

State of the Market - 2006 Spring

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Southern California Downtown Los Angeles *by Claudia Barnes, Esq.*

The market is usually very hot the first three months of the year. This year was no different, largely due to the salary wars/raises in Los Angeles. If you haven't heard, most large law firms raised their associates' salaries by \$5-10K. First-year associates now make \$135,000 (and in a few cases \$145,000). We saw a lot of activity in March, and it has continued in April and will likely continue throughout the summer. If you are thinking about move to Los Angeles or making a move within Los Angeles, now is a very good time to be looking. Candidates are getting interviews sometimes within minutes of being submitted. Just like in our previous market report, the hottest practice areas still are employment and labor law (it seems as if everyone is looking for an **employment litigator**), corporate, real estate, tax, and litigation. Candidates with 2 to 5 years of experience in any of these practice areas continue to interview and get offers. Slowly rising practice areas include employee benefits/ERISA and technology transactions.

Labor and Employment

There is a tremendous need for employment attorneys at law firms of all sizes. The strongest need is for junior and mid-level associates; however, candidates at all levels will likely get interviews. Firms typically like candidates to have experience in class actions and wage and hour matters. I have found that firms are receptive to candidates whose practice is 75% general litigation and 25% employment litigation. If you are willing to come in at a slightly lower class year, you will have many interviews and offers. Candidates with solid academic credentials and/or solid employment law experience should have little difficulty finding employment in downtown Los Angeles.

Corporate

Corporate associates are in high demand and have been for many months. We do not see any signs of a slowdown. Corporate practices are mainly seeking junior and mid-level corporate attorneys (no more than 6 years of experience). Candidates with capital markets, securities, mergers and acquisitions, and/or general corporate experience are in greatest demand. To a lesser extent, there is a need for structured finance associates; one particular firm even has three openings in structured finance. We have also seen a surge in the need for candidates with investment management and finance experience. If you have toyed with the idea of investigating the market, you need to put together a deal sheet detailing every significant project you've worked on and your role in each. Candidates moving from New York tend to do well here. So for you New Yorkers tired of the weather, there's always L.A.! Senior corporate attorneys (more than 7 years of experience) are expected to have portable books of business. We also have searches for corporate partners with significant books of business (more than \$2 million).

Real Estate

The need for **real estate attorneys** remains very strong. There has been talk that real estate is slowing down, but we continue to get requests from law firms for experienced real estate attorneys at all levels (even first-year associates). In particular, associates with broad experience in finance, leasing, and purchase and sale transactions are in demand. Firms will seriously consider any transactional attorney (corporate, tax, and, in some cases, bankruptcy) with strong credentials and a genuine desire to practice real estate law, even without being licensed in California. Candidates seeking to transition into this practice area must have excellent academic and professional pedigrees. I should note firms are willing to transition associates from other transactional practices only if they have less than 3 years of experience. Furthermore, L.A. firms like candidates who are coming from the East Coast and have ties to L.A.

Litigation

There is a very strong need for **litigators in Los Angeles**, particularly those with 1 to 5 years of experience. Hot practices include securities litigation, insurance coverage, products liability, construction, and general business disputes. There is less of a demand for senior-level litigators unless they have books of business.

Tax

The need for **tax attorneys** continues to rise. The ideal candidate has 1 to 6 years of solid tax experience from a well-regarded law firm. Candidates with LL.M.'s in Tax from New York University and Georgetown University should not have too much difficulty finding positions.

Employee Benefits/ERISA

The need for **employee benefits/ERISA attorneys** slowly continues to rise. Firms are interested in speaking with candidates who have 2 to 5 years of experience at a top law firm.

Healthcare

In terms of stability, healthcare is probably the best practice area to be in. There is always a steady need for healthcare lawyers (mostly transactional). Even during the economic downturn, healthcare remained solid. Attorneys at all levels with hands-on healthcare experience (California Bar not required) should get interviews.

Intellectual Property

There is always a need for candidates with patent litigation experience, particularly candidates who have degrees in electrical engineering, computer science, and chemistry (in that order). Candidates do not necessarily have to have stellar academic credentials as long as they have solid experience from respected law firms. Although it helps, candidates do not need to be members of the California Bar. Candidates with at least 2 years of solid intellectual property litigation experience are always in demand. There is also a very strong preference for patent litigators who are members of the Patent Bar and have dabbled in patent prosecution.

There is a growing need for junior-level litigation candidates with "soft" IP litigation experience--such as trademark, copyright, and trade secret infringement. This is a "sexy" practice area, and firms require top academic credentials and 1 to 4 years of litigation experience with a top firm.

The need for patent prosecutors is fairly strong and steady. It is still an extremely competitive area of the law; and in order to stand out, candidates should have experience from well-regarded law firms and Ph.D.'s or master's degrees from respected universities. Candidates with backgrounds in electrical engineering, computer science, chemical engineering, chemistry, physics, mathematics, and chemistry will get interviews. Candidates with backgrounds in biochemistry, biology, or mechanical engineering will have more difficulty finding positions unless they have advanced degrees.

There is still very little need for trademark and copyright prosecution attorneys in downtown Los Angeles;

there is more of a need on the Westside. Candidates with 3 to 5 years of experience in trademark and copyright law at top law firms will get interviews, however. Experienced attorneys with books of business will likely get many interviews because few trademark attorneys in Los Angeles have enough business to grow a practice.

Land Use

The need for land use attorneys remains fairly strong in Los Angeles. Some firms are willing to transition junior general litigators into this practice. Ideal candidates have exposure to zoning and CEQA. It is not necessary to come from a top law firm as long as you have good experience.

Bankruptcy

Bankruptcy/corporate restructuring is still rather slow. We have associates interviewing with top bankruptcy practices on a sporadic basis. There are a handful of firms that are always busy, but they have extremely high standards. In order to get your foot in the door, candidates must have graduated from a top law school and performed well and currently be working for a top law firm. Candidates in the 1-to-4-year range will have the most success.

Environmental

The need for attorneys with environmental litigation and/or regulatory experience is steady. There are few openings in Los Angeles, and firms are fairly selective. Candidates must have at least 1 year of experience to even be considered.

Trusts and Estates

Most of the trusts and estates practices are on the Westside. Downtown law firms are not currently seeking trusts and estates candidates. However, firms will always consider candidates with 1 to 5 years of experience who also have excellent academic credentials and/or an LL.M.'s in Tax.

West Los Angeles *by Claudia Barnes, Esq.*

West L.A. remains a strong market for lateral attorneys, especially those with stellar academics and great work experience. The hot practice areas are real estate, corporate, litigation, intellectual property, labor and employment, and trusts and estates. There is a slowly growing need for trademark and tech transaction attorneys.

Real Estate

The need for [real estate attorneys](#) on the Westside is just as strong as it is downtown; in fact, most of the real estate boutiques are on the Westside. Mid-level attorneys with experience in sales and dispositions, leasing, development, and finance will get interviews very quickly.

Litigation

The need for solid litigators with 2 to 5 years of experience is strong on the Westside, but there are far more openings downtown. Candidates with strong academic credentials who are members of the California Bar and are coming from highly regarded law firms should have no trouble getting interviews. But do not take an interview for granted, because there are a number of litigation candidates competing for the same jobs. Junior and mid-level litigators with substantive experience in complex commercial litigation matters have many opportunities. This is especially true for litigators who have a stable firm history and superior writing skills.

Corporate

There are a number of firms with needs for corporate associates with 1 to 5 years of experience in capital

markets, M&A, and public and private securities offerings, who also have excellent academic credentials and/or sophisticated law firm experience.

Labor and Employment

Similar to litigation and corporate, there is less of a need for labor and employment lawyers on the Westside, but the need certainly exists. Junior and mid-level employment attorneys with solid academics and good work experience can generally expect to have several firms to consider. Firms typically seek California-barred attorneys with California employment law experience.

Intellectual Property

Patent litigation attorneys will have an equal number of firms to consider on the Westside as they do downtown. Westside firms have the same preferences for candidates as downtown firms, namely, candidates with electrical engineering, computer science, and chemistry backgrounds. Candidates do not necessarily have to have stellar academic credentials as long as they have solid experience from respected law firms. Although it helps, candidates do not need to be members of the California Bar. Candidates with at least 2 years of solid patent litigation experience are always in demand. There is also a very strong preference for candidates who are members of the Patent Bar.

Candidates with "soft" IP litigation experience--such as trademark, copyright, and trade secret infringement--are not as marketable as patent litigators on the Westside. However, candidates with top-tier academic and professional credentials will surely get interviews.

Patent prosecution is also a steady practice area. Westside firms are on the lookout for candidates coming from top law firms or those who have Ph.D.'s or master's degrees or excellent academic credentials. Candidates with backgrounds in electrical engineering, computer science, chemical engineering, chemistry, physics, mathematics, and chemistry should be able to get interviews. Candidates with backgrounds in biochemistry, biology, and mechanical engineering will have more difficulty finding positions unless they have advanced degrees.

There are a few opportunities for trademark and copyright prosecution on the Westside. Most of the entertainment companies that have trademark/copyright needs are on the Westside. Candidates with 3 to 5 years of experience in trademark and copyright law at top law firms will likely get offers.

Trusts and Estates

Most of the trusts and estates work is done on the Westside, as most of the trusts and estates boutiques are on the Westside. Trusts and estates practices are seeking experienced candidates with strong academic credentials, and they have preferences for candidates with an LL.M. in Taxation. Candidates with less than 2 years of experience should stay put, get more experience, and attempt to lateral in the next year or so. Because the competition is incredible and so many attorneys want to get into this area of law, candidates must be members of the California Bar.

Tax

There is a far greater need for **tax attorneys** downtown than there is on the Westside. However, firms will generally consider very strong candidates (top academics and professional credentials) with 1 to 4 years of experience. An LL.M. in Tax or a C.P.A. background is preferred.

Land Use

There is a much greater need for land use attorneys downtown than there is on the Westside; although, it recently had been about equal. For the right candidates, Westside firms will have an interest, but land use attorneys should usually focus on downtown law firms. Candidates with 3 to 6 years of land use experience, including zoning and CEQA, should have relatively little difficulty finding employment. It is not necessary to

come from a top law firm as long as you have good experience.

Bankruptcy

There is not much need for **bankruptcy attorneys** all over Los Angeles, unfortunately. There are a handful of firms on the Westside seeking candidates with 3 to 5 years of experience who are true superstars, i.e., come from top-10 law schools and work at Am Law 100 law firms.

Healthcare

There is a greater need for healthcare lawyers on the Westside than there is downtown. There are even boutique healthcare firms on the Westside. Attorneys having at least 2 years of hands-on healthcare experience (California Bar not required) should get interviews.

Environmental

There is a stronger need for environmental attorneys downtown than there is on the Westside. Candidates with at least 3 years of experience at a top law firm or environmental boutique and strong academic credentials should get interviews.

Employee Benefits/ERISA

There is very little activity for employee benefits/ERISA candidates on the Westside. Candidates should focus their searches on downtown firms. However, many firms will consider strong candidates with top academic credentials.

Orange County

by *Gloria Noh Cannon*

The market in Orange County remains very strong, particularly for corporate, real estate, litigation, labor and employment, and intellectual property attorneys. Candidates should be aware that **Orange County offices** tend to seek candidates who have ties to the area, because they want to ensure that new hires will make a long-term commitment. Typically, membership to the California Bar is required, but this is less true for exceptional corporate and **real estate attorneys** with at least 2 years of strong law firm experience.

Corporate

Corporate associates with strong, big-firm experience at all levels, especially mid-levels, continue to be in high demand. In particular, associates with strong backgrounds in M&A, securities, private equity, corporate finance, and corporate governance will find a wealth of opportunities. Several firms are also looking for partners with portable books of business in order to expand their practices.

Real Estate

The real estate market remains extremely strong for attorneys at all levels who have solid, big-firm experience. It seems like every firm in Orange County is looking for **real estate attorneys**. So if you were thinking about making a move, now is definitely the time to contact us! Attorneys with solid academic credentials and strong real estate experience in a law firm environment should have no problem finding employment in this robust market.

Litigation

The beginning of this year has seen an increased demand for junior and mid-level general commercial litigators. There are numerous opportunities for associates with stellar academic credentials and substantive litigation skills. California bar membership is a definite requirement. In fact, some firms will not consider a candidate, no matter how stellar, without it.

Labor and Employment

There are several openings at top-notch law firms for **labor and employment attorneys** with 2 to 5 years of experience who have strong academic credentials and membership to the California Bar. In particular, labor and employment attorneys with strong experience in employment litigation are especially in demand.

Intellectual Property: Litigation/Patent Prosecution

There are a fair number of openings for mid-level intellectual property litigators with technical backgrounds. In particular, firms are seeking candidates with electrical engineering, computer science, biotechnology, chemistry, and mechanical engineering backgrounds. Candidates who have participated in Markman hearings are in highest demand. Ideally, candidates should be members of both the California and Patent Bars.

The market for patent prosecutors remains steady. Firms seem to be looking for candidates with 1 to 6 years of experience and technical backgrounds in electrical engineering, computer science, biotechnology, chemistry, and mechanical engineering. Admission to the Patent Bar is a must.

Land Use

As mentioned in the last report, there are quite a few opportunities for environmental attorneys with land use experience. Specifically, if you are a candidate with 3 to 6 years of land use experience, including zoning and CEQA, you should contact us if you are interested in making a lateral move. It is not necessary to come from a top law firm as long as you have strong land use experience.

There are also opportunities, although not as many, for attorneys in the following practice areas: bankruptcy, energy, healthcare, insurance coverage, and trademarks/copyright (i.e., "soft IP").

San Diego

by *Veronica Pawlowski*

San Diego remains a popular and highly desirable city for attorneys looking to make a lateral move. However, as we mentioned in our last report, the competition is fierce; and firms prefer candidates with strong ties to the **San Diego area**. Thus, attorneys interested in making a lateral move to San Diego should be California barred, have ties to the area, or otherwise be able to demonstrate a commitment to living and practicing in San Diego.

The practice areas in high demand include intellectual property, corporate, real estate, labor and **employment**, and litigation.

Intellectual Property

Intellectual property remains one of the steadiest and strongest practice areas in San Diego. This is particularly true for attorneys who have undergraduate and/or master's degrees in fields such as electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, computer science, and biotech.

Patent prosecutors are especially in high demand. Again, firms prefer attorneys with scientific backgrounds and admission to the USPTO. This is one area of specialty where admission to the California Bar is not a prerequisite as long as the candidate intends to sit for the exam at the next opportunity.

There are also quite a few openings for **intellectual property litigation associates**, especially patent litigation. Again, individuals with backgrounds in fields such as electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, and physics are highly desired.

Of special note, we've noticed a steady increase in openings for individuals who desire a mix of prosecution and litigation in their practices. Individuals with broad backgrounds that include patent preparation,

counseling, opinion work, and litigation experience will have plenty of opportunities in the San Diego market.

Corporate

The corporate market remains strong in San Diego. There are opportunities for **corporate attorneys** at all levels--even attorneys with only 1 to 2 years of experience. In addition, opportunities exist on a broad spectrum of corporate specialties, including general corporate representation, venture capital financing, private equity financing, securities, and M&A.

Real Estate

If you are a real estate associate looking to make a lateral move, the time to do so is now. The real estate market remains strong; but with the predicted slowdown in the real estate market, we expect to see a parallel slowdown in real estate opportunities at the associate level. Currently, however, there are plenty of openings for associates at all levels, who have experience with purchase and sale agreements, title and survey, commercial leasing, due diligence, and/or financing.

Labor and Employment

San Diego is definitely an area worth exploring if you are a labor and employment associate. Although there aren't as many positions as there are in Los Angeles, there also aren't as many candidates with strong labor and employment experience in the market. We've seen searches for labor and employment associates last for a considerable time. Consequently, opportunities exist for associates with strong academic credentials and broad experience that includes class-action, wage and hour, wrongful termination, and discrimination matters.

Litigation

The litigation market has definitely picked up as 2006 has gotten underway. Membership to the California Bar is almost always required, as are strong academic credentials. Practice areas in demand include general commercial and/or business litigation, as well as securities.

Overall, the San Diego market is a steady, strong market. **Opportunities are also available for attorneys** with ERISA/employee benefits, tax, and estate planning experience.

Northern California/Pacific Northwest

San Francisco

by *James Fant*

The demand for laterals remains extremely strong and is likely to strengthen early next year. Commercial vacancies are declining; a number of firms have sought new, larger spaces (one of the little-known causes for suppressed **hiring demand in San Francisco**, where the cost of adding to headcount is relatively high); and the economy is showing continuing signs of rebounding. This is the finest time to be a lateral candidate in San Francisco since the legal economy tanked.

One of the things masking this growth is the greater care that firms are showing in adding to their headcounts. The last recession is still fresh in people's minds, and the benefits of running a lean, mean organization are very clear. Still, law firms increase their market share by selling the marginal hour, and without the right people resources, it is impossible for them to grow. They know this.

Commercial Litigation

Litigation jobs are everywhere. Despite this massive demand, standards at the leading firms remain extremely high. Litigation never suffered the downturn that the corporate economy did; as a result, litigators tend not to have resumes "marked by the recession" (job changes, in-house tenures, and so on) in the way

that even many of the best corporate associates do. Interestingly, demand for litigators extends even to senior associates, who are often faced with fewer opportunities than mid-levels. Don't wait until it's too late!

Patent Litigation

Patent litigators with degrees in electrical engineering and "Big Law" experience remain in exceptionally strong demand.

Corporate Law

M&A activity has picked up this year, as has deal size, and there is every reason to believe that corporate securities work in the second quarter of 2006 will be much more robust than it has in recent years.

Of course, what drives corporate work at law firms is partners with business, who are still in very high demand as laterals. Virtually every month, a new realignment takes place-- even though a large number of mergers have already taken place. This has paradoxically increased the number of partners who are willing to look because of changed compensation, their degree of say in how the firm is run, or the competitive landscape itself. The belief that working for a national or international firm will serve as a better platform for many corporate attorneys--so they can "better serve their clients"--remains strong and is unlikely to change soon.

There are many opportunities for partners with at least \$500,000 in business, and the quality of these opportunities increases with portables. It will still take more than \$1,000,000 to attract attention from many of the leading firms.

Tech transactions work has increased, but there is still plenty of room for improvement, and the second quarter of 2006 will almost certainly bring it.

Real Estate

Real estate remains hot: This trend shows no sign of abating. As previous newsletters have reported, this is a systemic problem. There are not enough high-quality associates. In some cases, firms have had open positions for months and months, and I have seen their willingness to relax standards (slightly) for the right individual. Call today to find out more.

There is a great deal of new development [work taking place in San Francisco](#), and this promises to keep real estate lawyers busy for the foreseeable future.

Silicon Valley

by Deborah J. Acker, Esq.

Silicon Valley law firms are asking the [BCG Palo Alto office](#) for a lot of help in finding attorneys. We have been invited, as a preferred [legal recruiting firm](#), to a number of firms in the last three months to hear more about their needs and virtues. Some firms are literally desperate for attorneys who meet a certain profile. These needs tend to be in the IP litigation, corporate, and real estate practice areas. The bulk of these positions, as expected in this area, relate to the technology sector. Details below!

The major national law firms remain selective. In this environment, the successful candidate will usually come from a top-tier school and have reasonable grades and some longevity (2 years) with a national firm. Multilingual candidates (especially within the Asian languages) are definitely in demand. More than a few major firms are looking for senior attorneys, but almost all require significant books of business. Any of these requirements may be relaxed if you have unique strength in a particular technology, exceptional litigation experience, or a history of significant longevity with a good firm.

Even if your credentials are not quite up to these standards, good local and regional firms continue to seek candidates to serve clients in the high-technology and real estate/land use/environmental sectors. Not only are we able to help you get interviews at the "smaller" firms, but we can also help you strategize your career development in your current position to build a resume that will take you where you want to go.

The local market for new jobs really heated up in early 2006, with additional openings at all levels. Despite a lot of hiring to replace lateral moves in recent weeks, the economy is growing; and law firms are adding associates. The "hiring season" is extending into most of the year.

Intellectual Property

With an almost 30-percent increase in job postings for IP litigators in the last three months, this practice area is more than hot; it is booming. Laterals with IP litigation experience in big firms are almost guaranteed interviews. The firms with the big players handling the big cases are looking for associates. A background in electrical engineering, computer science, or physics is a plus. Even without a technical background, if you can demonstrate strong litigation skills, experience in IP, and the ability to get up to speed on the technology at issue, you are sought after. A few firms that emphasize trial work are specifically looking for top-notch attorneys with significant time in court. Specific experience in patent litigation is a must for some firms. But firms are also looking for litigators with experience in "soft IP," trade secret, trademark, copyright, media, etc.

A steady demand continues for patent prosecutors as well. Associates with a physics, electrical engineering, or computer science backgrounds and 1 to 7 years of experience have a number of opportunities. Firms are begging for you. Other desired backgrounds include biotechnology, organic chemistry, biochemistry, pharmaceuticals, chemical engineering, and medical devices. Those in bio fields are usually expected to have Ph.D.'s or at least master's degrees. Registration with the United States Patent and Trademark Office is nearly always a must. A steady demand for patent agents and technical specialists, primarily in the electrical and computer arts, also exists.

The growing economy here has generated more than a few new transactional IP positions at a number of major firms. Firms want experience with licensing and transactions related to emerging companies. Openings exist for junior and mid-level associates.

Firms are also becoming serious about expanding their trademark practices. Trademark work took a major hit when the economy slowed, and it is now rebuilding. Firms are considering resumes whether or not they are advertising. Great mid-level trademark associates and senior attorneys with trademark business should get in touch with us.

Most of the major national firms in Silicon Valley would like to speak with senior IP attorneys with portable business in any IP practice area.

Corporate

Openings for corporate attorneys in Silicon Valley have increased by about 20 percent in the last few months. International experience in mergers and acquisitions is particularly sought after. Securities work, venture capital, private equity, and fund experience are sought after. Most positions require 2 to 5 years of experience. Senior attorneys are in demand, but must have books of business. Asian language skills are particularly valued in this sector.

California Bar admission is a common requirement, but it is not an absolute.

Litigation

Litigators continue to be in demand at a steady pace. Large national and international firms are looking for litigators with 2 to 6 years of experience, often requiring top pedigrees and big law firm experience or a

judicial clerkship. In Silicon Valley, many firms value IP litigation experience, even if that is not the primary focus of the practice group. Experience with unfair competition, trademarks, and/or copyrights will add value to the resume of any potential Silicon Valley litigator, no matter what his/her specialty. A number of openings exist in securities, antitrust, complex class actions, and product liability litigation. A few firms are recruiting for appellate practices with the requirement of absolutely top-notch credentials. Litigation firms look for associates whose experience is appropriate for their level. If you want to be a top-notch litigator, your professional development and increasing independence are critical for success. A few top firms emphasize trial work and are actively recruiting. Top schools, law review, and hands-on experience are necessary for these positions.

Smaller regional and local firms are also looking for litigators. These positions require "in the trenches" experience and some familiarity with the local legal landscape. Smaller firms are more willing to "think outside the box" when considering schools and academic records. They also will value experience with mixed litigation practices in more than one area.

Real Estate

The market for **real estate attorneys in Silicon Valley** remains steady. Firms seek transactional attorneys that can hit the ground running. Opportunities exist in both national and regional firms. In recent months, there has been increased demand for attorneys with environmental and land use experience. Law firms are interviewing and hiring real estate attorneys now! Please contact us if you have an interest and fit the profile. For senior associates, significant portable business is required. Specifically, expertise in the areas of general transactional work, acquisitions, construction, funding, and commercial leasing is sought.

Employment/ERISA/Employee Benefits

Silicon Valley does have more than a few openings for labor and/or employment attorneys at major firms. Many of these positions require a combination of transactional and litigation work. International experience is a plus. Most firms require 2 to 5 years of experience specifically related to employment matters. The smaller firms also have a need for employment attorneys, but this practice area is often packaged with business transactions expertise or commercial litigation expertise.

Silicon Valley continues to offer opportunities for ERISA/employee benefits attorneys. Mid-level associates are sought with 2 to 5 years of experience. Additional experience in tax and/or securities is a plus. A few firms are ready to fill these positions now! Bring top academic credentials to these positions.

Washington by *James Fant*

The **lateral job market in Washington** has vastly improved from a year ago, but there is still plenty of room to grow. There is a chronic oversupply of bright, talented attorneys who wish to live in, for instance, Seattle relative to the size of the local legal economy.

Nevertheless, the larger firms have recovered substantially from the dark days of the corporate recession, and many seem poised for growth. Economic growth has not been as resurgent as it has in Silicon Valley, but the first-quarter performance demonstrates that 2006 may well be the best year for laterals in at least five years.

It is vital to navigate the rocky shoals of this job market with a knowledgeable recruiter as your guide. **Call BCG today to find out more.**

The Southwest Region Las Vegas *by Veronica Pawlowski*

The combination of Las Vegas' booming economy and the increasingly high cost of living in most other metropolitan cities has resulted in a steadily growing market for attorneys in Las Vegas. Membership in the Nevada Bar is generally preferred, but it is not required. In addition, the Las Vegas market tends to have opportunities for attorneys at all levels, including senior-level attorneys.

Litigation

The demand for litigators remains strong. Interestingly, litigators with strong academic credentials and solid litigation skills do not necessarily need considerable experience in the specific practice area of interest. Firms tend to look at transferable litigation skills and will often consider candidates who wish to broaden their focus within litigation. For litigation positions, there is a very strong (and understandable) preference for candidates with Nevada Bar membership.

Real Estate

With its booming economy and ever-increasing development, it's no surprise that Las Vegas continues to be a superb market for real estate attorneys of all levels. Experience with purchase and sale transactions, commercial leasing, title and survey review, and land development will be particularly helpful.

Intellectual Property

Intellectual property is becoming a busy practice area in the Las Vegas market, particularly for seasoned attorneys with extensive patent prosecution experience. Like most other markets, candidates with electrical engineering or similar backgrounds are in especially high demand. Admission before the USPTO is also extremely helpful.

With respect to patent litigation, the market is definitely not as busy. However, a candidate with strong credentials and experience will likely fare well in the Las Vegas market because although the demand is not high, the pool of intellectual property litigators with strong qualifications is also not as vast. Thus, candidates with excellent patent, trademark, copyright, and/or trade secret litigation experience are likely to have good opportunities in the Las Vegas market.

Corporate/Business and Finance

Las Vegas is a great market for transactional attorneys because many firms have very broad transactional practices that include corporate work, such as securities and M&A, as well as general business and finance work. Consequently, a highly qualified transactional attorney will have little difficulty finding a great opportunity in Las Vegas.

Labor and Employment

Interestingly, labor and employment seems to be a market that is steadily improving in Las Vegas. There are some labor and employment boutiques with offices in the Las Vegas area, as well as many full-service law firms with great labor and employment practices. In addition, there is a degree of flexibility for candidates with general litigation experience to transition into labor and employment. As with many litigation-focused positions, Nevada Bar membership is strongly preferred. However, for a uniquely qualified candidate, exceptions are often made.

Overall, the **Las Vegas market** remains a very promising and busy market for lateral candidates. In addition to the opportunities mentioned above, there are also openings in estate planning, tax, gaming, and healthcare/medical malpractice groups. It is also helpful that because the Las Vegas market is in a real state of growth, opportunities exist for attorneys at all levels. Furthermore, candidates who have either portable

business or significant and solid expectations for business development will generally have great success in this growing market.

Phoenix

by *Gloria Noh Cannon*

The **market in Phoenix** remains strong in certain practice areas, such as real estate, litigation, and corporate. Generally, opportunities are more plentiful for attorneys with 2 to 5 years of solid experience at top law firms. Interestingly, however, there are also positions available for more senior attorneys with backgrounds in areas such as real estate and hospitality law. Also, a book of business is not an absolute prerequisite. Phoenix firms tend to have high standards when it comes to academic credentials and law firm experience. In addition, attorneys admitted to the Arizona Bar have an advantage over the competition. That being said, this is less of an issue for transactional attorneys than it is for litigators.

Real Estate

The market for **real estate attorneys** remains extremely hot! There is a huge demand for well-qualified real estate transactional attorneys at all year levels. Attorneys should have solid law firm experience in commercial real estate, including purchase and sale agreements, leasing, development, and finance. It is not necessary to have top academic credentials or even work for a well-known law firm as long as you have solid law firm experience in real estate matters. The need for outstanding real estate transactional attorneys is so strong here that attorneys with more seniority, who traditionally face a relatively tough market when making a lateral move, have more opportunities open to them than usual. In addition, while the Arizona Bar is preferred, it is certainly not necessary for qualified candidates.

Litigation

Litigation associates with 2 to 5 years of experience are also very much in demand. Excellent academic credentials, training with a solid law firm, and membership to the Arizona Bar are essential. We continue to see the most activity in construction litigation, products liability, general commercial, and insurance.

Corporate

As expected, the need for **corporate attorneys** with 2 to 5 years of solid corporate experience has increased during the first quarter of this year. In particular, there are several openings for attorneys with strong law firm experience in mergers and acquisitions, debt/equity finance, securities, and general corporate matters.

Labor and Employment

There are a few firms seeking candidates with at least 2 years of strong labor and employment experience. The competition is tough, and candidates should have experience at highly regarded law firms and strong academic credentials.

Intellectual Property: Litigation/Patent Prosecution

There are some great opportunities for **patent litigation attorneys** with technical backgrounds (i.e., electrical engineering, semiconductor, and computer software) and at least 3 years of law firm experience. In addition, being a member of the Patent Bar will certainly give you an edge over the competition.

In addition, there are some top-notch firms looking for patent prosecutors with the usual technical backgrounds in electrical, chemical, and computer engineering. Membership to the Patent Bar is required.

There are also opportunities for attorneys in the following practice areas: hospitality, environmental, healthcare, and tax.

The Mountain Region

Denver

by *Melanie Neale*

Corporate

The demand has increased for junior and mid-level **corporate attorneys in Denver**. The number of lateral corporate positions we have received in 2006 has seen an upward trend since 2005.

There has been a slight but positive shift in mergers and acquisitions, largely a result of the good economic climate, low interest rates, and a rising stock market. Experts predict that we may see increased mergers and acquisitions activity in a variety of sectors, including technology, healthcare, manufacturing, and life sciences.

As such, we see a high demand for junior to mid-level corporate finance and banking associates and associates with anywhere from 2 to 5 years of experience in mergers and acquisitions and securities transactions.

Real Estate

There is a real shortage of qualified **real estate attorneys in Denver**, which has largely been a result of the cyclical nature of the real estate market. The number of lateral real estate positions we have received in 2006 has more than doubled since 2005. This surge is a result of a variety of factors. There has been an increase in real estate development in Colorado, including hospitality and resort development. The commercial real estate leasing environment demonstrates an upward trend. Because there have been many real estate transactions in Denver recently, there has been a corresponding need for legal services in the real estate area.

A wide variety of firms' real estate practices are extremely busy and seek real estate attorneys, particularly associates with 2 to 7 years of experience in commercial real estate transactions. Attorneys with exposure to leasing, lending, construction, acquisitions, and dispositions--along with those who have finance exposure--are in demand as well.

Litigation

As clients lean more and more toward mediation and arbitration, the need in Denver for strong litigation associates has declined. At this time, only a couple of Denver firms are **looking for litigation associates**. The few firms seeking litigation associates require clerkship experience, as well as excellent litigation skills, including deposition, extensive motion practice, and first-/second-chair trial experience. Excellent research, writing, and analytical skills, as well as top notch academics, are absolutely necessary.

Intellectual Property : Biotech, EE, CS, Ph.D.

IP practices in Denver continue to be busy. **Patent prosecution attorneys** with anywhere from 1 to 8 years of experience are in demand at both general practice firms as well as IP boutiques for associates with technical degrees in EE, CS, and biotech. As always, attorneys with Ph.D.'s are the most highly sought after.

Utah

by *Melanie Neale*

Utah is generally a difficult market for lateral attorneys. There are various reasons for this, including (1) the legal market is relatively small, (2) firms have a large pool of applicants from law schools in the area, (3) the market is less transitory than in other parts of the country and attrition rates are low, and (4) firms tend to demand strong ties and commitment to the area, such as family and admission to the Utah Bar. In addition, the economy has not recovered as quickly in Utah as it has in other parts of the country.

Attorneys seeking positions in Utah are most likely to be successful if they can demonstrate that they have strong reasons for being in the area and are likely to stay for the long haul. While the market currently is tough even for those attorneys who meet such criteria, opportunities may exist in areas such as commercial litigation, corporate and securities, energy, telecommunications, real estate, tax, and patent prosecution.

The Midwest Region

Chicago

by *Jamie Bailey*

With reports of increased profits in 2005 for law firms nationwide, record expansion of U.S. firms overseas, and corresponding reports of law firms stepping up their summer associate hiring and lateral hiring, the first quarter of 2006 brings bright news of a wide breadth of opportunities for attorneys seeking new opportunities. Coupled with this encouraging news are reports of firms increasing their associate-compensation levels nationwide, with most top-tier firms raising their first-year salaries to \$135,000 and a few taking the leap to \$140,000 or even \$145,000. With these increases, we are likely to see an increased need for highly qualified laterals with specialized experience and a rise in the expectations of law firms in terms of performance, billable hours, and overall commitment to work hard. As we move into the second quarter 2006, we are greatly encouraged by these recent developments, as well as the resulting increase in lateral-hiring activity we witnessed during the first quarter 2006 in law firms in Chicago and across the Midwest.

Surge in Need for Experienced Transactional Attorneys, Especially Those with Private Equity and Finance Experience, and for Partners with Specialization in Private Equity Matters

As we expected, during the first quarter of 2006, we witnessed a high demand in the transactional area. Driven by market conditions, more investors are investing their money where they believe they can get the highest return. Thus, firms have and continue to experience a high demand for attorneys with anywhere from 2 to 6 years of experience and skills in particular areas of expertise, including private equity, finance, mergers and acquisitions, venture capital, and securities. We are also receiving requests for banking associates with 3 to 5 years of experience and associates who have gained exposure to secured finance and lending transactions, with anywhere from 2 to 5 years of experience. We would also like to hear from junior to mid-level associates with investment management experience. Also, a number of firms have requested corporate associates with a minimum of 2 years of experience, who have had experience working on technology transactions.

Most of our openings for attorneys with these skills fall in the 2-to-6-year range, but we have also noted a demand for partners with specialization in private equity, strong business-development skills, and portable business. Many offices are seeking to supplement their existing practices, and some firms are seeking to either open offices in Chicago or add groups of attorneys with strong transactional experience. If you are a transactional partner with portable business seeking to transition to a new firm in Chicago, **please contact our Chicago office.**

Tax Associates with Transactional Tax, State and Local Tax, and Tax Controversy Experience

Not surprisingly, and perhaps as a result of the surge in transactional deal flow, we have seen a marked increase in the need for tax attorneys at large firms with busy corporate practices. Attorneys with 3 to 5 years of experience in the tax aspects of mergers and acquisitions and finance transactions are highly sought after, as well as those with anywhere from 2 to 5 years of experience in tax controversy matters and state and local tax matters. Most firms in Chicago prefer that tax candidates have taken the Illinois Bar; but in some cases, it is not necessarily required. Candidates who have LL.M.'s in Tax will be given top consideration.

Real Estate: Finance, Leasing, and Land Use

The first quarter of 2006 witnessed a large volume of leasing transactions in Chicago. Law firms of all sizes continue to contact us for junior, mid-level, and senior real estate attorneys with heavy exposure to finance and leasing transactions. We are also seeing some need for land use attorneys with 2 to 5 years of experience. With the shortage of highly qualified real estate attorneys, law firms have been very open to hiring real estate staff attorneys or other non-partnership-track positions.

Employee Benefits: Qualified and Non-Qualified Plans and Executive Compensation Plans

Many large Chicago firms have called and asked us for highly qualified employee benefits attorneys at all levels. Significant exposure to qualified retirement and welfare plans, non-qualified, and executive compensation plans is required.

Environmental: Clean Air Act, Permitting, and Water Pollution

With increased real estate transactions comes increased environmental work. Associates with 3 to 5 years of environmental experience are highly sought after by some of the largest Chicago firms. Firms are especially interested in meeting with associates who bring exposure to Clean Air Act, air permitting, wetland permitting, and water pollution matters.

Healthcare: Transactional

A number of large Chicago firms are seeking healthcare associates with 2 to 5 years of experience in transactional matters, particularly those with prior experience representing hospital systems and other healthcare clients in corporate, venture capital, mergers and acquisitions, and corporate restructuring matters.

Litigation

Firms with traditionally busy litigation practices [continue to contact us with litigation](#) needs at all associate levels. Most of these openings are in the largest international, national, and regional firms; and these firms generally like to see clerkship experience, deposition experience, and strong research and writing skills. Illinois licensure is required in some cases and is always a plus.

Trusts and Estates

We have seen a slight increase in the need for trusts and estates associates. Firms are generally requiring a minimum of 3 years of experience, but are considering candidates with up to 7 years of experience.

IP: EE, Computer Engineering, CS, and ME

IP practices in Chicago have been very busy during the first quarter of 2006; and we are continuing to receive requests from general practice firms, as well as prestigious IP boutiques, for attorneys with 2 to 6 years of experience in patent prosecution and with technical capabilities in EE, Computer Engineering, CS, and ME. Admission to the USPTO or eligibility for USPTO admission and excellent technical and law school academics are required.

IP litigators with 2 to 5 years of experience and technical backgrounds in biotech, chemistry, computer science, chemical engineering, and electrical engineering should contact us. Although we have not seen a significant need for trademark attorneys, we do have some openings for trademark litigators at the 2-to-5-year level.

Bankruptcy

Over the past quarter, we have received requests for bankruptcy attorneys with anywhere from 2 to 6 years of experience, but this has not necessarily been an area where we have seen significant need. Firms are very receptive to associates with prior bankruptcy clerkship experience and large law firm training.

Partners with Business

As always, national, international, and mid-sized firms in Chicago continue to contact us regarding supplementing their practices with partners with portable business. In particular, firms are expanding dramatically in the transactional areas (including private equity, general corporate, and real estate), bankruptcy, general commercial litigation, intellectual property litigation, labor and employment, and healthcare. If you are a partner in the early stages of your search and investigating your options, [please call our Chicago office](#) at 312/321-9411 to discuss our approach to the partner placement process, your goals for the growth of your practice, and how we can assist you to strategically transition your practice to a new firm.

Michigan

Corporate Transactions, Real Estate, and Litigation

Although the auto industry continues to suffer in Detroit, the prominent law firms are hiring in key areas that are reflective of other major legal markets, including real estate (with particular emphasis on finance and leasing transactions), transactional (including mergers and acquisitions and securities), and litigation. Most of the opportunities in these areas are for associates with between 2 and 5 years of experience, but we are also interested in speaking with partners with portable business.

In markets bordering Detroit--like Troy, Ann Arbor, and Lansing--there is enormous need for real estate associates with 3 to 5 years of experience (commercial finance and lending) and mid-level to senior transactional associates with more than 4 years of experience.

Grand Rapids firms are seeking litigators with 3 to 5 years of experience and transactional associates with a minimum of 1 year of experience in mergers and acquisitions.

Partners with Business

We would be interested in speaking with partners currently practicing in Michigan who are seeking out [opportunities in Detroit](#) or the surrounding legal markets, including Lansing, Ann Arbor, and Grand Rapids. In particular, we would like to speak with partners with a minimum of \$300,000 in portable business in real estate transactions and/or business transactional matters.

Minnesota

Intellectual Property

As in the past, Minnesota firms continue to expand their IP practices dramatically. IP candidates with 1 to 6 years of experience in patent prosecution and/or [patent litigation](#) should contact us. Those with biological, chemistry, or life sciences backgrounds are highly sought after. We are also receiving requests for those with ME, EE, and biotech backgrounds. Of course, USPTO admittance is preferred.

Corporate, Finance, and Banking

Prominent firms in Minnesota are experiencing the same surge in corporate transactional work as other firms across the nation. In particular demand are transactional associates with 1 to 4 years of experience in general corporate, mergers and acquisitions, and finance transactions. We would also like to speak with associates with exposure to banking transactions.

Real Estate

Similar to the surge in real estate transaction work in law firms nationwide, firms in Minneapolis are seeing a high level of real estate activity and have asked us to send them highly qualified junior to mid-level associates with commercial real estate exposure.

Iowa

Real Estate: Finance, Leasing, and Commercial Mortgage Experience

Attorneys seeking to relocate back home to Des Moines will be encouraged by the opportunities available in the Des Moines market. The most prestigious firms are seeking high-quality attorneys with connections to Iowa, who are serious about moving back and reconnecting for the long term. Mirroring some of the larger legal markets, Des Moines firms would like to meet with real estate associates at all levels. Finance, leasing, and commercial mortgage experience are all highly sought after. We are also receiving requests for highly qualified corporate transactions associates at the 2-to-5-year level.

Wisconsin

Real Estate: Finance, Leasing, and Development

Corporate: Mergers and Acquisitions, Securities, and General Corporate

In Milwaukee and Madison, firms are also focused on expanding their transactional practices. Associates with 2 to 5 years of exposure to real estate finance, leasing, and development transactions are highly sought after, as well as transactional associates with general corporate, mergers and acquisitions, and securities experience.

Intellectual Property: ME, EE, and CS

General Commercial Litigation

Wisconsin firms are also supplementing their intellectual property practices with junior to mid-level associates with patent litigation and patent prosecution experience. Associates who possess ME, EE, and CS degrees are in particular demand. Trademark litigation associates with 2 to 5 years of experience should also contact us.

We would also like to see commercial litigators with 2 to 5 years of experience.

Partners with Business

Wisconsin firms are also actively seeking partners with portable business in a variety of practice areas, including patent litigation, healthcare, ERISA, trusts and estates, employment litigation, and real estate.

Ohio

Cleveland: Real Estate, Corporate, Litigation, and Labor and Employment

Similar to the lateral activity we are witnessing nationwide, Cleveland firms are actively seeking highly qualified associates at all levels who are well versed in corporate and real estate transactions. We are also receiving requests for litigators with a minimum of 3 years of experience, as well as labor and employment litigators with a minimum of 2 years of experience.

Cincinnati: Corporate, Commercial Finance, Real Estate, and Bankruptcy

Cincinnati offices are equally busy, with corporate and commercial finance topping the list of priorities for lateral hiring. We would be interested in speaking with corporate associates with anywhere from 1 to 7 years of experience in general corporate, mergers and acquisitions, joint ventures, and finance. Real estate associates with 2 to 7 years of experience in commercial real estate transactions interested in Cincinnati positions should contact us. We would also like to speak with bankruptcy associates with 2 to 6 years of experience.

Columbus, Toledo, and Dayton: Tax and Real Estate Finance

In Columbus, Toledo, and Dayton, we've seen the most significant need in the tax and real estate finance areas. Firms are very receptive to tax associates with 2 to 5 years of experience and senior-level associates with more than 5 years of experience, who have gained exposure to federal, real property, and franchise tax, as well as partnership tax. A few firms are also requesting tax associates with subchapter K and low-income

housing experience.

Partners with Business

Cincinnati firms are continuing to expand in key practice areas, including finance, estate planning, tax, and corporate. Partners with portable business should call our Chicago office for details regarding opportunities to join top firms and expand their business in the Cincinnati market.

Similar to Cincinnati firms, Columbus firms are seeking partners with minimum portable business of \$300,000 in corporate transactions and real estate, as well as litigation and labor and employment.

The Northeast Region

New York

by *Carey Bertolet*

New York is booming. We are hard-pressed to identify practice area specialties that would not be marketable in New York right now. Although New York firms could not reasonably be considered desperate for lateral talent, they are actively looking and moving candidates quickly through the process.

Structured Finance and Securitization

One of the more interesting practice areas right now is new, in a sense. While structured finance and securitization groups have been busy (and looking) for some time, a prestigious handful of firms is on the cutting edge of creative products in the market and offers those that might be bored with repetitive structured finance groups a great deal of diversity. For these partners and associates who are on the other end of the line to their banking clients is the chance to structure some of the market's most novel debt and equity vehicles. For an associate with a great deal of interest in the market, this is your chance.

Mergers and Acquisitions

The mergers and acquisitions positions also hold more interest than usual. Because many of the firms that may have traditionally been notoriously difficult firms in which to make partner have such acute needs in this area, partnership opportunities are much more realistic in this practice group, even among firms with large international presences.

In addition to these discrete groups, other complex corporate subgroups are in need of expertise. Securities, bank finance, and investment management are all areas where we have seen and continue to see great movement. With respect to the latter, any sort of fund formation or hedge fund expertise will likely be quite marketable.

Project Finance

For the first time in a long time, we are seeing firms revamping their project finance groups. Again, these are positions for mid-levels with an interest in specializing to better position themselves to make partner.

Litigation

On the controversy side, litigation, especially securities and investigations work, continues on the upswing. While we would not describe litigation as booming, the demand is steady, consistent, and vibrant. Junior (class of 2004) lawyers through at least the class of 2000 are finding great positions in Manhattan, from general commercial practices to more specialized work. Antitrust has reemerged a bit, as has tax litigation, a somewhat rare specialty.

Intellectual Property

Intellectual property litigation is going strong in particular, especially on the trademark side. While trademark positions are highly coveted, we have been seeing a good deal more activity in that area. Not as robust is patent litigation. The biotech/pharmaceutical side of patent litigation is surprisingly quiet, while electrical engineers can often write their own tickets--in prosecution, opinion, and litigation work.

Real Estate

Real estate is still very much in demand, although it is not at the level of activity we've seen in the past year. The most marketable real estate-related experience for Manhattan is clearly in the real estate finance area. The closer an attorney is to the corporate finance world, while still keeping a foot in real estate, the more marketable he/she is.

Tax

Tax is increasingly in demand, especially when the tax lawyer has a narrow corporate specialty (e.g., a tax lawyer with structured finance, mergers and acquisitions, or, as previously mentioned, litigation experience. ERISA lawyers, in particular those with mergers and acquisitions experience, should do quite well.

Of course, the types of opportunities in New York are as varied as the clients who use law firm services. If you have any questions about a particular type of experience, you **should contact us directly**.

New Jersey *by Carey Bertolet*

New Jersey is an interesting market because it is not completely dominated by any one city. Its best firms span from Newark to Princeton. Therefore, location is often as significant as practice area. By and large, the best candidates for our New Jersey firms are lawyers with sophisticated practices in large cities, who intend to make a permanent move to New Jersey.

Many of the major players in New Jersey have fairly diverse practices. It's not unusual, then, to see several types practice groups represented in the market, with no one group dominating. That is certainly the case now.

Corporate

In the corporate and transactional worlds, we are seeing everything from corporate securities positions to mergers and acquisitions to venture capital positions. Although it's unlikely that one of our New Jersey firms will be handling deals or transactions that are of the overall size of those of their New York counterparts, the corporate lawyers at our firms are enjoying the sophistication of their practices, which often comes with a greater deal of responsibility than one might get at a large New York firm. There are a few marquee spots for those with a finance background, especially bank representation.

Litigation

The demand for excellent litigators remains steady and healthy. While many of our New Jersey firms have high standards, there is a range of experience (including clerkship experience) that the firms will consider. Again, litigation departments based in New Jersey firms offer greater opportunities for experience.

Insurance

While in some cases a subset of litigation, insurance specialties are more in demand than unusual. While third-party defense work is not as marketable, highly sophisticated reinsurance, coverage, and regulatory transactional work is.

Real Estate

We sometimes feel like a broken record: real estate, real estate, real estate! While this market has been

unbelievably hot, we anticipate that the market for real estate experience will cool. While we don't suspect it will be drastic, we do recommend that lawyers who are real estate specialists and anticipate a future move make that transition now.

Intellectual Property

There are a few very good opportunities, especially for those with electrical engineering backgrounds who are interested in patent prosecution or opinion work.

Jobs of Interest

We have seen several opportunities for healthcare associates that offer great variety in terms of diversity of practice (i.e., regulatory, transactional, etc.) as well as promotion opportunities. There are some interesting tax openings as well that represent a great chance for a tax lawyer to become a big fish in a medium-sized pond.

Philadelphia

by *Deirdre Sullivan, Esq.*

The **Philadelphia market** continues to evolve and grow. Philadelphia-based firms have moved into the national and international scenes by opening offices in power cities like New York and London. While this area once represented a "lifestyle" choice for those associates looking to leave large-firm life, associates should expect to see an increase in hours to match their New York counterparts in the future. However, the work continues to become more sophisticated, and the growth affords more partnership opportunities.

Even with its wider reach, the Philadelphia market continues to seek attorneys to do local work for local clients, particularly in the areas of public finance/municipal, environmental, land use, zoning, and planning. This work is Philly-centric, so locally trained attorneys tend to have first pick of these positions.

Associate Attorneys

Corporate associates with 3 to 5 years of experience with mid-sized to large firms in New York, Boston, and New Jersey continue to be in very high demand. Top academic and work credentials are still extremely important, but associates with the credentials have their pick of corporate positions. Commercial litigation continues to be strong, particularly in the areas of health effects, insurance defense, securities, and some antitrust. Many Philadelphia firms have successfully built strong intellectual property practices, with pharmaceutical and biotech work leading the curve.

Partners/Counsel

Philadelphia firms are always open to lateral partners and counsels, especially from New York firms. Minimum books of business range from \$500,000 for new partners to \$1 million or more for more established partners. Areas in high demand include healthcare transactions and litigation and intellectual property and technology.

Health Effects Litigation

This practice area covers the full gamut of litigation, from mass tort to products liability to insurance liability. Some firms include medical malpractice and professional liability defense in this practice area.

Healthcare

The emphasis in this practice area is transactional work involving nursing homes, long-term care facilities, hospitals, clinics, and pharmaceutical companies.

Intellectual Property

Intellectual property, both transactional and litigation, continues to be in high demand through the country,

and Philadelphia firms are making a strong effort to be major players in this area. Pharmaceutical and biotech work are the leading edge at the moment, both in patent prosecution and litigation. Philadelphia firms continue to try to grow their market share of trademark and copyright work as well.

Technology/Outsourcing

The demand for technology/outsourcing attorneys has slowed, but this is still an area of focus for Philadelphia firms.

Traditional practice areas remain in great demand, and New York large-firm experience is highly valued:

Corporate

Traditional areas of corporate practice are always in high demand in Philadelphia, particularly for large-firm attorneys with 3 to 5 years of experience. M&A, structured finance, banking, securities, and general corporate transactions all continue to be strong; and, as elsewhere, private equity work is growing.

Real Estate

The demand for experienced real estate attorneys continues to exceed supply across the country, and Philadelphia is no exception. Real estate experience in finance, acquisition and sale, leasing, and development are all in high demand.

Litigation

Insurance defense work continues to dominate this practice area. General commercial litigators, especially those with strong discovery and courtroom experience and large-firm experience, are always welcome. Health effects and healthcare experience will improve one's candidacy.

Labor and Employment

Labor and employment is strong and steady. Skills gained in this practice area in other cities are transferable to the Philadelphia market. Practice before the NLRB, including management- and employee-side work and union work, is in demand.

Trusts and Estates/Tax

Trusts and estates is a mainstay at Philadelphia firms, although the preference is generally for trusts and estates associates who have LL.M.'s in Taxation. Tax also continues to be strong. Both tax and trusts and estates positions fill quickly. Philadelphia firms love to see New York associates with large-firm experience for these positions.

Locally trained attorneys are generally preferred for these more specialized Philly-centric practice areas:

Public Finance/Municipal

This is very much a local practice that is expected to remain strong.

Environmental/Land Use/Zoning and Planning

Environmental, land use, and zoning and planning experience continue to be in demand; and positions fill very quickly.

Connecticut

by *Deirdre Sullivan, Esq.*

Connecticut continues to be a strong market for attorneys from New York and Boston. Hartford is still the major center for law firm work, followed by Stamford and smaller presences in New Haven and Greenwich.

Many firms with strong ties to Boston, New Jersey, and Philadelphia have started new offices or expanded existing offices in the Hartford and Stamford areas to accommodate both clients and partners. Connecticut is growing, and there are long-term opportunities here as firms increase their commitment to growing these offices.

There is an upswing in demand for technology, media, communications, software, and e-commerce experience. Healthcare transactional and litigation work continues to grow; and, as elsewhere, real estate transactional experience is in very high demand.

Associate Attorneys

Connecticut firms and Connecticut branch offices prefer mid-level associates with large-firm experience and strong academic credentials. However, there is a growing demand for more junior attorneys (1 to 3 years) in corporate, litigation, and IP. Mid-level and senior attorneys should be aware that partnership opportunities are strong in these three practice areas as well.

Partners/Counsel

IP and healthcare partners looking for new homes for their practices should definitely consider Connecticut. A strong real estate or corporate practice (particularly private equity) might also find a home here as well. There is a strong home-office commitment to growing and developing branch offices in Connecticut. Minimum books of business range from \$500,000 to \$1 million.

Intellectual Property

IP continues to grow in Connecticut. Mid-level attorneys and partners with experience in technology, media, e-commerce, software, and communications are in demand. Biotech work continues to grow. Attorneys are expected to have the appropriate undergraduate and graduate degrees for both patent prosecution and patent litigation.

Healthcare

The healthcare practice area continues to grow. There is high demand for transactional attorneys with experience in regulatory and reimbursement issues for nursing homes, long-term care facilities, hospitals, clinics, and pharmaceutical companies.

Real Estate

Real estate experience is in high demand across the country. In Connecticut, junior associates with experience in finance, acquisition, leasing, and development are particularly needed.

Corporate

Connecticut has always had a strong demand for general corporate and finance attorneys. That demand continues. Demand is growing for attorneys with expertise in private equity, venture capital, and funds. Connecticut firms and branch offices love corporate attorneys trained in New York or Boston.

Labor and Employment

As an adjunct to the corporate practice, mid-level attorneys with management-side experience in labor and employment are also needed.

Trusts and Estates

Trusts and estates positions open occasionally and are filled extremely quickly by attorneys who have been practicing in Connecticut already.

Boston
by *Stephen Seckler*

Merger mania continues in Boston. In late fall 2005, Palmer & Dodge, an old Boston corporate firm, joined forces with Edwards & Angell, a Providence, RI, firm (with offices in the Northeast, the Mid-Atlantic, and Florida). The new firm, Edwards Angell Palmer & Dodge, combines strong corporate and public finance practices with strong litigation and corporate finance practices. Several weeks ago, McCarter & English, a New Jersey firm with a strong litigation practice and offices up and down the East Coast, announced that it was acquiring the Boston firm Gadsby Hannah. Finally, Mintz Levin established a foothold in the California market by acquiring an IP boutique in the Bay Area, and Goodwin Procter is actively shopping for a West Coast partner for a merger (following the lead of Bingham McCutchen, Ropes & Gray, and WilmerHale).

This high level of merger activity will mean continued lateral movement and lateral opportunities as some partners head for the door. (Post-merger departures are an inevitable result when large firms merge. It is often the case that not all conflicts of interest can be resolved and not every partner supports the merger.) The arrival of yet another out-of-town firm will mean even more demand for experienced associates.

The demand for lateral associates is growing in Boston. There has been a steady demand for well-trained corporate associates, particularly those with private equity experience. The investment management field also remains busy, and lawyers with '40 Act experience have a number of opportunities.

There are **many opportunities for associates** with top-firm litigation experience. Associates with business litigation skills are in the greatest demand. Patent litigation experience is also desirable. But litigation hiring is definitely weaker than corporate hiring.

Many firms are still looking for patent attorneys with top credentials. Lawyers with backgrounds in electrical engineering are particularly in demand, but there are also opportunities for lawyers with backgrounds in the life sciences (particularly associates who have Ph.D.'s) and chemistry. Software and biotechnology continue to play an important role in the Massachusetts economy, and this is generating significant work for IP boutiques as well as general practice firms that have expanded into patent work.

Firms with good real estate practices are finding it very difficult to hire mid-level real estate associates who have strong finance experience. While the overall number of **opportunities for real estate associates** is smaller than the opportunities for corporate associates, this is a good time to be looking if you have 3 to 5 years of experience in real estate finance.

A handful of firms are also look for strong tax candidates and associates with solid litigation and counseling experience in labor and employment law.

Partners in search of better platforms are finding the marketplace to be very receptive. Corporate partners with more than \$750,000 in portable billings are in particular demand, but there are many opportunities for partners in other practice areas. Some firms are willing to speak with partners with smaller practices (i.e., where there is good evidence of marketing potential). This is particularly true at branch offices of national firms that are trying to grow in the Boston market.

The Mid-Atlantic Region Washington, DC by *Dan Binstock*

Since the last market report, the big news in Washington, DC (as well as other major legal markets across the country), has been the salary raises. As we predicted several months ago, many firms have jumped on the \$135,000-starting-salary bandwagon. Furthermore, some D.C. offices of New York-based firms have raised

starting salaries to \$145,000. Topping things off, Vinson & Elkins raised first-year guaranteed compensation to \$150,000, which includes a guaranteed \$5,000 bonus (but does not allow for any additional bonuses).

Okay, enough about the salary wars; it's yesterday's news. Let's downshift to a more holistic gear. It's springtime in Washington, DC, and you will no doubt be leaving the office a little earlier to enjoy the beautiful sunsets, jog under the shade of the Cherry Blossoms, and take advantage of this particularly wonderful time of the year. But I digress, as you're not here to find out the charms of Washington, DC, outside of the office. You're here to read about the big bad legal market, so let's go.

Spring is an interesting time for lateral moves for several reasons. First, firms see an increased number of "geographic move" candidates who are planning to relocate to Washington, DC, over the summer. Second, there can be an ever-so-slight slowdown in junior lateral hiring in certain practice areas (such as litigation) due to the incoming summer associate classes, which can provide the perception that firms will have more "bodies" to help out on basic assignments such as research, etc. However, because the summer associate program is essentially a recruiting tool and the workload is typically very light, this factor usually has a very slight, if any, effect on lateral hiring demands in the spring and should not be a cause to delay a job search.

Here is a quick snapshot of the **D.C. market**, arranged by practice areas (in alphabetical order).

Antitrust

This is a very hot area now. In terms of antitrust, we have a number of opportunities for attorneys with experience from the Department of Justice or the FTC. Also, there are numerous searches for attorneys who want to handle M&A-related internal investigations/counseling and/or litigation.

Bankruptcy

Bankruptcy has been very slow, as the economy has been very healthy; but if interest rates keep rising, some predict there may be more demand in this area in the coming years. That being said, we do have several positions in this area.

Construction

If you have experience in this area, you will have several very good firms to choose from.

Corporate (Including Finance)

Corporate/finance continues to be very hot. We have a number of searches for corporate/finance attorneys with 2 to 6 years of experience and backgrounds in a wide range of areas, such as financial services (structured finance, banking, lending, project finance), securities ('33, '34, and '40 Acts), and, to a lesser extent, M&A. If you have experience in capital markets or derivatives, you will be in demand. In fact, one of our candidates just received 3 interviews in one day. Are you interested in transitioning from general corporate into structured finance/securitization or '40 Act work? If you have the demonstrated interest in this sophisticated and sought-after area, as well as a strong pedigree, numerous firms will speak with you.

In short, the corporate/finance market continues to be very hot, and we have a number of excellent opportunities in this area.

ERISA/Employee Benefits

This is a highly specialized and in-demand area right now. If you have relevant experience and good credentials, you will have a number of very good firms to choose from (with little competition from other interviewers).

Labor and Employment

We have seen a slight slowdown in this area over the past six months; and we're not sure why, although

there are still a number of opportunities in this area.

Energy

As this is a highly specialized field, if you have experience (regulatory or litigation), there are several firms looking to hire junior to mid-level associates. Several firms are even open to considering attorneys with corporate or litigation backgrounds, who are interested in transitioning into this area. Like most areas, the lateral opportunities decrease significantly after the 6th-year level unless you have portable business.

Environmental

The environmental market has picked up quite a bit, and we have seen an increase of more than 80 percent in the number of environmental positions in the last six months. There are a number of transactional, regulatory, and/or litigation opportunities in this area, especially if you have experience with the "Acts" (i.e., Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act).

FDA

This is another very in-demand and specialized area. If you are coming from the FDA and have experience with pre-market and post-market regulatory requirements for the pharmaceutical and medical device industries, you are likely going to have several offers to choose from.

Government Contracts

This area is continuing to boom. There are many, many opportunities in this area, and firms are struggling to find good people. Experienced government contracts candidates who are not from top-25 law schools (and don't have top grades) are receiving multiple interviews from firms in this area.

Healthcare

This area is very hot, especially for those with experience in Medicare/Medicaid, fraud and abuse, regulatory/compliance, and reimbursement issues. We are working on one particularly interesting search for a corporate associate to work on transactions in the pharmaceutical industry.

Insurance

There is an ongoing need for litigators with insurance coverage experience.

Intellectual Property

We are continuing to see a widening gap in the demand for patent attorneys with electrical engineering or computer science degrees and those with degrees in the life sciences (biology/chemistry). At the time of writing this report, in the past week, we have received calls from three different law firms pleading for electrical engineering- or computer science-degreed patent attorneys, while our biology/chemistry-degreed patent attorneys are finding it much more challenging to get interviews (especially those without advanced degrees or without substantial litigation experience). The above information applies to both patent prosecution and litigation, but for one exception: Firms focusing on hiring patent litigators with electrical engineering or computer science degrees are open to considering patent litigators with degrees in mechanical engineering.

With respect to trademark attorneys, we are continuing to see a steady increase in opportunities (trademark prosecution and litigation), especially for junior-level attorneys with 1 to 5 years of experience. If you are a litigator and interested in transitioning to trademark litigation, give us a call. We have an excellent opportunity.

Litigation

There are no changes on the litigation front. It continues to be very hot, especially if you have litigation experience in regulatory areas (such as SEC enforcement). Litigation opportunities are available in almost

every field, but there is substantial competition for these positions given the high quantity of litigators in D.C. There is usually more opportunity to break into areas that are not considered "sexy." You probably know what these areas are because you did not want to take these courses in law school; but if you want a better idea, give us a call.

We have had a number of calls recently from litigators wanting to focus exclusively on appellate litigation. Remember, this is an extremely competitive field; and unless you have federal clerkship experience (district court or appellate court), you will find it very tough to break into this area.

Real Estate

While the housing market is slowing down a bit, the real estate/real estate finance opportunities are still holding strong. Given the high demand in this area, firms are considerably more flexible regarding grades requirements.

Tax

There is a continuing demand for **tax attorneys**, particularly those who are interested in cross-border matters and tax controversy/litigation. We have had numerous candidates receive multiple offers in this area, but credentials are especially important in the tax field.

Telecommunications

Telecommunications positions have been holding steady over the past year or so, and almost all of the firms are looking for associates with 2 to 5 years of relevant experience (e.g., wireless and common carrier issues, wireline, VOIP, satellite, etc.).

Trade (International Trade)

There are numerous opportunities, particularly for those with prior experience in antidumping and countervailing duty matters, as well as customs and export matters.

PARTNER/PRACTICE GROUP SEARCHES

Lastly, as always, partners with significant books of business remain in demand. Partners in all practice areas with at least \$1,000,000 in portable business will find the firms of their choice. We are also getting very good offers for partners with much less in portables, depending on the practice area. We are working on a number of partner searches, including practice group searches; so if you are interested in confidentially discussing these opportunities, please feel free to contact us at 202-955-5585.

Virginia
by *Carrie Leonard*

The Northern Virginia legal market continues to keep pace with the very active hiring efforts of D.C. firms this spring.

Many of the same practice areas experiencing considerable growth in D.C.--and therefore providing increased opportunities for attorneys--are also thriving in Northern Virginia. In particular, a number of Virginia firms are looking for experienced commercial litigators to handle business and/or construction disputes in the Eastern District of Virginia's "Rocket Docket," as well as before other state and federal forums.

Similarly, there is a notable increase in the need for experienced patent litigators to handle an increased number of patent infringement cases involving computer software and electronics. As always, Northern Virginia firms are continually on the lookout for patent prosecutors, especially those with electrical engineering or computer science backgrounds.

The ever-expanding commercial real estate market in Northern Virginia and surrounding areas is reflected in firms' needs for attorneys with backgrounds in commercial real estate, leasing, and real estate finance. In addition, we are working on several active searches for junior, Virginia-barred corporate/M&A/securities associates at a number of top-ranking firms with Northern Virginia offices.

Several opportunities also exist for junior to mid-level labor and employment and healthcare associates to join very well-regarded Northern Virginia practices.

In sum, while both the D.C. and Northern Virginia legal markets are quite competitive, they remain extraordinarily strong and offer a plethora of opportunities for experienced and well-qualified associates. We encourage you to contact us for further insights on the dynamic legal market in the D.C./Northern Virginia area.

The Southeast Region/Florida

Atlanta

by Raffaele Murdocca

Corporate

We predicted that corporate would pick up over the last six months, and it continues to be the busiest practice area for lateral hires. We have so many positions, in mid-sized to large firms, for all corporate transactional positions. If you have at least 18 months of experience in M&A, securities, capital markets, or private placement work, we can find the right fit for what you are looking for in a firm

Finance

We have several positions for associates with at least 1 year of finance experience. Real estate finance, mortgage-backed securities, bank lending, and bond work are all very busy. This will continue to be a growth area.

Commercial Real Estate

Firms in Atlanta are still looking for associates with 2 to 6 years of experience in this practice area. Firms are looking for experience with acquisition and disposition of property, leasing, and/or lending work.

Litigation

This area has slowed down over the last few months. There are fewer positions and more competition. We feel that as the economy continues to gain speed, litigation may continue to slow down.

Intellectual Property

The IP market is tight in Atlanta, compared with other markets. We are seeing some positions in IP litigation (3 to 6 years of experience) and patent prosecution position (EE, CE, ME).

Charlotte

by Raffaele Murdocca

Banking, Lending, Structured Finance, Asset Securitization, and Capital Markets

These all continue to be the busiest practice areas in this market. In most cases, the associate pay and bonus structure is much higher than it is in all the other markets in the Southeast, while the cost of living is lower. We have a number of positions in all of these areas of practice with top firms. At some firms, the pay is on par with large New York/Chicago/D.C. firms.

ERISA/Employee Benefits

We have several ERISA/employee benefits positions with our top clients. They are looking for associates with at least 2 years of experience. We have seen this area grow over the last few months. However, these positions are usually filled quickly; so if you are interested in a move, you should start the process now.

Commercial Real Estate

Firms are looking for junior associates with 2 to 4 years of experience in acquisition and disposition of property and lending work.

Corporate M&A

We continue to see an increasing demand for corporate M&A associates with at least 2 years of experience.

Raleigh

by Raffaele Murdocca

Partners

There are several firms looking to grow their Raleigh offices. If you are a partner with some portable business, you should contact us. We have many opportunities that would offer you more offices/reach for your existing client base and/or the chance to grow your practice.

Corporate

Corporate M&A is starting to pick up in Raleigh. We see this as a growth area for this market.

Healthcare

We have a couple of healthcare positions on the regulatory side in the RTP area.

Life Sciences

We believe that life sciences practice area will take off in 2006. Partners and associates with backgrounds in this area are encouraged to give us a call. We know several firms that would be interested in continuing to develop this practice.

South Carolina

by Jenny Van Veen

We said it once in 2005, and we'll say it again with even more enthusiasm in 2006: South Carolina is a place to watch. While law firms in South Carolina are a bit slower to react, it seems they are staying competitive with the national salary increases. This is not a promise that they will match the salaries found in larger markets in the Southeast; but considering the cost of living, it's definitely worth doing your research. Firms are not slowing down and continue to bring in sophisticated work that has historically gone to larger markets such as Charlotte and Atlanta. We think you'll continue to see big-firm names pop up in cities like Greenville, Columbia, and Charleston as firms realize it makes sense to follow the business. Local firms continue to grow and actively recruit lateral hires, as opposed to depending on traditional entry-level and on-campus hiring.

For those of you who have done your research and heard it's not just the bar exam that makes a move to South Carolina difficult, keep talking. While the state used to have a reputation for only recruiting local talent, that's simply not the case anymore. Firms value the diversity and experience attorneys bring from other regions. South Carolina may not be the first place international lawyers look, but they should certainly consider it. Companies like BMW have created a need for international lawyers with language skills. We may sound like a broken record, but real estate is hot. Like other regions, transactional attorneys are needed,

particularly banking, M&A, and general corporate. Litigation is steady, as usual. We recognize the advantages of this beautiful state, from a personal and a professional standpoint. If you've contemplated a move, we think it would be smart to get serious. Continue to dig, and you'll like what you'll find. We guarantee it.

Miami and South Florida

by Raffaele Murdocca

Real Estate

This continues to be the busiest practice area in the city. Firms are looking for candidates familiar with acquisition and disposition of property, leasing, and lending work. We have several firms that are also looking for associates with condo/homeowner experience. There continues to be a lot of development throughout South Florida--hotels, office buildings, and luxury condos. Our clients are looking for associates with at least 2 years of experience.

Litigation

This area has seen a considerable slowdown. When there is an opening, the firms are primarily focused on **litigation attorneys** who are members of the Florida Bar. However, for top candidates, there are always positions.

Corporate M&A and Securities

We are seeing the largest growth in corporate M&A and securities. There are more opportunities in this practice area now than there have been in many years.

Trusts and Estates

We are seeing some demand for trusts and estates attorneys with at least 3 years of experience. We expect this trend to continue, especially with so many baby boomers moving to Florida. Our clients prefer attorneys with LL.M.'s in Tax or Estate Planning.

Orlando, Tampa and Jacksonville

by Raffaele Murdocca

Corporate

Corporate is pretty hot in central and north Florida. If you have more than 2 years of experience, you should consider a move today.

Real Estate

This area still remains very hot. We have a number of positions for attorneys with large condo experience and commercial development experience. Our clients are also looking for attorneys with land use experience.

Litigation

We see litigation slowing down in north Florida as well, but we still have a few positions at some of the best firms in the region.

International: Europe

by Danice M. Kowalczyk

This article will not discuss the Europe in its entirety. Instead, we will discuss the top regions of interest to 90

percent of legal candidates: London, Paris, and Germany (Frankfurt, Munich, and Dsseldorf). For the sake of those few calls we receive per month from attorneys (or, more commonly, law students) interested in Amsterdam, I will simply say, "Grab your French fries and mayonnaise, and move along; Amsterdam is not looking for lawyers right now."

London

London. I love it, and I hate it. I love it for obvious reasons: shopping and Prince Harry. I hate it because so many are drawn to its cobblestone paths and newspaper-wrapped fish only to be disappointed when they find the legal community therein to be not quite as welcoming as they had expected--or wished. The golden rules for U.S. practitioners wishing to move to London are as follows:

- You should currently be working (or have recently worked) for a Wall Street or Magic Circle firm in the U.S.;
- Your practice is either corporate or international arbitration, with IP transactional recently falling a close third;
- You are, preferably, admitted in the U.S. and the U.K.
- You possess an exemplary academic history from a notable institution;
- You maintain a connection to London (e.g., family, past work history, past study history, practice flow); and
- You have some foreign-language skills beyond English.

The above list is not an absolute, but it is an extremely good predictor of success in your London job search.

I am going to start off the discussion of London with the most recent "topic of interest" for London-bound lawyers: compensation. I do not know if it is the recent salary hikes that have prompted the renewed interest in compensation, but certainly something has put a bug in candidates' ears. Here is the reality: Dual-qualified attorneys (U.K. qualified with PQE (post-qualification experience) and U.S. admitted) are often sought by London offices of U.S. firms that do not have varying compensation bases between U.S. and U.K. practitioners. In contrast, London-based firms commonly structure compensation along two lines: U.K.-qualified pay and U.S. pay. In other words, if you are U.K. qualified, you are likely getting paid something different from your U.S. counterpart doing the same work in the same London office. More often than not, the U.K.-qualified pay falls short. For obvious reasons, this is an issue for most London practitioners and is the subject of much recent discussion in London. Will this change soon? Will London-based firms eradicate the two-line structure and adopt a single line? I don't know. I know it is causing ripples in the fabric of U.K. firms and producing turnover at the mid-level stage. Are U.K. firms having problems finding people because of this? Not really. People still want to work in London and, as a result, will do what needs to be done to get there. The problem is that after a period of time, mid-levels are becoming disenchanted and disturbed by the differences in pay and the problems this creates. Hence, we are seeing breaks in class at the mid-level point. As a result, it is at this point where most of the current job openings are found.

Corporate continues to be the key practice area for London (along with most of Europe). Generally speaking, London firms have a soft spot for M&A practitioners (public and private) with private equity experience. In fact, this past spring, private equity practitioners have been very much in demand. While capital markets and securitization practitioners usually fall closely behind M&A lawyers in terms of desirability in the marketplace, more recently, corporate finance has been rearing its head. When I say finance, however, perhaps I should be more general; corporate finance, bank finance, and real estate finance have all been popular areas. If you practice in these areas, you may have some luck here.

Further, IP transactional positions continue to gain speed abroad. London firms have a dearth of people to fill these spots, and they are looking. If you are interested, you need to come bearing technology-driven experience, cross-border licensing, and cross-border outsourcing experience. If you are doing this, you know such area (cross-border licensing/outsourcing) brings up a host of privacy implications. Be on top of the privacy laws (U.S. and E.U.). If you don't know what I am talking about, don't apply.

Paris

I love Paris too. It pretends not to love me and my Pigeon French language skills, but I love it. This season, the name of the game in Paris is finance. Before we get to that, however, let's revisit what Paris demands. In order to work in Paris, you will need (i) fluency in the French language and (ii) an LL.M. or M.B.A. from a top U.S. educational institution (and top grades) as well as a French legal degree. The continual story is that it is very difficult for U.S. practitioners (who are not admitted in France) to break into the Paris market. Those U.S. practitioners (without French legal degrees) who have been lucky enough to go abroad usually are transferred from U.S. base offices.

Okay, back to finance. Paris is looking for finance practitioners in many different colors: structured finance, shipping finance, trade finance, export finance, and commodities finance. They are willing to think outside the box with these folks, and that is a recent point of interest.

Germany

Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, and Munich are the active cities in Germany, with Düsseldorf taking a secondary role to the other two this spring. On the European front, Germany is a tad easier legal market to break into. Why is this? That's a good question. I've spent time in Germany, as I briefly lived there while my significant other worked there as an attorney; I feel like I have a soft spot for the country. That said, Frankfurt is not London or Paris; it's very commercial, less charming. As a result, Frankfurt firms and Frankfurt branch offices of U.S. firms tend to be a bit more open when considering candidates because they know they have a more difficult time attracting the right people to their doors. In short, you need two things: fluency in German (particularly business German) and a strong corporate background from a top U.S. firm.

For the spring 2006, Frankfurt, Munich, and Düsseldorf are all looking for corporate generalists: M&A, capital markets/securities, private equity, venture capital, etc. If you do all of the above, you are well suited for work in Germany.

International: Asia

by *Danice M. Kowalczyk*

Hong Kong

Hong Kong continues, as expected, to be the superstar of Asia. It is a strong legal community built upon sophisticated work undertaken by the best Asian firms or U.S. branches of the top U.S. firms. Keep in mind, however, that Hong Kong is also a 24/7 shop. The billable hours are growing and growing; and while obtaining top experience, most candidates agree that they are being worked to the bone in, very often, a "strictly business" environment. If you are looking at Hong Kong, be prepared to work hard.

The bottom line on practicing in Hong Kong (or anywhere in Asia) is: (i) you must have experience from a Wall Street or Magic Circle firm; (ii) you must have a corporate background; (iii) you must possess stellar academics from a recognizable institution; and (iv) you must be fluent in English and Mandarin (and, very often, Cantonese). PRC-related experience is very desirable as well.

This spring, corporate practitioners remain in demand. In particular, those candidates with M&A, private equity, restructuring, project finance, capital markets/securities, and joint venture experience remain in high demand.

Also, language skills remain highly important. Firms want fluent English speakers, Mandarin speakers, and

Korean and/or Japanese speakers. To this end, a candidate's language skills must be exemplary. Firms are not interested in folks with basic language abilities or an inability to understand business language and related nuances.

Beijing

Beijing's prime interest has been in M&A, securities, project finance, and joint venture work. In fact, Beijing is starting to mirror Hong Kong quite a bit in terms of what it requires from its candidates.

Shanghai

Shanghai this season is also mirroring Hong Kong and Beijing in terms of the types of candidates the region is seeking. That said, because they are "newcomers" to the Asian market, Shanghai firms and Shanghai offices of U.S. firms are a tad distrustful of candidates wishing to practice here, fearing they will accept an offer in Shanghai and then leave for better ground in Hong Kong or Beijing. Hence, if you are interested in Shanghai, you will need to show that you have a committed interest to the area (whether through family connections, work history, school attendance, or otherwise).

You will also need serious PRC-related experience. More so than Hong Kong, Shanghai requires substantial knowledge of PRC-related transactions and law. Also, the region often asks that candidates speak the native dialect of Putonghau.

Tokyo

Tokyo is to Japan what Hong Kong is to China--the top place to do legal business. As of spring 2006, Tokyo seeks candidates with M&A, project finance, capital markets/securities, and joint venture backgrounds. General corporate practitioners continue to do well here. When it comes to language skills, candidates should have excellent Japanese language skills, be able to attend client meetings conducted in Japanese, and advise clients in Japanese.