

# *The Reality of Entertainment Law*

Summary: Learn what entertainment law is really like in this article.

Stationed as I am as a recruiter in Los Angeles, I get no small number of inquiries from attorneys who are looking for a job in entertainment law. Some of these attorneys have prior experience in the entertainment industry, and I've even met a few who were doing entertainment-related work in New York or other markets, and thus had at least a large amount of familiarity with the type of practice it entails. By and large, however, the notion of "entertainment law" seems to be an aspirational idea for many, and the unfortunate reality is that 1) there just are not that many entertainment law practices and positions at law firms, even in a city like Los Angeles that is arguably the content-producing capital of the world, 2) it is an extremely difficult practice area to break into if you have no existing clients or work-generating industry connections, and especially if you have no prior experience doing entertainment work, and 3) as few as the opportunities are, they are almost exclusively transactional-side positions, and thus it is highly unlikely you will be able to transition into an entertainment practice with a litigation-side background.

There are exceptions to all of these, of course, such as being able to do a decent amount of "entertainment"-related work as part of a broader copyright and trademark litigation practice, or people who have no prior entertainment-specific experience but have enough familiarity with technology licensing, financing, etc., that their skill set will transition smoothly into entertainment work. However, what I can tell you is that over the past year, I have only seen one formal entertainment law opening at a large firm in Los Angeles. Mid-sized and boutique firms who practice in this area largely recruit laterally through their existing industry contacts rather than blind submissions from previously-unknown applicants, and so combined with the paucity of big firm positions in this practice area, it can be extremely difficult to break into coming from outside of Los Angeles, and especially outside of the industry generally.

This is not meant to be discouraging if you do have aspirations of doing entertainment law, but rather to provide some realistic context to the entertainment law market, such as it exists. The quickest avenue into entertainment law that I have observed in my time as a recruiter is for someone to develop a solid transactional and financing background, and then look at the in-house postings on the careers page of the major production studios in Los Angeles and the surrounding area.

I think a lot of people are attracted to the fact that entertainment law *\*sounds\** glamorous, but at the end of the day, if you are looking to make a lateral move away from your current position and you enjoy negotiating deals or litigating interesting cases, there are many other areas of the law that are infinitely more likely to present you with opportunities.