

Junior Corporate Associate in Los Angeles Interested in a Larger Law Firm

By Harrison Barnes from Los Angeles Office Managing Director

A junior corporate associate in a small Los Angeles law firm contacted us seeking to relocate to a larger law firm. The attorney wanted to work on larger deals. The attorney had excellent qualifications from a top law school and was also from the Los Angeles area.

We started the attorney search shortly after she completed her first year of practice. Initially, she was having a difficult time getting interviews because the corporate market is not that active. The Los Angeles corporate market is not as large as many might believe. Markets such as the Bay Area and New York City are much larger.

Another interesting thing about this attorney was they were offered a job in a major law firm while still in law school. I suspect the current problem with this attorney was that she might not have been a good interviewer. There was no other reason to explain the attorney's inability to get a job in a major law firm other than this. They had gone to an excellent law school, had performed well in law school and were interested in working for a large law firm. One nice thing about getting experience--regardless of the law firm's size -- is it can often be easier to get a job with a major law firm with that experience. Attorneys mature at different levels in terms of how to interview and present themselves. Just because one does not get a job with a major law firm when they are in law school does not mean they will not get a major law firm job in the future.

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After working with the attorney for a few months, they began to get interviews but were too busy to go on the interviews. Many law firms that initially expressed interest in the attorney no longer would interview her after she was unable to attend the interviews. Because the attorney was at a small law firm, there were not a lot of people that could cover for her if she needed to be out of the office-- even for a few hours an afternoon. Because she was so busy, we stopped the search for approximately six months until things slowed down. After six months, we restarted the search and there was a lot more interests from attorney within large law firms. Corporate attorneys are most marketable after they have approximately a year-and-a-half to two years' experience. It is important for corporate attorneys to have more experience before they start searching because corporate, unlike many practice areas, can take a while to learn. In fact, most corporate attorneys are not proficient as corporate attorneys until they have approximately 4 to 5 years of experience and in some cases they may need even more.

The attorney ultimately accepted an offer with a large international law firm. The attorney was very happy at the law firm and it ended up being a very good fit. Corporate attorneys are very marketable when the economy is good. Here, the attorney accomplished her search in a very active market when there were many opportunities.

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