



ATTORNEY SEARCH

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Daily Journal Staff Writer

Web Site Aims to Make Headhunting Convenient for All Parties

One day last fall, David Derrico received five calls from headhunters trying to entice him away from his fourth-year associate position with Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman in Los Angeles.

"That really sparked something in me to say, 'There has to be a better way for headhunters to contact lawyers,'" Derrico said. "It doesn't help anybody when headhunters call them in the middle of the day, when they don't want to be called, and interrupt their work."

The telemarketing-like experience prompted Derrico to start Headhuntercalls.com. The Web site, launched in December, offers recruiters a list of lawyers who do and do not want to be contacted.

Lawyers who register with the site can customize where and when they want to be contacted about job openings. Associates interested in moving firms are able to specify the type of firm, small or large, they prefer.

Derrico said the list can help recruiters maximize their time because they can know which lawyers are not looking to move.

Headhunters can purchase the do-call list and the do-not-call list is available for free.

Derrico is not advertising the lists to recruiters yet. With less than 50 lawyers signed up for the site, it is not yet useful, he said.

Still, some recruiters are skeptical about the concept of the site.

"I think at face value it's a good idea, but as a practical matter, I think it's not going to be the most effective," said Lisa Orlandi, director of recruiting for Solutus Legal Search's Los Angeles office.

Recruiters said the Web site will limit the types of jobs lawyers hear about.

"When we make calls, we do it in a targeted fashion," said **Claudia Spielman**, a recruiter for BCG Attorney Search, based in Los Angeles.

Even if lawyers may not initially be interested in hearing about job openings, Spielman said, there are always some positions they could be interested in.

But Derrico said lawyers don't want to be called too often about job openings.

"Headhunters have this feeling that they can change someone's mind, that they are going to call with a great opportunity," Derrico said.

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But, he said, "if you aren't interested in something at all, then you aren't interested."

Recruiters say their job is more than just cold calling; they also work to build relationships with potential clients.

Derrico's Web site would limit the ability of recruiters to establish their clientele because they are only calling a limited number of lawyers, said Carl Reece, principal at Reece Legal Search and former president of the National Association of Legal Search Consultants.

But from Derrico's perspective, it is difficult for recruiters to build relationships with lawyers who receive four or five calls a day.

"I'm not going to remember if a headhunter calls me back in three months," he said. "In my experiences, there hasn't been much in relationship building."

Reece is also concerned about the fact Derrico is charging to view the names on the do-call list.

"Why charge somebody for it? Why not list it for free?" Reece said.

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Derrico said the fee he plans to charge is to cover his costs of maintaining a Web site.

Headhunters are also concerned about confidentiality issues associated with selling the names of lawyers interested in changing job positions.

If recruiters are able to obtain names by paying a fee, then that information could potentially get into the hands of an unethical headhunter, raising issues of confidentiality, Spielman said.

"What if an unethical headhunter uses that information and gives it out to law firms?" Spielman asked.

But Derrico said he will only sell the names and contact information of lawyers on the list to reputable recruiters, who sign an agreement not to distribute the information.

One of the ways Derrico is going to screen headhunters is through the National Association of Legal Search Consultants, an organization representing the legal search profession.

Samir Parikh, a fourth-year associate at Latham & Watkins in Los Angeles, said he does not think the information will be looked at by firms.

"I think most law firms are not really trying to monitor their associates," Parikh said. "Most big law firms understand people come and go."

Although the Web site is not being used by headhunters yet, Jennifer Riel, a patent lawyer on the do-call list, said she thinks the Web site will narrow the number of headhunters who call her.

Riel wants to move from her position as a sole practitioner in Las Vegas and said the Web site will help her identify job opportunities.

In its first few months, some 45 lawyers have registered with Derrico's site. Derrico said he wants to expand the Web site to reach headhunters and lawyers in other states.

"I want to get at least a couple hundred lawyers to sign up to get started," Derrico said. "That could be a starting point that some headhunters might be interested in and then I want to get into the thousands."