



## The In-House Position Maze

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Attorneys have traditionally gone in-house by accepting an offer from one of their clients (or a client of their firms). Nevertheless, unless specifically asked by a client to work for his/her company, traditional methods of searching for an in-house position might not produce the desired results. If you were to ask one of your firm's clients if you can work for his/her company, how does that make your current firm look? What if your request gets back to your current law firm?

A few attorneys get in-house positions by responding to ads on job-posting boards or in classified sections of legal newspapers. The problem with job-posting boards and legal classifieds is that most in-house employers posting positions in this way receive well in excess of 1,000 emailed resumes in response to their ads. In-house employers are simply flooded with resumes of top attorneys seeking a better lifestyle, more predictable hours, and no billable hour requirements. Indeed, many attorneys inside law firms have been looking for a position in-house for years, as it is perceived by many to be a haven for attorneys who no longer want to deal with the stress of a firm. For some attorneys who practiced in law firms before going in-house, this has proven to be the case.

Probably the least common way for attorneys to get an in-house position is through a legal recruiting firm. The legal recruiting firm typically conducts an in-house search as follows:

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- First, the recruiter “cold calls” numerous General Counsels or corporate officers to persuade them to allow the recruiter to fill an opening. More often than not, the recruiter demands a meeting and goes to the meeting with brochures and other propaganda about the search firm. The General Counsel will then speak with other search firms to negotiate fees before choosing a search firm. The few national search firms that do in-house searches typically have a dedicated recruiter who spends his/her days soliciting companies for in-house opportunities (and potential placement fees).
- Second, most of the time, the recruiter will demand an exclusive, from the company to perform the in-house search. By an exclusive, the recruiter will seek to prohibit the company from using any outside sources to fill the position for a minimum length of time (usually six months to a year). When granted an exclusive, a recruiter also requires the corporation to forward to him/her all resumes it receives for the attorney position for the length of the exclusive. Because recruiters want to use the name of the company in advertising the company's position, candidates are prevented from contacting the company directly (in which event, the company would not have to pay the recruiter any fees).
- Third, the recruiter will typically demand that the company pay him/her a “retainer.” The retainer is generally set at between 1/3 and 1/2 of the placement firm's expected placement fee. Attorney placement firms typically charge corporations and other employers a fee to introduce you to



the employer. This fee is between 25 and 40% of your annual salary. The “retainer fee” is used by the placement firm to pay for advertising and other incidental expenses associated with finding candidates for the position. For example, if a recruiting firm receives a \$15,000 retainer, it may (1) pay \$5,000 to the recruiter who “brought in” the in-house job (The recruiter who fills the position itself will be compensated individually out of the 25-40% fee, which deducts the retainer.), (2) spend \$5,000 on advertising, or (3) keep \$5,000 to cover the overhead associated with the work it did on the search.

Just like employers, when a placement firm places an ad for an in-house position, it typically receives hundreds, or even thousands, That is why its advertising budget is so high. Out of what is often well in excess of 1,000 inquiries (and sometimes a multiple of that in larger cities), the placement firm will very quickly whittle down the inquiries to less than 10 candidates to introduce to the corporation. A placement will then hopefully be made.

As you can see, from a recruiter’s standpoint, the beauty of doing in-house placements is that they very quickly provide him/her with hundreds of candidates he/she knows are interested in alternative employment. Accordingly, while the recruiter will rarely have suitable in-house positions for these attorneys, there are far more potential law firm opportunities than in-house opportunities, and the recruiter will attempt to interest candidates in law firm positions, even if they do not want to go to other law firms.

We believe that the best method for finding an in-house position is by using Legal Authority. Legal Authority counteracts most of the traditional obstacles to getting an in-house position, which are (1) recruiters, (2) job boards, and (3) the traditional reliance upon a “network.” If you are using these methods to get a position, you may be waiting a very long time indeed.

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Legal Authority assists attorneys in contacting every potential in-house employer they choose in the area of the country they are interested. The benefit of this is that your materials will arrive on the desk of every potential employer you could possibly ever want to work for. Also, most in-house employers do not use recruiters to fill attorney positions. Using Legal Authority can help you contact the employers you are most interested in, regardless of whether they use recruiters or typically advertise their openings on job posting boards. Legal Authority also helps you focus your in-house search in the most appropriate way possible. For example, if you are seeking a position in the General Counsel’s Office of a biotech company (because you have a background in doing biotech patent prosecution), Legal Authority can assist you in contacting all of the companies that do biotech in a given area. Also, we have the most appropriate information. For example, if you are a senior attorney who is currently a General Counsel, it would likely not be most appropriate to contact the General Counsel about replacing him/her. Instead, you would be better served by contacting a high-level executive within the company. This is something that Legal Authority can assist you in doing.

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We believe Legal Authority is the most effective way to obtain an in-house position. Indeed, given the breadth of exposure we give attorneys, and the number of offers many Legal Authority clients receive in-house, we believe Legal Authority is the only way to get an in-house job that actually makes sense. In fact, we are aware of no other company in the world that gets more attorneys jobs in-house than Legal Authority.