

## *Experienced Mid-level to Senior Complex Litigator Placed at Elite Litigation Boutique in LA*

Mid-level to more senior litigators, even very highly-qualified ones, can have a tough time when it comes to lateral firm searches. I have found that general litigators are the most marketable between their second and fifth year of practice. After the fifth or sixth year, unless the candidate has a portable book of business that he or she will bring with him or her to the next firm, a lot of firms won't be interested, especially Big Law and more national firms. I have had the most success placing Big Law mid-level to senior general litigators at boutique firms. Boutique firms care less about the candidate's class year and more about his or her pre-litigation and any trial experience. While boutiques, like all firms, would love to see a portable book of business, they don't expect it, most of the time.

The candidate that I just worked with and eventually placed was just such a highly qualified, well-credentialed mid-level to more senior general complex commercial litigator. He had been at a top Am Law 100 firm in NYC for about three and a half years, practicing general commercial and white collar litigation, and then lateraled to a top Am Law 100 firm in LA, where he practiced general commercial litigation and a bit of antitrust for a little over three years, until he was laid off. He attended a Top 10 law school where he had done decently well, a top public university for his undergraduate studies and was licensed to practice law in both California and New York (which some firms place a high premium on). Of course, the experience that he gained at the two Am Law 100 firms was high-caliber, sophisticated pre-litigation experience. However, this candidate is a seventh, almost an eighth year, doesn't have a portable book of business and was recently laid off from his latest Big Law firm due to COVID-19-related budget cuts. I knew that we would find him something, but that it was likely to be a smaller firm.

He wanted to search both in DC and in Southern California, as he is from Southern California but is currently and temporarily located in DC with his partner during this quarantine and remote work time. I knew that he was a lot likelier to get traction in Southern California than in DC, because DC is a very competitive market, is a smaller market than California and even Southern California and is saturated with highly-credentialed lawyers. DC also generally has a few smaller firms and a lot of Big Law firms, and I knew that this candidate was likelier to get real traction with smaller firms. Southern California, and especially LA, in contrast, has a lot of smaller, more boutique litigation shops, in addition to a lot of Big Law firms. I had recently placed one of this candidate's old colleagues, who was also laid off from their old firm due to COVID, at a boutique firm in LA, and I thought that it was likely that I could do the same for this candidate.

We ended up applying this candidate to a lot of firms in both DC and Southern California, and all of his interviews ended up coming from Southern California. He interviewed with one top national firm in the OC for a more senior antitrust position, but was unfortunately rejected. He also obtained two interviews at two boutique litigation shops in LA, and ended up receiving offers from both. One of the two has more complex cases and larger clients, is more prestigious and pays quite a bit more than the other boutique, and he ended up accepting this offer. The firm is also allowing him to work remotely from DC until early next fall, which is pretty amazing. A lot of firms are working remotely right now due to COVID-19, but the unspoken expectation is that once the pandemic ends, hopefully in the summer, everyone will return to the office. This firm claims that it will be fine with partial remote work and possibly even fully remote work going forward, even after the pandemic ends. This is just an added bonus for the candidate, in addition to the fact that he will gain a lot of pre-litigation and even trial experience at this elite boutique (they really market themselves as an aggressive trial boutique). The candidate is very excited to start at the firm soon, and I couldn't be more excited for him! I'm so glad that we were able to find him a great long-term law firm home, even despite his seniority and the fact that he was out of work. I know that he will excel at his new elite boutique law firm home!