



“Another corporate attorney in the Bay Area comes through with Legal Authority”

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Mark*, a 2000 graduate of a top ten law school, had little more than a year of experience as a corporate attorney with a major Silicon Valley law firm. Mark's circumstance was particularly dire because he (1) was a corporate attorney, and (2) had failed the California Bar Exam not once-but twice. Mark's law firm had the same policy as others: If you failed the bar exam more than once you were out.

Mark conducted his job search for a few hours every day, trying numerous methods for getting a position. Mark scanned online job boards, contacted recruiters and asked his law school for alumni contacts. By January of 2002 - more than 7 months after being let go - Mark had not received a single interview. After unsuccessfully trying to get a job through a preeminent San Francisco recruiter, the same recruiting firm recommended that Mark contact Legal Authority.

Despite all of the gloom, there were some positives to Mark's prospects by January of 2002. Fortunately, Mark ultimately did pass the bar on his third attempt. In addition, Mark graduated in the top 50 percent of his law school class. Having seen many of his fellow associates get laid off in 2001 (several at his own firm were even let go while he was studying for the Bar Exam his third time), Mark was not entirely committed to doing corporate work. In fact, Mark had become so disillusioned with corporate practice, that he was not sure he even wanted to practice law at all. Nevertheless, Mark believed he owed it to himself to push forward. With almost \$100,000 in student loans from law school, and a family to support, Mark felt a need to continue working as an attorney.

Mark was initially skeptical about using a service like Legal Authority, according to Legal Authority Employment Advocate Melissa Zelada. Melissa, herself an attorney, had to spend a great deal of time with Mark educating him about Legal Authority and discussing his job search. According to Melissa, "Mark's search was complicated by the fact that he wanted to change practice areas and he was conducting his search in one of the worst areas of the United States from an employment perspective. Mark believed that if a firm did not advertise a position or hire a recruiter to track down a candidate for an opening, they were not worth contacting."

Melissa also knew that Mark's search was not going to be an easy one: "Here was a super candidate who had both found himself in the wrong place at the wrong time and had not passed the bar after two attempts. He was also in the virtual epicenter of the economic downturn. He was a junior corporate associate and had not worked in over six months. I knew that Legal Authority could help Mark despite his situation."

Melissa and Mark spent over two hours on the phone strategizing options. Mark was eager to move out of corporate law and into something he felt would be more stable, like litigation. As a summer associate at both a major New York and San Francisco law firm, Mark had been exposed to litigation



work. In addition, Mark spent one year as a litigation paralegal prior to enrolling in law school, and had enjoyed the litigation work there.

“When I was a second and third year in law school, all anyone was talking about was corporate, corporate, corporate,” Mark told Legal Authority, “Everyone knew that being a corporate associate could be a ticket to a super in-house position and stock options. When I was a corporate associate I gradually came to realize that being a litigator was probably more suited to my personality. To me, corporate attorneys were just too uptight.”

Melissa and Mark believed that the best strategy was to follow his heart and go for a litigation position. In the San Francisco legal market, like virtually every legal market, far more firms do litigation work than corporate work. Finally, the corporate market at the time was in horrible shape. Mark ultimately decided to approach 300 large and medium-sized law firms with litigation departments to secure his litigation position.

Mark and resume specialist Christopher Dacus worked on several versions of his resume and cover letter with Legal Authority. According to Dacus, the largest challenge with Mark’s cover letter was that Mark really needed a job and would basically take any position offered, and he needed to portray strength while not appearing desperate. According to Chris:

“Mark didn’t want to put all his eggs in one basket. Essentially, he was hoping that a corporate position would open up for him if the litigation strategy failed. When I am working with our clients at Legal Authority, I am always cognizant that my goal is to ensure that they get a job.”

Mark’s final cover letter and resume reflected that he had litigation and corporate experience. While the cover letter emphasized Mark’s litigation interest but also mentioned his corporate experience in enough detail that employers would see it.

Mark received his Federal Express package from Legal Authority on a Saturday. On Sunday he signed his cover letters and mailed them on Monday. What happened next surprised Mark. By Wednesday, Mark had received 5 interviews. While 4 of the 5 interviews were with medium sized firms, the fifth interview was with the San Francisco office of a major New York City-based law firm. By Friday, Mark had received 11 interviews, and by the middle of the following week he had received 16 interviews.

Mark called Melissa the day he received his first interviews. Two weeks later, he called Melissa again to tell her he had accepted a litigation position with a mid-sized San Francisco firm - at a salary identical to his former one. And what happened with the San Francisco office of the major New York law firm? Mark was quite clear: “When I got my call back after my screening interview, I stalled and ultimately never went back. I do not think I am ever going to want to work for a big firm again. Who needs that? I expect to be a partner in five years at my present firm. If there is anything I would recommend to attorneys searching for a job it is this: Don’t use Legal Authority as a last resort. I could have been employed more than 6 months ago if I had used Legal Authority in the first place.”

*Names have been changed to maintain privacy, but this is a 100% true success story.