

Senior Real Estate Attorney Doing a Nationwide Search Finds a Great Job in California

By Harrison Barnes from Los Angeles Office Managing Director

A senior real estate attorney unemployed for the past five years contacted me looking for a position anywhere in the country. The attorney formally worked in a major city on the East Coast in the real estate practice area for several years for a major law firm. While the attorney enjoyed being involved in real estate, they worked excessive hours, which finally burned out their desire to practice law. The attorney took several years off during which they traveled extensively, wrote and took advantage of many outside interests — including volunteering. Nevertheless, having relaxed and experienced outside interests, the attorney decided they were interested in returning to the practice of law.

It is rare once an attorney leaves the practice of law for them to return to law, particularly within an established law firm. This is especially true when an attorney has worked in a demanding market. Attorneys that have worked in very demanding markets typically do not have interest in returning to the practice of law after they receive a taste of what it is like to not work in a major law firm for an extended period of time. They realize there are other things to life than working long hours in an office, and with that, their values often quickly change. This is one reason why many attorneys learned early in their career that a person can never not be practicing for too long of a time if they want to stay in the game. Law firms, for their part, are also aware that once an attorney has not been working in a law firm for an extended period of time they are unlikely to be very enthusiastic about returning and, when they do often do not fit well within a law firm or the law practice in general. The attorneys that do go back to practicing law after having taken time off will frequently leave the law firms they join after a short period of time.

In the case of this attorney, I explained to them that returning to the practice of law would be quite difficult because of the time off that had. I further explained that their odds of returning to a large law firm and earning a big firm salary were also something that was going to be difficult. The attorney had so much down time; the odds of a law firm taking their return to a law seriously were quite slim. It is one thing if someone has taken time off to have children, even though that can be difficult. It is another thing when the attorney has simply left because they did not appreciate the long hours and stress associated with their practice.

In the case of this attorney, things were a bit different. This attorney was so good at their job that the law firm literally overwhelmed them with work to the point of spending 70+ hours in the office week after week, year after year. The attorney at one point worked so hard that one of their blood vessels in their eyes exploded. When this attorney went to the emergency room, another attorney that they worked with called the attorney's emergency contact-- who happened to be their parents-- and told them that if the attorney did not come back into the office, they risked losing their job. Large law firms can be brutal places and this was one of the more brutal stories that I've heard in my career.

[Search Real Estate Attorney Jobs](#)
[Go Here to Learn More about the Real Estate Practice Area](#)

Because the attorney was in a nationwide search, the last place in the world that I thought they would be able to get an interview was with a good law firm in California. California is a very difficult market for attorneys to lateral into because all attorneys need to take the bar exam before they come to California and it is difficult to get positions when an outside attorney is competing with local attorneys. Here, I was working with a firm where I held an exclusive search agreement. Additionally, the law firm did not advertise their open position, which gave me an advantage of knowing the types of candidates that would be attractive to this firm. Just as advantageous was the firm's hiring attorney who listened to my recommendation of who they should hire.

I made a strong case that this attorney would be an excellent hire. First, the attorney had an excellent background and a lot of the reason for their absence was due to the fact that they were so good at their work. Second, I felt that the time off the attorney took was something that was more likely to be beneficial to the law firm than not. The attorney actually wanted to go back in to practicing law and was newly committed where attorneys from other sorts of backgrounds might not be. When I spoke with the attorney about my candidate, I was able to make a very clear case that under no circumstance should the attorney not hire this particular candidate.

The attorney met with the firm and did very well in their interviews. The law firm was very enthusiastic about the attorney and the attorney was likewise quite enthusiastic. Shortly after the meeting, the law firm extended the attorney an offer and the placement ended up going through. After the attorney had been at the law firm for a few months, they took and passed the California bar. This attorney was able to get an excellent position due to their ability to be geographically flexible, my development of a good rapport with the hiring attorney, and my advocacy on the attorney's behalf due to their being quite extraordinary.

[View BCG Attorney Search's Recent Placements](#)

[Read BCG Attorney Search Reviews](#)