

Attorney Relocating to Bay Area Lands New Job in Record Time

The lateral hiring process can be very quick or it can take several months to a year or more. In the case of this candidate, the process was very, very quick! Before I placed this candidate, the quickest that I had experienced was about two weeks. In the case of this candidate, the process took only a week to slightly less than a week - six days!

This candidate is a 2016 graduate of a strong law school in Los Angeles. She has been at two firms since her graduation from law school, both boutique, one in Los Angeles and one in SF. After graduating from law school, she decided to pursue entertainment law at a small firm in LA, and was doing both entertainment litigation and soft IP litigation. However, this candidate is from the Bay Area and wanted to move home, and so she lateraled to another small firm, and switched to defense-side Labor & Employment litigation. This candidate was at her first firm for about a year, and has been at her current firm for about a year and a half, so she only has a year and a half of relevant Labor & Employment experience. She also focuses on public entity defense, in particular public school districts.

It can be challenging to work with candidates who have made a practice group switch, as firms often don't know what to do with these types of candidates, and what class year to bring them on as. However, Labor & Employment (defense-side) is one of the strongest practice areas in California if not the strongest practice area, and so I had a feeling that this candidate would get traction, even despite her 1.5 years of relevant experience and 1 year of somewhat related but not entirely relevant experience.

I spoke with this candidate last Monday and conducted a full intake of her. She wanted to lateral to a mid-sized or larger Labor & Employment firm or a firm with a strong Labor & Employment practice, whose reputation would give her the best chance of either lateraling to an even larger firm in a couple of years or of going in-house. I sent her firms to review and approve on Tuesday, and she approved only a few firms the same day, including several Big Law firms as well as strong specialty Labor & Employment firms. She did approve one mid-sized Labor & Employment firm that specializes in public entity defense, and in particular school districts, which is exactly what she currently does. Although her goal is to land at a larger firm than this mid-sized firm, and to practice in private defense as well as public entity defense, I explained to her that this firm would be a great stepping stone to either a Big Law firm or a larger specialty Labor & Employment firm like Littler Mendelson or Fisher Phillips in a year or two.

I submitted this candidate to the handful of firms that she approved last Tuesday, and because I have close contacts / deep ties to the mid-sized public entity Labor & Employment defense firm (at which I have placed two other candidates), I sent them a tailored email with her submission materials, highlighting what a perfect match she'd be for their firm (given her public entity defense experience with school districts). The firm responded within an hour or two asking to interview this candidate, and we set the in-person interview for last Thursday, two days later.

As expected, this candidate wowed her interviewers in her interview, and sure enough, within a couple of hours we already had her offer letter! I think that this firm expedited things with this candidate because she was leaving on an international trip the next day, last Friday, and they wanted to get her the offer letter before she left.

This placement reinforced a couple of ideas to me: 1) firms can move very fast if the candidate has perfect experience for them, 2) Labor & Employment (defense-side) continues to be extremely marketable in California, 3) a tailored email to an inside / close connection can help, and 4) a practice group switch does not have to be the death knell for a candidate.

