



Conducting an Effective Job Search

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You have put your years in, gained experience at a firm, and are now ready to explore your options and move on. So now what? While there is no exact science to beginning a job search, few people actually allow themselves enough time and preparation to make the best decision. Unfortunately, a good job search takes time, and there is no way around that. Most people (lawyers are certainly no exception) spend the majority of their waking hours at work. Deciding to change jobs requires more thought than figuring out what's for dinner tonight. However, few people actually devise and execute a thorough job hunt.

To begin a job search, many attorneys make the mistake of relying solely on a recruiter or headhunter. It is important to keep in mind that there is a world of job opportunities out there that will go unexplored by limiting the search to this route. Recruiters, if they will work with you, only fill about 3 percent of all available jobs. Also, recruiters typically work with a limited number of law firms, leaving many possibilities untapped. Furthermore, for those experienced attorneys who are looking at smaller to mid-sized firms, the majority of these firms do not even use recruiters. They cannot afford the fee and don't have the time and resources to initiate a full-scale candidate search. In fact, most of these firms use advertising only as a last resort; instead, they rely on letters from attorneys expressing an interest in working with them.

When you are looking for a new position, why limit yourself to the few firms that a recruiter typically works with? Changing jobs is a big decision, and you owe it to yourself to explore all of your options. In an ideal world, you would make the job hunt your second job. We realize that most people do not have the time, energy, and/or capabilities to conduct such a search; and that's where Legal Authority can help.

To explore all of your options, you need to consider firm size, practice areas, and locations. Legal Authority has the ability to do just that. By targeting the right firms with your resume, you will be sure that you are reaching as wide an audience as possible. You are in control of the job-search process; you know where your resume is going and who will be reading it.

Legal Authority can also be useful in helping an experienced attorney who wants to make the transition to an in-house position. Many attorneys flock to in-house opportunities because of the change in atmosphere and lifestyle. Unfortunately, this often leads to a competitive market. Traditional job-posting sites are breeding grounds for job seekers, with literally thousands of resumes out there for one position. Many postings are not even current.



In order to fully explore the market, even an attorney with years of experience is going to need to do a very thorough search. If you are interested in a particular industry, Legal Authority has the ability to target the entire industry. We also can narrow a search by location or size of the company in terms of sales. By using Legal Authority, you are guaranteeing that you are getting your resume in the hands of as many decision makers as possible, in industries where you would like to work.

Targeting law firms or companies is only half of the battle. Experienced attorneys must understand the importance of having a strong cover letter and resume. You may have worked on huge deals, won case after case, or brought in massive business. These accomplishments will go unnoticed if your resume and cover letter are not appropriately written. On average, a prospective employer will review a resume for 20 seconds. The importance of having a professional resume cannot be understated. Your cover letter and resume will give the employer his or her first impression of you. Experienced attorneys tend toward two extremes when finalizing a resume. Some will fear going over one page and parse down their accomplishments to such a degree that the resume will not stand out from the next one in the pile. Others will take the “kitchen sink” approach and list everything that they have done—with footnotes, references, and spreadsheet summaries. The Legal Authority resume team works only on attorney resumes and will be able to create a cover letter and resume package that effectively highlights your accomplishments and gets you noticed.

In sum, many experienced attorneys expect doors to open for them left and right. Some opportunities may indeed present themselves. However, you owe it to yourself to conduct a complete and thorough job search. Legal Authority can help you with the grunt work. By using Legal Authority, you will know that you have a strong introduction to the employer by way of a professional cover letter and resume. Further, a targeted mailing enables you to have all your options on the table. With these tools, you will be able to see a complete picture of what the market has to offer you. To me, that’s a smart job search.