

## How to Choose a Recruiter That Is Right for You

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### Question:

I am an associate at a large firm, and get calls from legal recruiters all the time. How do I choose a great recruiter to assist me in making a move?

### Answer:

This is a great question, and one not nearly enough attorneys ask. Here are some tips for figuring out whether a legal recruiter is someone you want to work with.

1. [A great legal recruiter practiced law herself \(or worked in a related capacity\) and has academic credentials similar to yours.](#)

While not all great [legal recruiters](#) are former practitioners, most are. This is because a great recruiter understands your day-to-day life, the decisions you face, the atmosphere you work in, and the work you do. The easiest way for a recruiter to know this is by having practiced in a similar environment. Does this person know what it is like to work in a [large firm](#)? Do they know what it is like to move to a smaller firm? Go in-house? They can speak to the experience best if they have actually been there.

See [A Comprehensive Guide to Working with a Legal Recruiter](#) for more information.

Moreover, a great recruiter was usually a great attorney, meaning that her academic credentials are good enough to work at the types of firms she wants you to look at. She understands what law firms want. Occasionally, a great legal recruiter will have experience as an in-house law firm HR person, which may allow them to have similar knowledge. Rarely, however, will a great recruiter hold a JD and have no practice experience at all.

2. They are knowledgeable about firms and different areas of law.

Any recruiter should be able to talk to you about particular firms and opportunities. She may not know every single firm, but should know many of them, and be able to tell you about particular practice groups, the clients the firm handles, and the firm's atmosphere. If she can't, she should know how to find out.

See [How to Easily Determine the Best Attorneys and Law Firms: The Five Prestige Levels of Attorneys and Law Firms](#) for more information about how to determine which law firms are the best.

Similarly, this person understands your particular skill set. An effective recruiter needs to have a deep understanding of different [areas of law practice](#) in order to best match your skills with a law firm's need. Again, if you are very specialized or have a radically different background than your recruiter, she may have questions about your practice, and may ask. Even if this is the case, she should be able to get up to speed quickly so that she can market your skills effectively.

3. They are respected as an authority in the field.

A great recruiter who is known and respected in her field will be called upon to speak and write regularly. Can you find publications and speaking engagements she has participated in? Someone who is not called upon to speak, write, etc. is probably not a top person in the field.

4. They come recommended.

A great way to find out which recruiter to use is to ask friends or former colleagues. Many of them will sing the praises of a particular recruiter. Especially if you hear a name more than once, you might research that person and see if it is someone who also appears to meet the criteria above.

What separates the [best legal recruiters](#) from the rest? Find out in [this related article](#).

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