

Best Practices for Recruiting the Partners You Want



We have all fallen hard for a candidate only to have them turn down an offer or move on elsewhere before we even get a chance to try to court and woo them. So, what can a law firm do to increase their chances of winning over the lateral partners they really want on their team?

In our experience, here are some modifications to make in your hiring process to help sway a partner toward your firm:

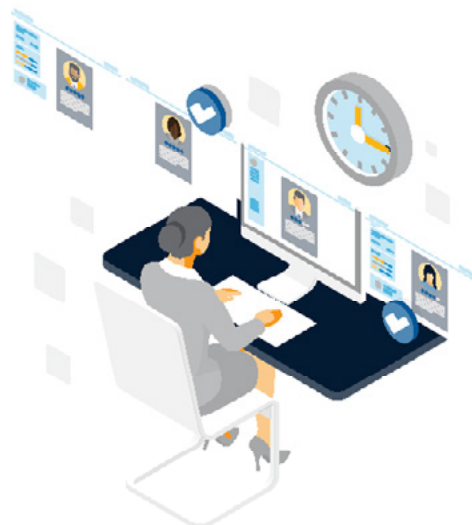


Communication

- **Communicate constantly with the candidate, either through your recruiter or directly.** Even a lengthy process can be smooth as long as candidates always know where they stand. The firms that recruit the best are constantly managing a candidate's expectations about the process.
- **Ask candidates what is important to them—and then ask again.** Firms that recruit well make a candidate believe that joining the firm will be transformative for them. Firms that recruit poorly focus on why the deal will be transformative for the firm. (There is, of course, room to focus on how the deal will benefit everyone.)

Preparation

- **Make the candidate feel desired from the start.** While there will be ample time over the course of the process to do all of your necessary diligence, approach early interviews in sales mode and show the candidate everything that's great about your firm.
- **Designate one person to be the lead interviewer for hard questions—** and let other interviewers know that hard questions will be asked by one person and not everyone. It does not help the recruitment if half the interviewers turn into inquisitors, trying to dig deep into a candidate's financials or depth of client relationships.
- **Check for both substantive and business conflicts as early in the process as possible.** There are few events more disruptive to a recruiting process than a significant last-minute conflict with a major client of the lateral. The earlier the conflicts are identified, the easier it is for collaboration with your candidates on solutions.



- **Designate a quarterback.** There should be one person (or maybe two) who drives the process for the firm and who has ownership of moving things along and interfacing with the candidate. Firms that get to the end without having at least one key person forge a real relationship with the candidate are much less likely to land that candidate.
- **Have the sponsor of the candidate sit in on virtually all the interviews.** This allows for real-time correction of missteps by interviewers and allows for mid-process correction. For example, if it comes out in the interview that the candidate has pitched XYZ Bank for years but has never been able to get over the approved-list hurdle, the firm can add to later interview schedules the lead relationship partner at XYZ Bank.
- **Collaborate with the candidate on the LPQ.** LPQs are very important for many reasons. However, asking too early or for too much can be off putting. Work with the recruiter to get a completed LPQ for the candidate at the appropriate time.

Integration

- **Begin integration planning during the recruiting process**
 - › This signals commitment and alignment.
- **Demonstrate early investment in the candidate's success**
 - › This builds trust and enthusiasm
- **Use integration conversations to reinforce cultural fit and strategic value.**
 - › Firms with strong integration processes consistently outperform peers in lateral retention and long-term success.

