

## *Counsel at a Major Law Firm in New York With Seven-Figure Book of Business Interested in Relocating to Boston*

*By Harrison Barnes from Los Angeles Office Managing Director*

An of counsel attorney with a major New York City law firm contacted me interested in relocating to Boston. The attorney had a multimillion dollar book of business, however, the firm they were with was large enough and prestigious enough that they were not interested in elevating this particular attorney to a partner role. The attorney wanted to work for major Boston firm and knew this would be possible in Boston but not necessarily within a top New York City law firm.

While it is possible to lateral as a partner into a New York City law firm with less than \$1 million of business, the law firms that are receptive to this tend to be on the smaller side and/or have a lot of lower paying clients in fields like insurance defense, employment and so forth. In order to lateral in as a partner in the largest New York law firms, most law firms want at least a few million dollars in business and the most prestigious even more. This attorney had a few million dollars in business and was doing well but the firm made clear to him that even if he substantially increased his business he would not be able to be made a partner. This firm did not have a lot of need for partners in this office and he told me that they would not be interested in him.

The attorney was looking for a law firm in Boston that could service his sophisticated financial service clients. The attorney needed a national law firm and wanted the law firm to be based in Boston. I identified several prospects for and began discussions with several law firms about this attorney's practice. Over the next few months, the attorney had several interviews with major Boston law firms. Ultimately, the attorney selected a strong Boston-based firm that had been selectively retiring much older partners and bringing in younger management attorneys. The attorney was excited about the opportunity because the firm provided them the [opportunity to go to work for a major law firm](#) and work with contemporaries who are assuming leadership roles in the management of the law firm.

This was an interesting placement and the attorney's reasons for the move were interesting as well. At the most prestigious New York law firms, just coming up through the ranks as an associate and even developing a multimillion dollar book of business is often not enough to become a partner. In fact, at many of the most prestigious New York law firms it is actually just as prestige is be made counsel as it is to become a partner in large law firms within other cities. Attorneys that become counsel in major New York law firms often choose to relocate outside of that market. In many cases, relocating can be an excellent career move that can give attorneys more involvement in management, a better title and the feeling of more control over their future.

In addition, after leaving the New York law firm, the attorney was able to substantially increase their book of business. The attorney's billing rate decreased, and they felt it was easier to attract clients as a consequence. The attorney's existing clients also gave him more work with a lower billing rate. Finally, because the attorney had a partner title also helped him attract more business. Sometimes if an attorney has a glass ceiling in the firm the best they can do is leave. Some markets-- such as major law firms in New York-- often also act as glass ceilings that keep attorneys from reaching their full potential.

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