

Employer Outreach: A Roadmap to Reaching Outside Your Region to New Geographic Markets

by Erin Guruli

While hiring is becoming increasingly local in many regions, career services offices are typically tasked with conducting employer outreach in other geographic legal markets to identify both summer and permanent opportunities for law students and graduates. With out-of-state student recruitment on the rise, more law schools are admitting students who seek to return to their hometowns after graduation, and who thus seek permanent employment opportunities in those cities. Some students will also identify cities experiencing an up-tick in a specific industry (e.g., energy) and target that employment market. For all of these reasons, expanding employer outreach efforts beyond a school's local employment market should be an integral part of every law school's marketing plan.

If you've never created an employer outreach plan for a new (or unfamiliar-to-you) geographic market, here's a roadmap for how to get started. First, you will need to identify new geographic markets. You can do this based on an assessment of where your students want to work (this can be done by surveying the 1L class each fall) and identifying those cities where employers are most interested in recruiting from your law school. There might be occasions when you only have a handful of students interested in a particular city, but it might be worth conducting outreach in that city if you have one or two alumni from your law school who are already established there.

Next, identify employers you want to target for outreach. In building your list of law firms, corpo-

rations, government offices, and other organizations, you will want to consider the size of the organization, whether any alumni from your law school are currently (or formerly) employed there, why this employer might be attracted to recruiting students from your law school, and whether you are making a pitch for students to be hired for summer clerkships, internships, externships, and/or permanent positions. You can create this marketing list by running online searches in www.martindale.com, www.nalpdirectory.com, www.superlawyers.com, Symplicity, and your law school's alumni database. Once you have selected employers in a new geographic market for outreach, collaborating with other departments in your law school, such as alumni affairs and CLE, will ensure that you are contacting the best recruiting leads in the organizations you plan to target.

Now that you have identified potential employers to contact, how can you prepare for meetings with your target employers to market your law students? What's your pitch? Why are you visiting this city? Why should this employer hire students from your law school? You can begin with an introduction to let the employer know why you have targeted their city — for example:

- A recent survey of our students indicates that *this city/state* ranks among their top choices for out-of-state employment.
- The *XYZ Law School* has increased its efforts with respect to out-of-state recruitment, and currently *X%* of our enrolled students are from out of state;

Y% are from your area, and most of them want to return to your area after graduation.

- It is our desire to increase the *XYZ Law School* alumni presence by employing more graduates in this legal market, thereby enhancing continued efforts to open more doors to new out-of-state employers.

Let the employer know how they can help, since most will ask how they can get involved with your law school:

- Ask what ideas they have as successful professionals in the area on how to better market the students of the *XYZ Law School* to local firms and corporations, given the current state of the economy. Let them know your goal is to brainstorm about possible options and the best way for your students to approach employers in this region.
- Ask them to tell you more about their firm/organization, including standards/criteria used in recruitment efforts.
- Inquire about summer programs and timing of student applications.

Talk about *XYZ Law School* and why they should hire *your* law students:

- Explain the benefits and versatility of your school's certificate programs, dual degree programs, LL.M. programs, civil law component, or clinical program.

- Provide data that supports the claim that your law school stands up to many of the best law schools in the city you are visiting.
- Highlight alumni from your law school who work in that city.
- Review your career services marketing brochure and leave it behind with the employer.

Finally, do your research in advance:

- Provide a comparison of the schools that city's employers typically recruit from to the students of *XYZ Law School*.
- Identify which out-of-state employers are already coming to your state to recruit law students.
- Identify the programs that other law schools in your state are using to recruit out-of-state employers.

Erin Guruli, Esq., is Director of Career Services & Employer Relations for the Paul M. Hebert Law Center, Louisiana State University. This article was submitted on behalf of the NALP CSO Employer Outreach Section.

Midwest Legal Employment Conference For Legal Employers & Law Schools



■ Recruiting, Professionalism, Diversity, & More!

The Midwest Legal Employment Market

Recruitment and retention, training, professionalism, diversity, well-being. These are just a few of the challenges that law firms and law schools are addressing in the current legal market. Smaller and mid-size law firms, particularly those outside major metropolitan areas, face additional challenges. Law firms, and law schools from across the greater Midwest are invited to discuss these issues, highlight innovative solutions, and engage with each other at the Midwest Legal Employment Summit on May 2&3, 2019 at Drake University Law School in Des Moines.

Industry Leaders

The agenda includes leaders and experts providing guidance and thoughtful discussion to attorneys engaged in hiring, retention, or training and administrators working to prepare the next generation of legal professionals.

Shared Resources

The Summit also provides an opportunity for networking and engagement with colleagues from a variety of states, practice areas, and firm sizes. There is much we can learn from each other, including innovative recruitment and training options, successful professionalism programs, and new well-being initiatives. It also is a chance to identify types of support that are missing in this market - such as shared or other types of resources that entities can develop to provide smaller and midsize firms options for efficient and effective training.

See the back for details, or visit ([eventbrite site](#)).

Agenda

Thursday, May 2, 2019 - Welcome Reception

5:30-7:30 pm

Friday, May 3, 2019 - Drake University Law School

8:30-8:40 am – **Welcome**

8:40-9:10 am – **Employment Trends – NALP Data**

9:10-9:40 – **Incubators, Clinics and Preparing students for Practice - Jerry Foxhoven** (former Director, Drake Legal Clinic; Director Iowa Department of Human Services); Ellen Suni (University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law)

9:50-10:50 am – **Concurrent Sessions**

- **Retention and Recruitment challenges**
- **Law student professional development program ideas - Neil Hamilton** (Holloran Professor of Law and Director of the Holloran Center for Ethical Leadership in the Professions, University of St. Thomas School of Law)

10:55-11:55 am – **Concurrent Session**

- **New Partner Training**
- **Professionalism: what attorneys want schools to know - IAALS, the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System**

12:00-1:15 pm – Lunch and Plenary Speaker: Diversity & Inclusion in the Midwest Legal Market - **Kori**

Carew (Director of Strategic Diversity Initiatives – Shook, Hardy & Bacon, Kansas City)

1:15-2:15 pm – Concurrent Session

- **Meeting the demand for affordable legal services and court-appointed attorneys - Trevor Clark** (Justice Entrepreneurship Program)
- **Employer outreach initiatives beyond the urban markets**

2:20-3:20 pm - **Plenary Panel: Future of Law Practice -**

Michael Roback (Director of the Schoenecker Law Library, Associate Dean and Clinical Professor of Law, University of St. Thomas School of Law)

3:30-4:30pm - **Ethics - Well-Being Initiatives in Law Firms and Law Schools: Why They Matter & Where to Begin - Dean Barbara Glesner Fines** (University of Missouri Kansas City School of Law)

4:30 pm - **Closing**

CLE, Networking, and More

Registration for this event will be \$60 and include the Thursday reception, breakfast and lunch on Friday, and CLE. We will be applying for CLE credit for several of the sessions, including the diversity and well-being plenaries. The draft agenda, along with confirmed speakers, is here for your review. Registration information can be found at (list eventbrite site). For more information or if you have questions, please contact:

- **Jennifer Zwagerman**, Drake University Law School - (515) 271-0951; jennifer.zwagerman@drake.edu
- **Shannon DeGennaro**, DePaul University College of Law - (312) 362-8387; sdgenn1@depaul.edu
- **Monica Gould**, University of St. Thomas School of Law - (651) 962-4862; monica.gould@stthomas.edu
- **Molly Wilensky**, University of Missouri - Kansas City School of Law - (816) 235-2690; wilenskym@umkc.edu

Host, Sponsors & Additional Information

Hosted by Drake University Law School, we appreciate our speakers and sponsors who help make this event possible. Sponsors include: 12Twenty

Information on parking and hotel room blocks is available on at (list eventbrite)

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Top Ten Tips

1. Network, Network and Network
2. Map out your Markets
3. Engage your Alumni
4. Bring in the Lawyers (IRL)
5. Do a Deep Dive into the Market
6. Go to the Bar (Associations that is...)
7. Get the Students in the Door
8. Branding: Just do it!
9. Stop, Collaborate and Listen
10. Think locally, Act Regionally