

Why Companies Continue To Use Legal Recruiters

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Do Companies continue to use legal recruiters? We know that attorneys do. For instance, experienced and newly minted attorneys tend to use legal search firms or "headhunters," as they are often referred to, to help them identify new positions. If you have worked in a law firm or with a company for some time, you've received cold calls from legal search recruiters looking to fill positions, or you've called a legal recruiter yourself to change jobs or inquire about an opportunity. While the candidate-legal recruiter relationship is a well-known one, the employer-legal recruiter relationship is not as well known. There is much more to this relationship than what first meets the eye. To understand it fully, you need to know how legal recruiters work. This will also explain why, despite a still recovering economy, companies continue to use legal recruiters.

Established legal recruiting firms possess large databases of information on attorneys in law firms and companies, within a particular market or markets. An experienced legal recruiting firm knows who does what in which firm and which legal department, and they are familiar with the "culture" of particular organizations. They obtain this information by researching and working with legal employers and their attorneys, day in and day out, often over a period of many years. In short, they are experts in the legal market and know the players.

When experienced legal recruiters receive a job order for a specific legal position, they often already know where that talent exists. Once they identify where the talent is, they begin making cold calls or emails to attorneys, attempting to find someone who is going to be the right fit for their client and the position. Often time legal recruiting firms may already have attorneys in their databases just waiting for the right opportunity to present itself. As Kafkaesque as it may sound, they often know a lot about the attorney even before they make that phone call. Attorneys should take this as a positive sign that someone else might be interested in their talents and abilities, especially in a tight job market.

In an era of economic belt tightening, you might anticipate that companies have lessened their reliance on legal recruiting firms to find legal talent, for monetary reasons alone. Surprisingly, this is not the case. Almost every company I polled still uses legal recruiting firms to fill their legal department positions. Obviously, some companies utilize legal recruiters more than others, but the practice is alive and there to stay.

Why you ask? Often companies have hard-to-fill positions that require experts to identify that one candidate that is the perfect fit. Or the companies are experiencing such rates or growth, that their experienced human resources recruiters are stretched too thin to dedicate the amount of time and resources necessary to fill the legal positions. Often you'll find legal recruiters helping out in such cases. Some companies don't have recruiting staffs or staff that is not equipped to handle executive-level searched. Small or medium-sized companies often don't have the available manpower to fill their positions. So they call in the experts for help when they need it. In many circumstances, legal recruiting firms end up saving their clients both time and money recruiting the right person for the job, and in a tight market, any cost-saving measure is one worth keeping.