

In Their Shoes:

The Candidate's Perspective in the Lateral Associate Search

NALP Annual
Education
Conference

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What we'll cover

- Reasons why associates look to lateral and what they look for in a new firm
- Resources available to an associate going through the lateral process
- Considerations and stressors for associates during the lateral process
- How firms can better position themselves and determine if a candidate is a fit by putting themselves in the lateral candidate's shoes

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Why Laterals Look to Leave

Lifestyle/People

- Too much work/unpredictability
- Night/weekend work
- Lack of (or negative) culture

Work/Firm-Specific

- Lack of interest in specific practice, industry, or client base
- Lack of substantive work, learning/development/mentorship opportunities
- Firm/group politics, economic issues
- Not prestigious/lucrative enough

Future at the Firm

- Lack of advancement opportunity
- Passed up for partnership
- Laid off or terminated due to performance

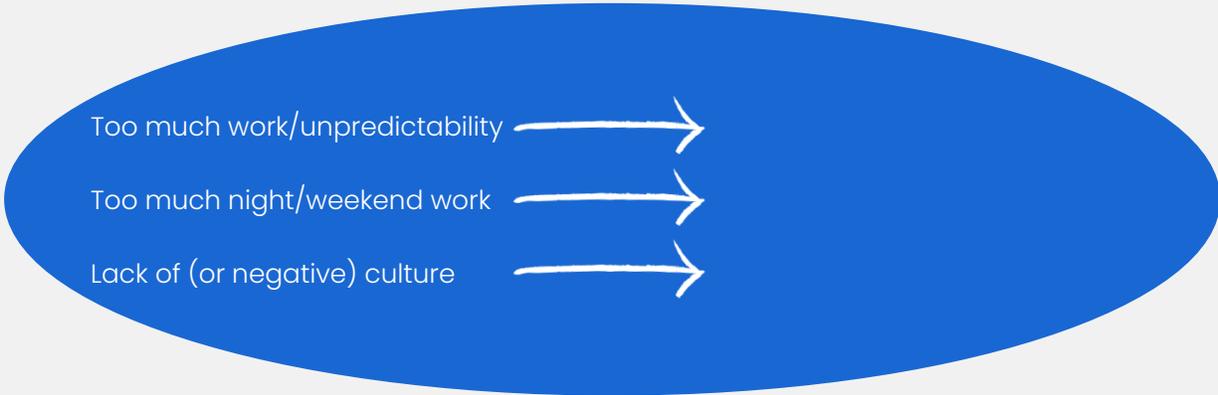
External Factors

- Location change
- Caring for family/kids
- Reset after personal/health-related pause

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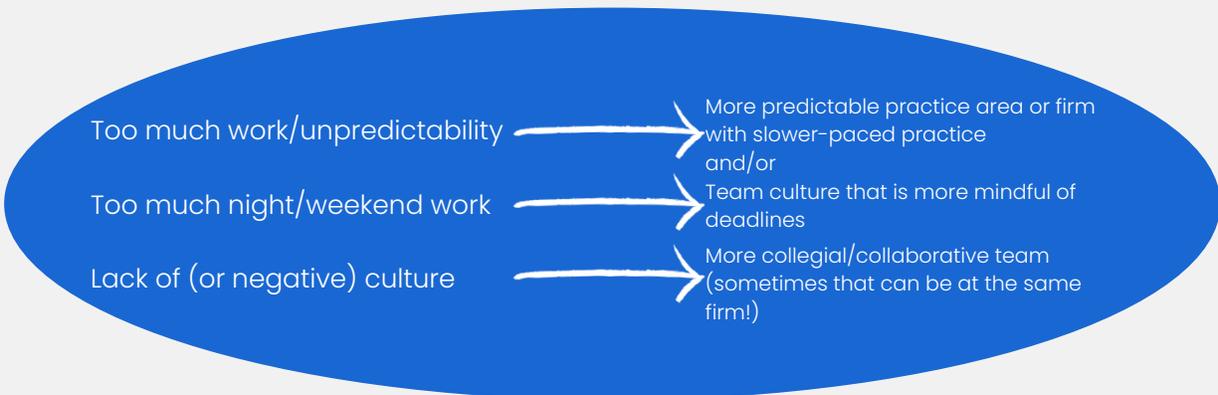
Lifestyle/People



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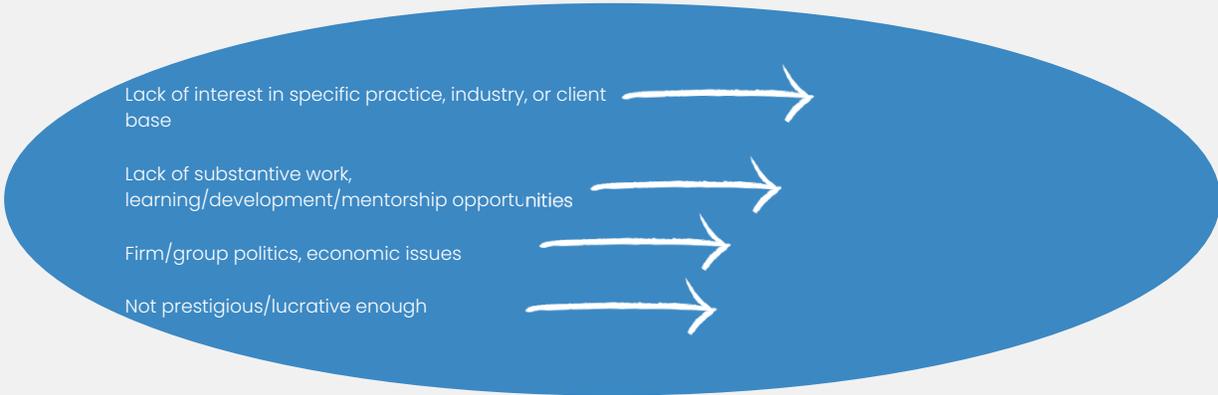
Lifestyle/People



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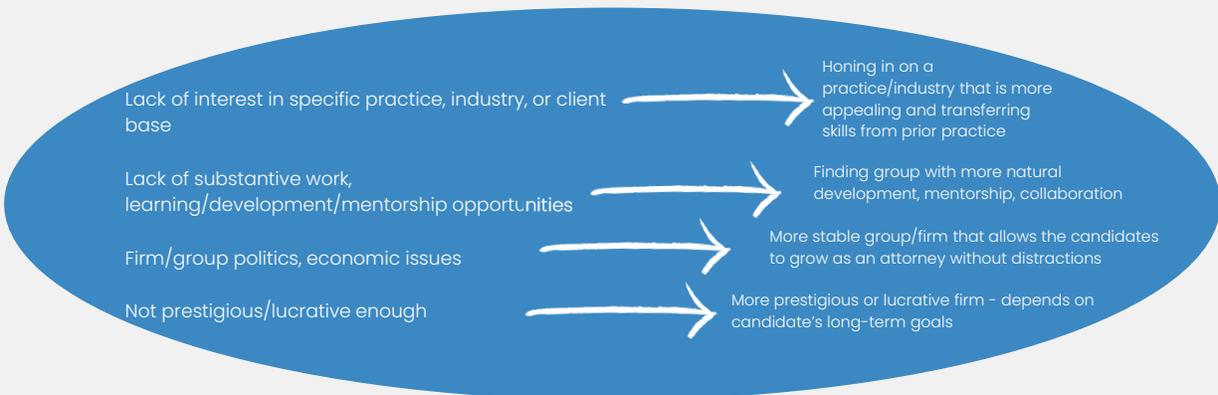
Work/Firm-Specific



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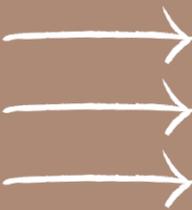
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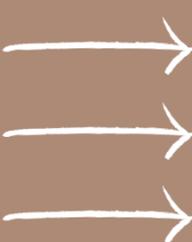
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Why Laterals Look to Leave

Future at the Firm

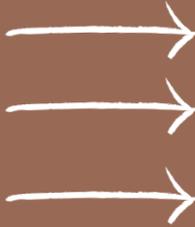
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- 
- Finding a group with clear opportunity, based on other seniors, industry focus, and other factors
 - Group that is looking for junior partner or soon-to-be-partner with this candidate's credentials
 - Use feedback to develop for next role
Find group that works better with the candidate's style/strengths

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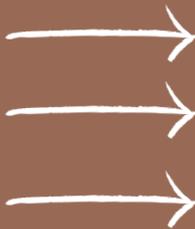


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Finding a firm/group where working in this location is doable

Finding a group/practice that provides more flexibility for location/schedule/hours

Finding a group where the candidate can have a fresh start and maximize the skills and experience they have built

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What keeps
lateral
candidates
up at night?



Thoughts?

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What keeps
lateral
candidates
up at night?

- Don't know where to start
- Hard to find out who is hiring
- Difficulty closing a door
- Not sure if the new firm will be better
- Hard to get "real info" about the firm/group
- Being pushed to pursue certain opportunities / conflicting advice
- Firms not answering
- Firms rejecting without interview or explanation
- Lack of confidence after involuntary termination
- No time to spend on job search
- Going at it on their own/lack of structure

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Which
resources do
laterals use?



Thoughts?

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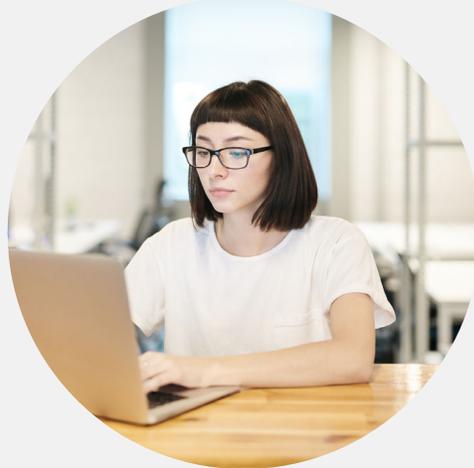
Which
resources do
laterals use?

- Recruiters
- Public job postings (e.g., firm external careers sites, Lateral Hub, LinkedIn)
- Alumni director/internal firm counselor
- Friends, classmates, former colleagues network contacts
- Law school career office / alumni job board
- Paid career coaches (including outplacement coaches provided by the firm)
- Fishbowl, other online communities

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Scenario 1: "Prestige to People" Move

- Initially joined the firm's M&A team in Fall 2020, currently a 5th-year associate
- For 18-24 months, worked almost exclusively remotely; interactions with colleagues were purely "transactional"
- Billed 2,400 hours per year in first two years; the unpredictability and availability expectations during nights and weekends were difficult
- Currently goes into the office 3-4 days per week but the team is too big and attendance is sporadic



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Scenario 2: Change in Work/Clients

- Chose the firm after 1L during the OCI process; clerked for one year and joined as full-time Litigation associate
- Decision-making during OCI was largely based on reputation; unsure which practice area would be appealing
- Currently a fourth-year and worked on only 3-4 large cases; generally likes the firm and the team, but looking for more substantive "real-life" work



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Scenario 3: Involuntary Termination

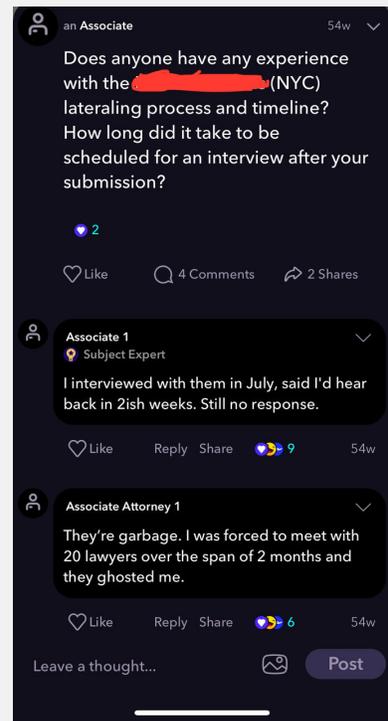
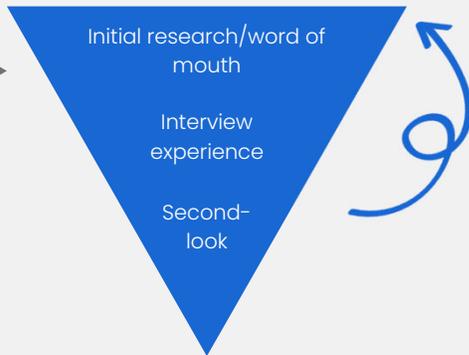
- 6th-year associate; primarily positive reviews; joined as a lateral in late 2021 during busy lateral market
- Associate was notified that they will not be considered for partner and should consider looking elsewhere
- Associate gathered positive references from partners who worked closely with him
- Firm provided 6-month timeline for search and job placement coaching



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Key Takeaways:

- Recruiting PR: Word-of-Mouth > Website
Generated from real-life action and before the fact. Firms don't see most "candidates" at all.



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Key Takeaways:

- Understand the considerations underlying the lateral move for each candidate.
- Take those considerations into account holistically when analyzing a candidate's materials.
- Be thoughtful in the interview and second-look process to determine if it's the right fit, and position the firm as best as possible, based on a candidate's reasons to lateral.



"Come work here because: _____!"

Note: This can depend on how urgent the search is



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Questions?

Thanks for joining us!



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**Get in
touch!**