

## *California Top Recruiter Liz Hudson Interviewed about California's Growing Real Estate Attorney Market*

Liz Hudson, as a Managing Director at BCG Attorney Search, has her finger on the pulse of West Coast Law. With her unique position working with many of the largest firms in California, Arizona, Washington, Oregon, Nevada, Alaska, and Hawaii, she is excited that to tell us of the improvements the market has made in the second half of 2012. Herself a lawyer with a J.D. from prestigious Northwestern University, who has herself once suffered the setbacks of a bear of a market, with all too many applicants and all too few positions, she knows first hand the frustrations lawyers feel finding employment. Getting her first major break at Bell, Boyd, & Lloyd (now K&L Gates) came as a great relief, a justification for all the work she had done, and now that she is a recruiter for BCG there are few joys in her life greater than helping others experience that same justification and relief of being rightly placed to do good work.

Overall, the State of the Market in California has been fair, at least relative to the last few years. Markets such as intellectual property, patent litigation, and patent prosecution, persistently fared the best through the turmoil, especially in San Francisco and Silicon Valley. General Litigation meanwhile notoriously is outweighed by candidates over positions. Real Estate began to perk up, finally, after much anticipation, in the first quarter of 2012, especially, and as always, for midlevels (3-5 years), but as we shall see, things got more exciting as the year progressed.

California has long been a coveted market, especially for East Coasters such as New Yorkers, who are surprisingly welcome to the otherwise relatively, closed markets. New York lawyers have a reputation for working hard - that is appreciated. California is a tad more lax than New York, but the margin isn't too large. Markets like Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Silicon Valley are always huge and each offers its unique flavor - the climate, the atmosphere, the people - that tempts people from all over the country.

Getting into such a market is hard. Californian firms often expect applicants to be home grown or at least be admitted to the California Bar. Experience, how ever, is always welcome, from all over the country, especially in high-demand fields. The hottest fields are the most likely to accept market crossovers.

As a top recruiter for BCG, Liz was excited to share with me a gleam of sunshine in a legal market that's been cloudy since the 2009 economic depression. She works with a wide range of law firms across the West Coast and is witnessing the response of Real Estate lawyers to the improving overall market. She is in a unique position to see how firms are hiring and says she "sees the trends in the market." Real Estate attorneys are in especially high demand nowadays, and there aren't enough qualified candidates, after the market was hit so hard. Real Estate attorneys had been laid off most of the other legal fields in the recession, and now they are in higher demand.

After the recession "People weren't building huge developments any more," she noted. But things are changing as of 2012, and especially as of the last half of 2012. While real estate attorneys are "in demand n most areas in the country" -- she mentioned Chicago as having a high demand -- California is especially in high demand at this point.

Liz spoke excitedly about a woman she placed last June whom she feels is representative of the favorable market. Her candidate was not licensed in California and was relocating from another state. California is a competitive market, especially lately, in which it is hard for non-Californian residents who are not licensed in California to get looked at. She says that it is "difficult if not licensed here as there are so many candidates." But "because, real estate was in such high demand, [this woman] got an offer from one of the country's top firms."

In other words, this is a unique time for a cross-over market into the Californian market, especially for real estate attorneys. What are they looking for? Of course the market is still competitive, but if you have 2-6 years of experience in real estate -- "three years seems to be the sweet spot," Liz said -- than your chances are higher than ever in moving to one of the biggest markets in the United States. Liz says the highest demand right now is in L.A., but qualified applicants are being sought across the board.

Firms are looking for well-rounded attorneys, and for lawyers with extensive transactional real estate experience. They of course like to see well-rounded commercial real estate experience.

Upcoming JDs need not fear the real estate market any more; in fact, if you intend to [specialize](#), which is a good strategy, real estate is a good idea. "You will be in demand" she said, but warned that "when your practice isn't doing well, its frustrating," and she referred to her own job search. A niche transactional lawyer herself, when Liz looked to move in-house from her law firm she didn't see many relevant opening and was concerned. But, due to her niche specialty, when one opening did come up there was far fewer candidates qualified for the job than for most corporate openings. This helped her move in-house at a very young stage in her career. Thus she views it as a competitive edge in her job search down the road. Ideally, she'd recommend that recent graduates interested in real estate law focus approximately half their time on general transactional work and half their time on specific real estate work once they land their first job.

Liz anticipates 2013 will be giving us more of what the second half of 2012 has given us: more and more opportunities for Real Estate Attorneys on the West Coast.

To read more about Liz, please view her bio here: [https://www.bcgsearch.com/employee.php?emp\\_id=43](https://www.bcgsearch.com/employee.php?emp_id=43)

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**[21 Major Interview Mistakes to Avoid at All Costs](#)**

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**[How to Answer the Tell Me About Yourself Interview Question](#)**

**[How to Answer the Do You Have Any Questions for Me Interview Question](#)**