

# Top 10 Reasons Attorneys Should Look at Multiple Markets in Their Job Search

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It is usually easier to find a job as an attorney in another market.  
Many attorneys are afraid or resistant to looking in other markets.  
This is a huge mistake that attorneys continue to make every day.  
The most successful attorneys are the ones who search for jobs in many markets.

**Summary:** The most successful attorneys are those who don't limit themselves to just one market in their job search. Find out why in this article.

More than half of the placements I make are attorneys relocating from one market to another. I make these placements because it is more often than not much easier for attorneys to relocate from the market in which they currently practice into another market. I'm going to discuss this and the reasons why later in this article, but at the outset, I will give you one of the most basic reasons why: There are over HUNDREDS OF CITIES around the country containing major law firms. You work in one of these. If you are interested in more than one of these, you exponentially increase your odds of getting a good position. This job search strategy works. **See [Why Relocating to a Different Market Is the Greatest \(But Little Known\) Way for a Law Firm Attorney to Get Ahead in the Legal Profession](#) for more information.**

Attorneys who limit their search to the market they are in severely hamper their career. Whether you are unemployed, underemployed, underappreciated, or need a new position, the smartest thing you can do is look at other markets. Not looking at other markets is one of the worst career mistakes you can make, yet it is one I see attorneys go through all the time.  
Are they stupid for doing so? Yes.  
Are they stubborn for doing so? Yes.  
Do they throw away good careers when they do so? Yes.  
Do I see this all the time--daily even? Yes.  
Does their career suffer indefinitely for doing so? Often, yes.

I cannot help most of these people. Trying to break through to them would be no different than me sitting down with a squirrel and attempting to explain to it the Rule Against Perpetuities. The best I can do is to lay out my message in this article with hope that you may understand. I doubt I will break through--my odds are slim if you have already made up your mind. As you will see, while [attorneys are very good at understanding logic](#), passing legal exams involving all sorts of complex logic, and so forth, when it comes to understanding the logic for relocating they are often more like the aforementioned squirrel than an intelligent attorney. They become a different species entirely when confronted with the need to relocate.

As you read this, there are attorneys who are sitting around doing nothing in markets all over the United States. Many of these attorneys are in New York City; Washington, D.C.; or San Francisco; and tell themselves they will never leave these markets. In many cases working in these markets represents *something* to them and they feel they should be there--**EVEN IF THEY ARE NOT WORKING!** In other cases, they may be working in one of a myriad of smaller markets where they have family, friends, or a significant

other, and they believe they need to stay close by. In other cases, they may have a home they purchased, or their kids may be in school. I spoke with an attorney in Colorado the other day that used to work for a major New York law firm, relocated to Colorado, and then lost his Colorado job. He had not worked in six months and was running out of savings. However, he told me he was not going to leave because he enjoyed the view, and living in Colorado. But that was no reason to throw away his career. He went to an Ivy League law school and was formerly making over \$300,000 a year. Now large law firms will not touch him because he is connected to something abstract ("I love the smell and feel of the cool mountain air") instead of understanding that his wife and children rely on him for support. He needs to work to continue enjoying cool mountain air.

## Let's Get Something Clear

When an airplane takes off, it knows where it is going. If airplanes took off and wandered all over the sky without a clear objective, they would never arrive anywhere, crash, or end up in strange places. Most attorneys run their careers this way--they have no idea where they are going. Before I get into many of the reasons you need to look at other markets in your search, I want to be clear about something: You are an attorney. You've spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on your education. You have made sacrifices not only with regard to money but time as well; time in school, time spent studying, time spent learning skills working inside of a law firm. You have done something that not everyone is capable of doing, and which presumably was important to you. Regardless of your personal goals, your top objectives need to be to (1) keep working and (2) make the most of your skills by putting them to the highest and best use. You need to find people who are willing to pay for these skills, and that means you need to be mobile and look wherever people are willing to pay for these skills. There are places that will value these skills more than others. You need to go where these skills are valued, even if this means another market.

**See the following articles for more information:**

**[Communicate Your Value: How to Get a Job and Keep It](#)**  
**[The Importance of Creating and Maintaining Value](#)**

If you are unwilling to move, you will be stuck with whatever you can get in your current market--and that may not be good.

If you are not employed, the longer you are unemployed, the more difficult it is going to be for you to find a new position. With each week that goes by that you are unemployed, the closer it will become NEAR IMPOSSIBLE for you to find another job with a major law firm. It will even become difficult to find one with a smaller law firm. This is because all firms will think there is something uncertain about you (you were fired, cannot get along with your peers, no one wants to give you work--you name it).

If you are in danger of losing your job, you are IN TROUBLE and need to go all-out to find a position while you still can. You need to work hard to ensure that you remain employed. This should be your number one goal--and it is an important one.

I understand you may want to remain where you are--but what makes you so special? Rock stars make a lot of money, but they cannot sit around Cleveland, Ohio playing every night and expect to make a living--they need to go where there are people willing to pay for their talent and give them money. They do not see their families for extended periods of time, live out of buses and hotels, and are never home. You, at least, have the opportunity to go to work in ONE PLACE. Everyone out there goes where the work is and attorneys are no different.

**Is being near your brothers, sisters, and parents important to you?** Let's get something straight. Unless any of these people are going to pay you hundreds of thousands of dollars a year to sit around doing nothing and give you interesting work to do, I am not sure what the problem is. You can talk to them on the phone and

message them all day just like you do now. They are not the ones who went to law school and whose career is on the line if you do not find a good job. I like my family too, but your career is where you spend most of your waking time--and they do not understand that if you are unemployed, your career is in danger of imploding.

**Is being near your significant other important to you and you need to stay by him or her?** I'm sympathetic to this. I talk to young men and women each week who tell me they have been dating someone for six months or a year, and may get engaged soon--or are engaged and need to remain close by. In most cases, these significant others are not attorneys and not in your situation. If they want to be married to an attorney, they need to understand what they are getting themselves into. You need to go where the work is, and that is that. If they do not understand what being with you means, then maybe they will be better off with someone else. They will certainly be happy to benefit from your financial contribution and your status as an attorney. They need to take the good with the bad. Do not worry--you will find someone else. There are plenty of fish in the pond, and you may need to move on.

**Is being close to your friends important to you?** I like friends too--most people do. However, you can talk with them on the phone, Facetime, email and instant message them from anywhere in the world--which is what you do now. You can also take a trip with them a few times a year--if that is what you do now. Unless your friends are willing to pay you hundreds of thousands of dollars a year to hang out with them a few nights a week and give you something to do all day, you better re-examine your priorities right away. You can make friends anywhere--it is very easy, and there are interesting people all over. I moved to a small, former lumber town, Bay City, Michigan, when I was clerking for a federal judge and quickly made friends with a bunch of people in their mid-20s who all went to high school together and never went to college. I had a great time with them. A few of them had even been married a few times before the age of 25, and had three kids already, one worked at Hooters, and another was a clerk in the Department of Motor Vehicles, and got fired for drinking on the job (in the morning!). I had the time of my life making new friends there and would not trade it for anything in the world.

**Is being in the town you grew up in important to you?** That's great. How nice it must be to be around familiar people, places and things you grew up with. Unfortunately, none of these things are going to pay you hundreds of thousands of dollars a year to be around them, and none of these things had to endure all the education, testing, and student loans you are dealing with. Let's say you live until your early 90s--I know of several attorneys now who are in their mid-80s and still practicing. Do you think that you have time to get familiar with other surroundings in the interim? It is certainly possible and will be fun. I grew up in a town of about 6,000 people in the Midwest. By the time I was 18 I knew every shopkeeper and the life history of just about everyone close to my age (and that of their brothers and sisters as well)--most of them never left. I was pretty excited to get the hell out of there, but you may be different. You need to go where the work is. If your career is important to you, then you must go where the work is.

**Do your children go to school in your city and want to stay there?** I love my children too. Unfortunately, all three of my girls are going to need me to pay for their college education, their weddings, and all sorts of stuff in the future. I need to work daily to ensure I'm ready for that. Each week my girls need money for dance lessons, acting lessons, clothes, candy, and lunch at school, summer camp, toys, etc. As a parent, I am assuming that you have various responsibilities that involve paying for this sort of thing. If you do not pay for this, I am not sure where that leaves you. When I was growing up, I moved several times and had great experiences doing so (unfortunately, I ended up back in my town of 6,000). I am assuming you also want the respect of your children as someone who works and has a good career. You cannot worry too much about your kids and school. They will meet new people, and your responsibility is to look after and support them by looking out for your career.

**Are you a Portland, New York, San Francisco, LA sort-of-person and need to remain there?** I like the rain in Portland, the crowds in New York, the expensive housing in San Francisco and the traffic in Los Angeles too. All these things are great! But I certainly would be more than willing to give any of these up if it meant continuing my career and making the best use of my skills on an ongoing basis. There is absolutely no reason that anyone should remain in a market because it is tied closely to their identity. That is insane, and it is SHALLOW and STUPID. Whatever the hell city you are in is not a real person and it is not you! It did not

pay for you to go to law school, it does not support you (it taxes you), and if it does not have work for you it is EVIL, and you need to get the heck out of there.

**Did you purchase a home?** That's nice you have a house. SELL IT OR RENT IT OUT. You will have plenty of homes in your lifetime. You can always rent or sell your house out. Call a realtor and put it on the market. This is your career and livelihood we are talking about. Your home is a liability and is going to expect you to pay taxes on it, to pay its mortgage, to paint it, to update it and take good care of it. If you do not do these things, it will go away. It takes money to do all these things, and this home will expect you to work to pay for it. Also, just like finding new friends, or a significant other, you can find new homes and places to live anywhere. People have been building, buying and selling homes for thousands of years and you can continue to take part in this tradition when you move somewhere else.

I have heard all sorts of reasons that attorneys believe they should remain in various markets. I am not sure that I have touched on all of them here--but these are the big ones. Now that we have gotten these reasons out of the way let me discuss some of the **COMPELLING REASONS** that you should be looking at other markets in your search.

See [Why Every Attorney Should Look at Multiple Legal Markets When Doing a Job Search](#) for more information.

At the outset,  
**You are unemployed.**

If you are unemployed, you should look everywhere. There is absolutely no reason not to look everywhere when you are unemployed.

I worked with an unemployed attorney who was a tenth-year attorney, from an Ivy League law school who was working as a bartender in a major city because he could not find a job--he was in a niche practice area. He had been unemployed for two years and ended up getting a job (after a video conference) with a major international law firm paying over \$300,000 a year in the Middle East. His career is back on track. I work with people like this all the time. You need to look everywhere that you can look.

As I mentioned earlier, when you are unemployed there is a presumption among law firms reviewing your application that there is something wrong with you. Some of their immediate conclusions will be that (1) you were fired and did something wrong, (2) you left your firm because you did not like it and will do the same again, or (3) you were not doing good work, and no one was giving you work. You could say you were laid off as well (and may have been), but the problem is that law firms do not lay off everyone when they conduct layoffs and always keep people around they like and value--that is why talking about a loss of a client and so forth will often fall on deaf ears. You could talk about an important partner leaving with business, but law firms will think the same way--why didn't they take you with them? Regardless of the reasons you are unemployed; it sends a bad signal to firms.

You can always explain away why you are unemployed to firms, but most will not care at all. Why? Because there are tons people in the market that will come without that potential baggage, and they do not need to take the risk. This is especially so in major markets like New York City, for example, where there are countless highly qualified attorneys practically crawling out of the walls. Unless you have some ultra-rare experience, if you are in a major market like New York City you are going to have a next-to-impossible time competing with attorneys who are already employed. There is no way you can, and unless you are interested in taking a job at a small law firm, you are not going to have many options.

Conversely, you may be in a small market and unemployed. This is another good reason to look around. There are fewer jobs in smaller markets.

The unemployed attorney needs to look at as many markets as possible. This is their only option and something that will keep their career on track.

[The legal market is governed by the laws of supply and demand.](#) Law firms are self-interested and hire the best people they can find. There are fewer world-class attorneys interested in working in Detroit than there are attorneys who are interested in working in New York; Washington, D.C.; and Palo Alto. Therefore, you are going to have better odds in a city like Detroit than you might in New York.

I'm from outside Detroit. I try and tell attorneys how great it is all the time. Attorneys always say: "I'd never live in Detroit!" They've never been. The City of Detroit has its issues, but there are some great suburbs, and you can buy a nice, 6,000 square foot house on a big lot, in a safe neighborhood with good schools for what a 1,200 square-foot house costs in Los Angeles, on a small lot with bad schools. Some of the suburbs have some of the best schools in the country. The suburbs are amazing. Detroit was one of the wealthiest cities in the world for several decades when cars and machines drove the national economy. Its suburbs, freeways, and infrastructure are outstanding. It is also easier to make partner and to bring in clients, and attorneys are far more respected and revered in Detroit than they are in a city like Los Angeles, New York or Washington, D.C.--where they are a dime a dozen. An attorney with sophisticated securities experience is also much rarer in Detroit than they would be in Palo Alto or New York. There is also a huge variety of in-house opportunities available in Detroit as well--and most of these companies prefer people coming from large law firms. I just relocated a great, unemployed ERISA attorney from Texas to a major law firm in Detroit. He had been unemployed over a year. He would still be unemployed if he were in Texas.

People from the South, in particular, have all sorts of negative preconceptions about places like Los Angeles--they picture no substance, lots of traffic and so forth. These sorts of beliefs are true of some parts of Los Angeles, of course, but there are countless suburbs and types of people all over the area. There are also two different worlds in Los Angeles - the Westside and the Eastside of the City, for example. Each has different personalities, characters of neighborhoods, and so forth. If you are unemployed, you should be looking everywhere.

People from many areas of the country either love or hate New York. New York has some incredible suburbs and schools, great public transportation, and there are many major advantages to living there that are not always immediately evident to people who do not understand the area.

There are lots of other markets like Detroit around the country that people can look at and keep their job careers on track. If you are unemployed, the smartest thing you can do is to make other markets part of your job search. The more time that passes, the more difficult it is going to be for you to find a position. Unemployed people should be looking everywhere.

**See the following articles for more information:**

[As an Unemployed Associate, How Can I Best Position Myself to Get Placed with a Top Law Firm?](#)

[Unemployed and Looking to Increase Marketability](#)

[Unemployed? STAY BUSY.](#)

[Does Being Long-term Unemployed Hurt Chances of Getting Back in the Legal Field?](#)

[You are losing \(or about to lose your job\).](#)

If you are about to lose your job, the smartest thing you can do is look everywhere and fast. You will have at least a 5x easier time finding a position while you are employed than if you are unemployed. When you are employed, your odds of finding jobs in major legal markets (New York; Los Angeles; Washington, D.C. and so forth) are profoundly higher than they will be if you are unemployed. You need to go all-out and apply to as many places as possible, and as your legal recruiter is willing to recommend. If your recruiter is simply



providing you positions on a piecemeal basis, perhaps they do not understand the urgency of your search and how important it is that you find something before you lose your job. You need to find a legal recruiter who takes your career seriously.

Remember that the legal market operates via the law of supply and demand. Almost every law firm prefers to hire people who are employed versus unemployed.

**See the following articles for more information:**

[Top 32 Reasons Attorneys Lose Their Jobs Inside of Law Firms](#)

[Top 9 Reasons Attorneys Lose Law Firm Jobs](#)

[Legal Career Suicide: Quitting a Job without Having another One Lined Up](#)

[No, You Should Not Quit Your Job before Securing a New One](#)

**You are senior with no business.**

If you have more than seven years of experience, you are considered "senior" in the legal profession.

Almost every law firm out there functions on a similar business model. They bring in junior associates to do work for a lower billing rate than more senior people. As the attorney gets more senior, their billing rate goes up, and their salary does as well. They bill a lot of hours in an attempt to become a partner and make money for those above them. If the law firm makes them partner, they have been made partner because (1) there is a limited amount of high hourly work that they can do for large institutional clients of the firm and these clients like the new partner or (2) they are being made an income partner with a limited runway to generate business before either doing so or being asked to leave. In the case of "1", this is something that only the most dedicated associates who work at the law firm for the longest period are entitled to share--and most law firms will not give this to outsiders. Concerning "2", most attorneys get "one shot" at this and if they do not make it they either go in-house or try and find a law firm that can support them with senior-level work. Also, most law firms know that after 8 to 10 years of working very long hours most attorneys that are not partners will stop this behavior--especially if they do not want to be partners--and find reasons to be more efficient and not bill long hours. This upsets partners who want to make a lot of money from their clients, and they much prefer to give work to younger people trying to work hard to make a place for themselves at the top and who will cater to their superiors every need, and do the best work they possibly can.

Most law firms do not have room for senior attorneys without business. That is just how it is. This is especially the case in the most major markets where the "up or out" system is the most fully operational. The only reason a law firm will need senior attorneys is when the law firm cannot find people with your particular skillset in the market, and it would prefer to have someone senior, without business, doing this sort of work.

What sort of law firm would be interested in this bizarre and unusual combination? That is a very good question.

The only way to find a law firm interested in your particular combination of seniority and lack of business is to look far and wide. There will be law firms that do not have senior talent in their markets and have the work to bill out. These law firms may have retiring partners leaving work to the firm or large clients in need of your expertise that require someone with your sort of experience. Law firms are businesses and as businesses are self-interested. If they can make more money having someone senior do the work without business, then they will do it. You need to find law firms that can.

[In order to find law firms that can make money from you as a senior attorney, you simply need to search the market and find law firms that can profit from your experience and have more incentives to bring in an attorney without business](#), who will not worship the partners they work for in an effort to get ahead, and who will not be expected to work as many hours as humanly possible as is expected of junior attorneys. This is

not an easy assignment. In most cases, this will require you to look at many geographical markets if you are going to find a law firm willing to take a break from the business model that most modern law firms follow. There are firms like this in most major markets, but you also need to keep in mind this is a "timing issue" as well. You need to be in the right place at the right time, and this more often than not means you are looking for a needle in a haystack. You need to look at many markets to find this.

**See the following articles for more information:**

**[Why Attorneys with 5+ Years of Law Firm Experience Are in Serious Trouble \(and Seven Steps They Need to Take to Save Their Legal Careers\)](#)**

**[How Can I Make a Move without a Good Book of Business?](#)**

**[Senior Associate With Small Book of Business Seeks Work - Suggestions?](#)**

**You are in a niche practice area.**

If you are in a niche practice area, looking in different geographic markets is a necessity in many instances. In practices like trademark, project finance, government contracts, white collar litigation and others, even in major legal markets, there may be no more than a few openings at any one time. Being in a niche practice area means that only a few law firms may have the work you are seeking to do. Because only a few law firms have this work, you are going to be competing with other attorneys that have the same experience, and this will limit your possibilities. If there are only a few openings in your market, it is going to be very difficult for you to find a position.

While there might be one opening for a trademark attorney in Los Angeles, there may be 25 around the country with other decent-sized firms. This means that if you search outside of Los Angeles, your odds will be roughly 25-times greater than if you searched only in Los Angeles. Realistically, if you hope to continue working as a trademark attorney, your only realistic option would be to look around the country--and that is what many trademark attorneys, patent attorneys, and others do--and it works. Each year I place a high number of patent, trademark, international finance, project finance and other niche-practice-area attorneys who have looked in other markets besides their own. You need to look in other markets outside of your own to stay employed, and this is one of the choices you make when you go into a niche practice area. Niche-practice-area attorneys need to be geographically flexible.

The drawback of being a niche-practice-area attorney is the fact that you may need to be geographically flexible when looking for a position. The benefit of being a niche-practice-area attorney is that you can almost always find a good position when you choose to be geographically flexible and look at multiple markets when searching. Patent attorneys are a great case in point. Many patent attorneys--the more niche, the better--can have long, fruitful careers (even without business)--provided they are willing to constantly look at different markets when they need to look for a job. In contrast, getting locked down to one market can often be severely limiting and create issues for patent attorneys in long-term employment. The attorneys in niche practice areas who tend to have problems are those who are not geographically flexible. If you are going to remain in a niche practice area, you are almost always going to need to be geographically flexible and move during your career--unless you can get a good-sized book of business.

**See [The BCG Attorney Search 2018 State of the American Lateral Law Firm Legal Market Report](#) for more information.**

**You are not in a niche practice area, and your practice area is slow**

When the market slows down--and all legal markets slow down--your practice area may slow down. Litigation, corporate, and real estate all go through their ups and downs. During recessions, corporate can get extremely slow all over the country. In good economies, litigation often slows down--especially in major markets like New York. The only way to stay gainfully employed is to look within other markets.

While there may be opportunities in your market, one of the major issues is that when a market slows, there

will be more of the most highly qualified attorneys seeking jobs. There will be people from better law schools, coming from better law firms, with more employment stability and who have a better mix of experience than you, all looking for the same jobs. This means that the people you will be competing with are going to make it difficult for you to find a position in a major market. Looking outside your market may be your only choice--especially if you want to stay with a large law firm.

**See [Why Every Big Firm Practice Area Eventually "Self-Destructs" at Least Once Every Eight Years](#) for more information.**

**You have enemies in your market or a bad reputation at your last firm.**

Some attorneys have enemies in their market. If you are part of a practice area with a relatively small bar and you worked for someone who is not so nice and has it out for you, you may have a difficult time getting a position in your market.

**[At some point, many law firms want to check references after extending you an offer.](#)**

While most law firms check references formally--and few will ever say anything bad about a former attorney--there is also something called the "informal reference check" (which can happen after you are hired and haunt you for years). This is the sort of reference check that is done between attorneys who know each other well after or while hiring someone who worked with them. The informal reference check only happens when attorneys are practicing together in the same market.

If you were fired from your law firm for doing something wrong and get an offer from another firm, the informal reference check might take over. This involves partners calling someone they know at another law firm that worked with you and asking about you. The right thing for the person receiving a call like this is to allow you to go on with your career and say nice things about you provided you are not a horrible person. What many people do, though, is the opposite: They will tell the other attorney (provided they already know them well) all sorts of dirt about you and you will not get an offer.

I have even seen this happen in many markets after someone was hired--particularly in the Midwest for some reason (I've also seen it in a few parts of the South). Someone is hired by a firm in Minneapolis, for example, and after they are hired, someone from their former firm who has very bad things to say freely shares these things with someone at the new firm. The new firm may let the new hire go--I've seen this happen at firms in Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana, and Minnesota to my astonishment several times over the past several years. If you have major detractors at your former (or current) firm who have it out for you, it can often be a good decision to look at other markets where an informal network is not likely to work against you in the future. People often do not care about this ridiculousness in markets like New York, San Francisco, or Houston, for example, but it can happen where there is a small bar for a given practice area (such as bankruptcy).

**See [Guidelines on Reciprocity or "Admission On Motion" among the States as per American Bar Association](#) for more information.**

If you feel that you are going to be unfairly penalized by people at your past firm, you may be better off starting fresh in a new market.

**See the following articles for more information:**

**[Protect Your Reputation at All Costs](#)**

**[Bad Manners, Rumors, and Your Career](#)**

**Your market is slow in general and crowded with other laterals seeking positions.**

Your market may be in a recession, or it may just slow. Regardless, if there are a lot of people looking for positions, you will be competing with everyone else that is looking for a job. At that point, you better hope that you are more qualified than the other applicants for at least one of the positions you are seeking.



If there are not a lot of opportunities in your market, you do not have to move, of course. One option is to wait and apply for openings as they come up. This is a good situation when you are in a position to take time to search for a position, because you are secure in your position. If you are secure in your position, then you can afford to wait. If you are not secure, though, the smartest thing that you can do is start looking in other markets.

See [Avoid Sophisticated and Saturated Markets](#) for more information.

**Your market is too small.**

If you are in a small market, the odds are you may have to wait a very long time for an opening to come up that matches what you are seeking. If you are willing to wait and feel, you stand a good chance of getting a position, and this may not concern you. The issue with small markets, though, is that it will make moving at all points in your career potentially difficult. Having the ability to move law firms in the future is a benefit you will have in a large market.

If you are in a small market, you may have no choice but to look at other markets in your search. There will be jobs in areas outside of your home market that will not exist in your current market.

**Your market is too large.**

Large markets also mean more competition and a higher bar for the same jobs. It is virtually impossible for laid-off attorneys from big firms to get positions in New York City, for example, because there is too much competition and law firms would rather hire the employed. In a similar vein, Washington, D.C. is swarming with litigators. It is difficult for all but the most highly qualified attorneys to get positions with major law firms there as well.

Large markets mean more competition and a higher bar to entry. It can often be easier to get a position in another market--particularly when you are competing with a lot of attorneys just like you in your home market. This is one reason that many people from markets like New York City will always relocate to other, smaller markets where their training and experience is highly valued later in their careers.

See the following articles for more information:

[Breaking Into a Smaller Market](#)

[25 Reasons Why Boutique Firms Are the Best Choice for Many Attorneys and Can Be Much Safer Than Larger Law Firms](#)

[Choosing the Small versus the Large Firm](#)

[The Benefits to Living and Working in a Smaller Market](#)

[It is always easiest to move home.](#)

[One of the easiest moves an attorney can make is to go home.](#) If you are working in one market and want to work in your home market, a move home is an easy one to explain to firms and often a welcome one. Law firms love it when attorneys want to move back to their hometowns for several reasons:

**You have a support network there and are likely to stay.** Law firms want you to stay--or at least have an incentive to because this means you will work harder and do all sorts of things in the interest of the law firm.

**You have gotten experience elsewhere and are bringing that back.** Law firms love diverse experience, outside training, and new ways of looking at things. If you are moving to a small market after working in a major market, the law firm will feel proud showing the attorneys there that it is better working in the small market than the big one.

**You will know people there who you grew up with, and they can provide you with business.** The odds are that if you grew up in a smaller market, you might know people there who can also provide you business. If you grew up there, once you get settled back into the market in your hometown, your odds of getting business there increase.

**You will likely buy a house, get married (if you are not already), have children, and do other things that will make you more likely to commit to your job and not leave.** Law firms like it when people are from a given market and settle down there with all sorts of obligations. Obligations make it difficult for the attorney to leave the firm, and more likely to stick around and give their best efforts in all respects.

If you are an attorney moving home, you also often do not need to just apply to law firms with existing openings. Unless you are moving into a major legal market (New York; Los Angeles; Washington, D.C.; etc.), you can apply to many law firms that are likely to be the best fit for you because they know they are only going to get one shot to hire you--law firms will almost always create positions and roles for attorneys coming home if they have good qualifications. This means that you have a wider variety of places to which you can apply. It is much easier to get a position if you are moving home than it is if you are relocating to another part of the country.

**See the following articles for more information:**

**[The Right and Wrong Reasons to Switch Law Firms](#)**

**[There Are Only Three Reasons an Attorney Should Ever Switch Law Firms](#)**

**Conclusions**

Attorneys spend a lot of time going to school, then joining law firms and training to become attorneys and getting experience there. When their law firm slows down, and they lose their job--or are in danger of losing a job--they may need to look elsewhere for work if there are not a lot of positions in the market they are in currently. Regardless of why you are looking for a job, looking in other markets is often the smartest thing you can do, and all attorneys should be doing this. Your skills will be valued differently in different markets. What is not valued in one market may be flying off the shelves in another.

When you confine your search to one market, this limits you only to the opportunities in that market. If your existing market is slow and you cannot find work there, there is a presumption that this market is slow for everyone in your practice area as well. In many cases, you may be in a market where there are not a lot of opportunities, and you will be able to move easily if you relocate.

Here are some recent examples of people I placed in just the past six months, who I would not have been able to place had they not been willing to relocate:

**Corporate attorney loses a job in San Francisco (for being sick half the year) as a first year.** Found a position quickly in Kentucky (not from Kentucky and never been there) but got no interviews in San Francisco--or throughout California.

**A senior employed environmental attorney cannot find work in Los Angeles.** Finds a job quickly at a great firm in San Diego.

**A senior real estate attorney cannot find work in Texas after being out of work for three years.** Finds a position in Southern California paying over \$300,000 a year--never been to California before the interview.

**A senior patent attorney cannot find work in Colorado.** Finds a position on Long Island--from Colorado and went to law school and college there.

**Fired junior corporate attorney cannot find work in Atlanta after a six month job search.** Finds a position in Palo Alto, California. Never been there before.

**Intellectual property litigator cannot find work in Washington, D.C.** Finds a position in Charlotte, North Carolina.

**Patent attorney loses a job in Rochester, New York.** Finds a position in Boulder, Colorado.

**Bankruptcy attorney in Nevada is looking to work in a major city for a major firm.** Gets a position in New York City.

**Senior trademark attorney in Los Angeles is looking for a position.** Gets a position in Texas.

Placements like this happen several times a week at our firm, and they happen because attorneys decide

they are interested in relocating as part of their job searches. Relocating is the smartest thing you can do to open yourself to others during your job search. It works.

**See the following articles for more information:**

**[How to Relocate to Another Area of the Country as an Attorney](#)**

**[Relocating to Another Part of the Country as an Attorney](#)**

**[How Much Do Hot Practice Areas Vary from State to State?](#)**

**[Relocation! Relocation! Relocation!](#)**

**[A Comprehensive Guide to Bar Reciprocity: What States Have Reciprocity for Lawyers and Allow You to Waive into the Bar](#)**

**[How Can I Make Moving to the West Coast from a New York Law Firm Easier?](#)**

**[How to Interview in a Different City without Risking Your Current Job](#)**