



*By A. Harrison Barnes, Esq.*

## Why use a consultant?

### Top 10 Reasons to Use a Professional Search Consultant

There are numerous reasons to use a legal recruiter. In choosing a legal recruiter, it is extremely important that you know what to look for. Good legal recruiters are firmly established as some of the most valuable fixtures in the legal community. Through their aggressive research, instinct, and knowledge of the legal-job market, a good recruiter affects the lives of attorneys, the lives of their families and friends, and the success of entire law firms. A good legal recruiter can also make the difference between your career's stalling and taking off. With so much effort put into becoming an attorney, it is of utmost importance that you choose a legal-recruiting firm that takes your career as seriously as you do.

In order to work effectively with a legal-recruiting firm, it is important that you understand the benefits a good legal-recruiting firm provides so that you can take advantage of them. These are some of the things a good legal recruiter does on a daily basis:

#### 1. Diligently Researches Available Opportunities

It would be virtually impossible for you to know of all the opportunities available unless you used a good professional search consultant. A good professional search consultant performs at least 75 "research assignments" a day. By performing "research assignments," a good legal recruiter identifies law firms you may never have heard of and brings you to opportunities that match your goals and interests. We maintain the largest full-time staff of individuals who scout the market for opportunities of any legal-search firm we know of. In fact, because our focus is not on cold calling, this comprises the substantial majority of what our firm does.

At BCG Attorney Search, we define a "research assignment" as a call to a legal-hiring organization, research into an area where the organization is growing, or a trip to a legal-hiring organization to learn about open positions and the culture of the organization. Be careful of recruiting firms that do not commit substantial resources to this task: It takes a lot of people and money to do this. The needs of legal markets can change on a weekly basis. We have seen markets where one week there were as few as two or three positions for particular types of attorneys, and the next week there were as many as 10-15. There are certainly several reasons for this; however, knowing that the jobs are out there is the most important component to understand.

In a market as small as Los Angeles', for instance, on some days, we may have as many as seven people researching the market for opportunities. Because our research is focused and directed, we are also very efficient in how we approach this work. At present, we have little doubt that our in-house-developed database system is more effective than that of any other United States recruiter-legal or otherwise. Many recruiters who have been at this for decades will tell you things like "I just know the jobs out there" or "It's who you know." To some extent that is true; however, statements like that make it self-evident that the legal recruiter is missing a substantial amount of jobs on a regular basis.

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We find numerous law firms per week that emerge for the first time on our radar screen because they are mentioned in a small news story in one of the 10+ legal newspapers we subscribe to, have split off from larger firms, or decide after our extended contact with them that they do have legal positions. We have placed several attorneys in firms like these who otherwise might not have found a position, and we believe our research is well worth the tremendous effort we put into it. This simply gives our candidates more options. In fact, for qualified candidates, we often have in excess of 25 opportunities matching their interests in a given city. We would never counsel a candidate to try all these opportunities, but it's good knowing they're out there. If you become one of our candidates, our goal is to do everything within our power to make sure that you know everything possible about the market you are interested in and have the most options possible.

If you have worked with professional search consultants before, you may be surprised that some have positions that others do not. It is axiomatic that you get better results for the candidates you serve when you have more positions. Being a professional search consultant at its highest level is serious business and requires a lot of work on a daily basis. That work pays off for the candidates we work with. The atmosphere of our firm is intense and is much like a law firm's. We are constantly calling, researching, and meeting with law firms and hiring organizations.

## **2. Matches You with the Right Job Opportunities**

A good professional search consultant will take time to understand exactly what the hiring organization is looking for. Good professional search consultants spend the majority of their time identifying opportunities for candidates and only advise candidates of opportunities that fit the candidate's goals. This is a subjective process, and those who advise candidates of opportunities should be attorneys. In order to make good matches, it is important to understand what the candidate is like and what the hiring organization is like. Culture, value systems, work ethic, practice strengths, and so forth are all parts of the calculus of a good fit. A good professional search consultant will keep people who are not going to get along away from each other.

## **3. Gets You in the Door**

A good professional search consultant has the ability to get you in the door. A good professional search consultant has credibility, which in this business means that (1) he/she only presents candidates to law organizations fitting the law firm's requirements, (2) he/she only presents candidates to law firms that in fact have positions, (3) he/she only presents candidates who are genuinely interested in working in the law organization, and (4) he/she has good reasons for wanting to do so.

More important, it also means that the professional search consultant will never, never, never play "fast and loose" with hiring organizations. Make no mistake about it. We work for the hiring organizations we serve, and we serve them with the highest level of integrity possible.

We make a consistent effort to meet with each of the legal-hiring organizations we serve. Certainly, we have not met everyone in every law firm everywhere; however, we take the time to get to know the people we are serving. We also make every effort to let them know everything they can about us. We treat the organizations we serve with a high level of respect and do everything to strengthen their loyalty so when they see our candidates, they take notice.

Many professional search consultants blanket the market with a recruit's resume, do not take the time to know the people they are serving, and play "fast and loose." In fact, this seems to be the norm for many so-called "professional search consultants." If one has ever called you on the phone, you probably know what we're talking about. This does nothing for the credibility of either the recruit or the "professional search consultant."

When a good professional search consultant presents a resume, the law firm knows the recruit is serious. The most difficult part about getting a legal job, any legal job, is getting in the door. A good professional search consultant will sell your abilities and background to the right people inside the law organization you are contemplating even before the organization sees your resume. This is a combination of salesmanship and instinct. The salesmanship is not the same type of salesmanship that you may be used to. It is helping you understand your strengths and communicating those strengths to the hiring organization in a way that is extremely professional, clear, concise, leaves few questions unanswered, and most important, is memorable. We often hear from hiring organizations that we are better at this than anyone. If you have ever seen another professional search consultant's work and have compared it to ours, you know what we're talking about.

If you have ever sent your resume to a law firm “cold,” you know that nine times out of ten, you’re going to get rejected. If you are recommended to the law firm by someone who works there or someone who takes the time to explain your exact situation to the law firm in a convincing manner before it even sees your resume, your chances of success are far greater. A good professional search consultant is the hiring organization’s friend, and his/her candidates thus have more credibility before they ever get in the door.

#### **4. Prepares Your Resume, if Necessary**

That’s right. A good professional search consultant will prepare your resume, if necessary, after an in-depth interview with you. In today’s legal market, with an increasing degree of specialization in all fields, a resume needs to show that you are a good fit for the particular job you are being hired for. The type of resume you needed to get a job when you were in law school may not be the same type of resume that is needed to get a job after you have commenced practicing law. We are one of the few professional search consulting firms we know of that will take the time to prepare a candidate’s resume. By writing a candidate’s resume for him/her, we are able to ensure that for each law firm the candidate is submitted to, his/her strengths and interests reflect, as accurately as possible, exactly what the law firm is looking for.

#### **5. Maintains Your Confidentiality**

If you send your resume to a law firm blindly, you have no way of ensuring your confidentiality. A good professional search consultant fiercely protects a candidate’s confidentiality. Law firms are not stupid; they know that if they disturb a candidate’s confidentiality, the search firm is unlikely to recommend people to them in the future. Accordingly, by using a professional search firm, you can ensure that your confidentiality is protected. To View our TRUSTe Approved [privacy policy](#).

#### **6. Moves Your Career Forward**

A good professional search consultant will take as much time as possible to understand exactly where you want your career to be. Once the professional search consultant takes the time to do this, he/she will identify the best possible opportunities that will help you satisfy these objectives. There are bad law firms to work for and firms that we simply will not suggest to our recruits. A good professional search consultant will help move your career forward by placing you in an organization that is a good one for you to work for and one that fits your goals for the future.

#### **7. Prepares You for Interviews**

Anyone who gets in the door has a good chance of getting the position. We take the time to prepare our candidates for the interviews, anticipating potential questions an employer may have and helping candidates prepare for unanticipated interview questions. We also use career counselors to work with our candidates when we sense they may need substantial work before their interviews. Generally, if you have been out of the interviewing loop for a while, we will recommend this.

#### **8. Assists You in Salary Negotiations**

Oftentimes, firms can be persuaded to offer starting bonuses and other incentives to get a good candidate. Additionally, salaries can often be negotiated. Nobody wants to do this on his/her own-it simply does not start things off on the right foot. A good professional search consultant will handle these types of situations with tact, which means not telling the firm that you want this, but that you may have been offered such and such elsewhere. This type of tactic can motivate law firms to offer you more than they would normally.

#### **9. Takes Care of the Details and Does the Work**

There is a tremendous amount of work that goes into finding you a job. When you use a professional search consultant, your most time-consuming task will be showing up for the interviews. We take the time to make the most professional presentations possible to the legal-hiring organizations we serve and even use professional attorney writers in making our presentations. Additionally, as experienced attorneys dealing with hiring authorities and candidates, good recruiters find ways to put deals together and iron out differences between you and the hiring organization, of which both you and the hiring organization may not even be aware.

#### **10. Provides Moral Support**

A job search can be fun, but as every attorney knows, it can be a draining experience. We're there with you every step of the way and will support you with the type of attention you need in the stressful situation of locating a new position. We speak to you after every interview and do everything we can to ensure that psychologically you are ready for each interview you go into.