

# The Benefits of Working with a Legal Recruiter Rather than Conducting a DIY Search for In-House Counsel

No one knows the value of professionals more than those who run businesses. In every business today, there is a paramount need to optimize time. For business leaders, the optimized use of personal time has a direct effect on business productivity and performance. And no one leading a company has the time to spend chasing after wild geese. So, enter the recruiter, a professional who does the job of finding and hiring the right in-house counsel. Of course, you know all of that if your company is into hiring lawyers frequently. This article is for those who are faced with the problem of filling a position which is vital enough for the involvement of the top brass, something that doesn't happen every day, and for those who are thinking of hiring an in-house counsel for the first time.

## **Not only you, but also private law firms are competing to hire reputed in-house counsel:**

An article published on the ABA Journal on August 6 2012 remarked upon an unusual trend “œlateral lawyers moving back into private practice from in-house counsel positions.” The article titled *Law Firms Are Looking to Hire In-House Counsel for Lateral Positions* mentioned of a July hiring surge among Pennsylvania law firms of hiring in-house counsel.

According to the Legal Intelligencer, there are a number of factors encouraging former in-house counsel to make such moves, and also motivating law firms to hire former in-house counsel. Some of these factors include improved law firm pricing efficiencies, as also the demand for lawyers in certain practice areas such as corporate law, real estate, and intellectual property law.

Whatever be the truth, and whatever be the factors behind such a reverse trend, the fact is right now, in order to hire top talent as in-house counsel you would be competing not only with other businesses, but also with private law firms. Current market trends define that in search for recruiting in-house counsel it is much better to rely upon a legal recruiter for finding and bringing in the talent, and involve yourself only in the later stages of the recruitment process.

## **The advantages brought to the recruiting process by the legal recruiter**

- Reputed recruiters usually maintain their own databases and track the careers of lawyers even when those lawyers are not actively looking for jobs. Recruiters usually maintain touch with talented lawyers and are aware of their personal career objectives. As a result, they are able to reach out to top talent in a much more productive manner.

Lawyers moving in-house are keenly aware of losing competitive advantage against lawyers in private firm practice and loss of earnings in the long run. So, competent lawyers moving into in-house positions always try to push up the entry-level compensation as much as possible. They also have other demands where a legally recruiter can prove invaluable during the first rounds of negotiations.

- Talking out things with a legally recruiter before launching the recruitment process for an in-house counsel can also save you by having access to his experience. Often unguided recruiting processes have insufficient initial budget due to benchmarking issues. Also HR departments face a difficulty while trying to fit in-house counsel salaries into the overall corporate compensation structure. Having the help of an experienced legal recruiter can also save you the embarrassment of applying for additional budget.
- Recruitment of in-house counsel is usually a time-consuming process and forming a relationship with a good legal recruiter who knows both your short-term and long-term needs can save enormous amounts in terms of business, operations, revenue, and goodwill besides time.
- A professional recruiter helps because in most companies the legal department is among the most expensive per head. It's truly much more expensive to make hiring mistakes regarding in-house counsel, than to spend money for the services of a legal recruiter.
- The practice of law is so different than other professions, and usually the knowledge and attitudes of a potential candidate for in-house counsel is so different from other employees, that generate recruiters often fail to deliver results. An attorney is usually a very adult person who values time and will often talk in a manner that might seem arrogant to ordinary recruiters. Unless, you are used to dealing with lawyers every day, it would be unwise to control the recruitment process of a lawyer without having the aid of an experienced legal recruiter.
- A legal recruiter is a person who really understands lawyers, their expertise, and their motivations. Knowing the profession, helps a legal recruiter know more about a potential in-house counsel than can be judged from a resume or an interview. Good lawyers are usually good orators and extremely good in creating first impressions. Inside knowledge matters when hiring in-house counsel and such knowledge usually comes from a professional legal recruiter.

In short, the benefits of a legally recruiter include a ready talent pool, inside knowledge, time efficiency, better budget planning, better negotiations, and better managed costs in terms of time, money and result.

Whatever be the reason for you to decide to not promote someone from within your legal department, but to bring in new in-house counsel, it is better to work with a reputed legal recruiter than to try to find the right talent all by yourself. Unless, of course, you already have talked with someone whom you know, trust, and believe would be able to fulfill the job as your in-house counsel.