.
- Monthly lunches with lateral hires from the prior two years; bring in speakers from throughout the firm.
- Join business plan with the lateral once s/he joins the firm.
- CEO/Managing partner presents new partners and their practice to partnership.
- Group lateral orientation for all new lateral associates in home offices 1-2 times per year depending on how many and when laterals are hired.
- Award outstanding teacher awards to mid-level associates for their success with training 1st and 2nd years. This often goes to more laterals than summer hires.
- Managing partner takes some time to get to know lateral. Checks in from time to time. Makes a great impression.