

How to Fill the Gaps in Your Business | BCG Search Article

By Harrison Barnes from Los Angeles Office Managing Director

Bob Wade, a healthcare partner at Baker & Daniels in Indiana, discusses with BCG his move from an in-house position back to private practice.

As technology continues to evolve, the need for people to fill a void in both the physical and digital space has grown. Companies are now looking for a new type of workforce: one that is agile, adaptable, and digitally skilled. This new group of workers, known as “fillers,” can help bridge the gap between the physical and digital space by providing solutions to real-world problems.

As the demand for fillers increases, so does the need for companies to find qualified candidates. The challenge is to identify individuals with the right skills and experience to fill a specific void. This could be anything from optimizing website design to developing marketing strategies.

One way companies can recruit these fillers is through job postings. These postings should focus on the specific skills and experience needed to fill the void. Focusing on the specific will help ensure that the right person is hired for the job.

In addition to job postings, companies should also be open to networking opportunities. This could include attending industry events, job fairs, or staying in touch with recruiters. Similarly, employers should be leveraging online tools such as LinkedIn and other social networks to identify qualified candidates.

Finally, employers should consider the importance of offering competitive compensation and benefits packages. This is key to attracting and retaining top talent, especially in a competitive environment.

All in all, filling a void is no simple task. Companies must be willing to invest in the right tools and resources, such as job postings, networking opportunities, and competitive compensation packages, to find the right people with the right skills to fill the gap. By doing so, companies can build an agile, adaptable, and digitally savvy workforce to help them stay competitive in today’s ever-changing landscape.

Gender Equality in the Workplace

Gender equality in the workplace is an increasingly important issue in today's world. Women are becoming increasingly assertive and determined to excel in their chosen professions, and employers must be proactive in creating an environment in which employees of both genders can thrive. Gender roles are changing, and companies must recognize and adjust to the changes to succeed in the increasingly competitive global economy. Unfortunately, many companies fail to recognize the need for change. Studies have shown that women have fewer advancement opportunities than men in the same job.

Creating Equal Opportunities

Ensuring that women have equal opportunities in the workplace is essential to creating a successful and productive work environment. Companies should create policies and procedures that promote gender equality, such as working toward achieving gender pay equity, eliminating biases towards certain genders, and providing career development and training opportunities for all employees. In addition, employers should ensure that there is an equal representation of both genders in all levels of the workforce, from entry-level positions to executive roles. Companies that embrace gender equality in the workplace can create a culture of respect, inclusion and collaboration.

The Gender Gap in the Workplace

Despite the progress made in recent years, women continue to face challenges in achieving equal pay, career opportunities and job satisfaction. The gender gap in the workplace is still a major problem, with women earning less than men in comparable positions and struggles in gaining access to leadership roles.

In fact, the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2020 found that the economic gender gap won't be closed for another 257 years. This highlights the need for companies to work harder to close the gender gap in their own industries and workplaces.

Supporting Women in the Workplace

Companies should focus on supporting women in the workplace to help close the gender gap. This can be achieved through empowering initiatives such as mentoring programs, leadership development training and flexible working policies. Additionally, companies should develop effective gender-neutral policies that support both female and male employees and provide equal opportunities for career advancement. Furthermore, providing access to networks of successful industry professionals can help women develop their skills and build meaningful relationships within their professions.

Closing the Gender Gap

Gender equality in the workplace is essential for closing the gender gap and creating an inclusive and diverse working environment. Companies should focus on creating equal opportunities for all employees, eliminating gender biases, and providing leadership development opportunities for female employees. By taking these steps, companies can create an environment in which everyone can thrive, ultimately leading to overall success.

I recently had the privilege to work with a talented [healthcare partner](#), Bob Wade, whose successful transition back to a law firm serves as a model for attorneys contemplating going in-house with the long-term goal of returning to private practice later in their career. Bob recently shared his thoughts with me on how he managed to become an established expert in healthcare law and how he successfully transitioned from his position as General Counsel and Organizational Integrity Officer for Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center ("St. Joseph") back to private practice at Baker & Daniels.

Bob's story starts in Columbus, Ohio. Bob attended Bowling Green State University and graduated *summa cum laude* in 1986 with a B.A. in Business Administration and Political Science. The son of parents who were factory workers, Bob never really had any inclination during his younger years to become an attorney. In fact, when attending Buckeye Boys State program as a high school junior, a judge planted the inspiration in Bob to pursue a legal career.

Having made a decision to pursue a law degree, Bob applied to The [Ohio State University College of Law](#) and graduated *summa cum laude* and Order of the Coif in 1989. Bob began his [legal career](#) as an associate at Jones Day's Columbus office, where his practice was focused on corporate and bankruptcy matters. In 1992, Bob transitioned to Baker & Daniels in Indiana.

Filling the Void

While working at [Baker & Daniels](#) as an associate, [Bob attended a market-planning and business-development meeting at the firm](#). It was determined during the meeting that the firm lacked a healthcare presence in the South Bend market and that the partners viewed the void as a real business opportunity. Though only an associate at the time, Bob recognized the unique opportunity to fill a need at his firm and volunteered to start a healthcare presence in the South Bend office. Bob views this as the turning point in his legal career.

"My volunteering to start a healthcare presence in the Baker & Daniels South Bend office essentially launched my legal career and really stands out to me as the most significant decision I have ever made in my career. Baker & Daniels was extremely supportive and dedicated the resources necessary to make sure things were immediately up to speed. Every firm has a void. If you are an associate and you see a practice area void at your firm or office, you should work toward that void and become an expert in that area. My best advice to any young associate is to accept new challenges and seek to develop expertise in an area where your firm has no strength or where it needs additional representation, and in

so doing, a niche will be created for you."

In April 1997, while an associate at Baker & Daniels, Bob assisted the healthcare team of Baker & Daniels in obtaining the representation of St. Joseph. Remarkably, while still an associate, Bob became the point person for all of the work for St. Joseph.

"This was possibly the second most significant career decision for me-taking on the case for St. Joseph and doing everything I could to excel on behalf of our client. I was putting in approximately 2,200 hours annually and soon became the lead attorney on the case, which represented considerable annualized billings for Baker & Daniels. I ensured that St. Joseph's expectations were exceeded, both in quality and timing. My work on this case is what caused St. Joseph to ask me to move into an in-house position."

It was perhaps largely due to Bob's drive to exceed the expectations of St. Joseph, that in January 1998, Bob was voted into the partnership at Baker & Daniels. Later that year, St. Joseph established an in-house legal and compliance department and contacted Bob regarding heading the department. In August 1998, Bob joined St. Joseph as General Counsel and Organizational Integrity Officer.

The perceived risks of leaving private practice and going in-house

Although some attorneys view taking an in-house position as a very attractive prospect, most attorneys will agree that moving in-house involves a serious change in the direction of their legal career. Not surprisingly, Bob's decision to leave private practice was not an easy one, and he viewed it as one that came with a number of significant inherent risks.

"There were several key considerations for me moving in-house. There was, of course, the longtime perception in the legal marketplace that there is a lack of sophistication of work in most in-house environments. So I investigated the type of work I would be doing and certainly gave this serious consideration. I might add that I now believe this perception is unfounded. My work as the in-house lawyer was very sophisticated. As General Counsel, you have the luxury of choosing the work you want to retain in-house and also making the decision as to what work you will assign to outside counsel."

I also think there is a misconception that the standard of work product delivered by in-house attorneys is somehow lower than the standard expected in a law firm environment, perhaps because of a perceived lack of resources in-house. I always told St. Joseph that the expectation from my legal department should be exactly what they would expect from a law firm, if not better, and that if my department was not meeting that expectation, they no longer needed my department. A lack of resources is not an excuse for a lower standard of work product."

I believe I was also concerned about the fact that St. Joseph was my primary client at the time and represented considerable billings. I had spent two-and-a-half years developing the system at St. Joseph, and I didn't want someone else coming in and modifying the systems I put in place. I really liked St. Joseph a lot and wanted to continue to work with and associate with them. I also knew that there was a possibility that St. Joseph could hire an attorney from one of Baker & Daniels' competitors, which could have jeopardized Baker & Daniels' continued representation of St. Joseph."

Although compensation was a consideration, more important to me was the political environment at St. Joseph and to whom I would be reporting. As with all organizations, you have to recognize the hierarchy you have to work through in an in-house position. There is also a good deal of vulnerability in reporting to one person. I knew the history of St. Joseph. With a new legal and compliance department, St. Joseph was going to operate differently, and I knew I would be playing a significant role in the process."

The importance of having entry and exit strategies

When Bob joined St. Joseph, he knew it would probably take approximately five years to bring the hospital through corporate integrity agreement. Bob's long-term vision included returning to private practice, and he continued to do things that would ensure his successful transition back into a law firm. As part of his strategy, Bob believed it was necessary to establish a strategic plan for his entry and exit.

"As a compliance officer, I knew my primary responsibility would be to bring the hospital into compliance and that once that was completed, I would have worked myself out of a position. Thus, I knew going in that I needed an effective entry and exit strategy.

I believed my entry strategy needed to be one which would offer me the protection that I needed to make the right legal decisions for the company and secure my position for the length of time it would take to complete St. Joseph's corporate-integrity agreement. I concluded that I needed the protection of the CEO and the Board of Trustees, and I ultimately negotiated this protection into my contract.

My exit strategy was focused on being sure to complete the tasks that would make it possible for me to move back into private practice. I knew this would involve continuing to speak, write articles, and maintain contacts with key healthcare professionals across the country. As the in-house expert, I built a compliance and legal structure that was recognized nationally as a best practice. I needed to make sure that when I left St. Joseph, I would be viewed as a leading national expert in healthcare matters.

I believe for anyone considering going in-house, you must be absolutely sure it is the right fit for you and your long-term career goals. Make sure it is an opportunity that provides you with growth and challenges and that you are not falling into a rudimentary position. Determine whether your plan is to work yourself up to a General Counsel position in the organization or whether it is a short-term position in your long-term career plan."

Challenges associated with being in-house

At BCG, we hear daily from in-house attorneys about the challenges they face. Bob's ability to maneuver effectively the internal structure at St. Joseph was instrumental in his being able to accomplish his five-year plan to bring the hospital through its corporate-integrity agreement.

"I found the environment to be challenging and extremely diverse in many respects. It was not unlike any vibrant organization. Outside counsel, because they are not employed by the organization, can give their opinion and run. As an in-house lawyer, you often are responsible for giving the opinion, dealing with the emotional consequences of giving the opinion, counseling all levels of employees, and having to constantly maneuver politically. You are dealing with the entire spectrum of management. For instance, giving advice to middle managers is entirely different from advising a CEO or Board. Also particularly challenging for me were the differences in staffing and resources, the pressure to deliver a high standard of work product and at the same time control outside legal fees, and the challenge to continue to stay connected to other lawyers in the community and industry."

Despite these and other challenges, Bob counts his time at St. Joseph as one of the most rewarding experiences he has had and is happy to have the opportunity to again serve as outside counsel for St. Joseph.

Key factors associated with returning to private practice

Bob's return to private practice involved a different set of challenges, but part of Bob's comfort level in transitioning back to a law firm was his hope that his former law firm would embrace him and his business plan, which included specific goals for building a healthcare consulting practice and significantly increasing

Baker & Daniels' national exposure in the healthcare arena.

"I did not have a significant book of business, and I knew this would be a factor when meeting with law firms. I did have a well-developed business plan and was well known as an expert in healthcare law and compliance. I believed that my efforts during the six-and-a-half years at St. Joseph through speaking, writing, and developing relationships nationwide would allow me to bring in significant business if I were able to associate with a prominent firm that could provide the resources to support my practice.

A very important consideration was determining the right time to announce my intention to return to private practice and discussing the possibility of serving as outside counsel for St. Joseph. The timing of this announcement was perhaps the most important thing for me to assess. It could have been a risky conversation and needed to take place at the absolute right time. It was extremely important that I not burn any bridges. Fortunately, the conversation was timed correctly and was well received.

During the interviewing process, law firms were assessing my immediate ability to draw work from St. Joseph. They were also assessing my relationship with St. Joseph and trying to determine whether they perceived that the partnership would be a win for the client and the law firm. Their main concern was understandably how much work I could bring with me and how firm was my belief that it would come. I think it was essential that I had a solid relationship with the decision makers at St. Joseph and consider myself fortunate to have been able to maintain those relationships.

Having a strong business plan deemed to be reasonable without overselling was essential. If you are not bringing business with you, you either need to be filling a void for the firm or they must have the confidence that you will grow the business. I also found that firms were looking for someone who was an established expert in the industry, and I was happy that I had been very successful in my extra efforts to bring that about while at St. Joseph. Also, I feel strongly that anyone seeking to transition back into a law firm from an in-house position should market themselves effectively while working in-house so that he/she can attract clients greater than his/her current employer. You must establish yourself as the "go to" person in your area of expertise.

Key for me during the interviewing process with law firms was the personalities I encountered and evaluating the culture of the firms with which I met. I also wanted to get a sense of the internal politics within the partnership. Third, I was very focused on the effects my move back into a law firm would have on my family."

Bob remains focused on client development and providing top-notch client service

Whether working in private practice or in-house, it is clear that Bob is focused on client development and that has always been a priority in his practice. While at Baker & Daniels, Bob was cultivating his relationships with business leaders and planting the seeds for future business opportunities. In-house, he continued to cultivate relationships in the healthcare industry with the expectation that he would use those relationships when he returned to private practice.

"My focus is and always has been on establishing positive relationships and providing top-notch service. I feel it is very important to set expectations with clients and meet or exceed those expectations. Efficiency and quality are very important to clients. I believe I will be successful again in private practice, ensuring quality and efficiency for my clients. By focusing on quality representation, I am confident that I will develop a large book of business."

Back at Baker & Daniels

Bob's long-term vision for returning to private practice and his efforts in making sure he took all the steps necessary to transition effectively have led him to where he is today. Back at Baker & Daniels, Bob counts his return to the firm as a blessing and looks forward to continuing to build his practice, servicing his clients, and finishing his career with his former colleagues.

*"It is very nostalgic for me being back at my old firm and practicing with my former colleagues. Of course, I miss my staff and contacts at St. Joseph-they really became very good friends-but I'm very happy to be back and am truly enjoying it. I think the key will be making my business plan become a reality and understanding the realities that make that happen. My focus today is establishing contact with all persons in the healthcare industry that I know to let them know that I am available to represent their organization. Having been in-house, I understand the pressures placed on in-house counsel and executives hiring legal services. Organizations are looking for operationally practical solutions, a perspective that I have obtained, having served as an **in-house attorney**. This new phase of my career enables me to provide the high-quality and efficient representation to multiple clients, as I did with St. Joseph*