

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:

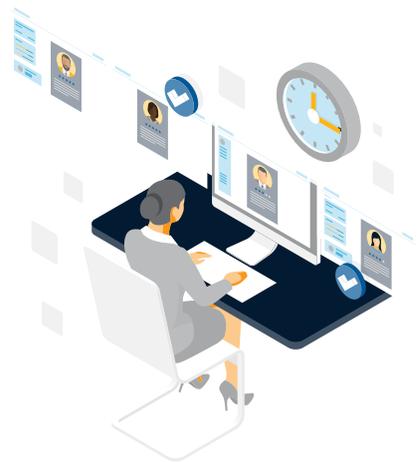


Communication

- › **Communicate constantly with the candidate**, either through your recruiter or directly. Even a long 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.



Support

- › **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 never can get over the approved-list hurdle, the firm can add to later interview schedules the lead relationship partner at XYZ Bank.
- › **Collaborate on the LPQ.** Rather than forwarding over a blank document, send the candidate something that is already partially populated and they will be more inclined to respond in a speedy fashion.