



Getting an In-House Position

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“Uncluttering the Maze Leading to an In-House Position”

There are several methods for finding an in-house legal position. The most common way that attorneys have traditionally gone in house is to accept a position with one of their clients. We would estimate that throughout history this is the most common way attorneys have gotten positions. Nevertheless, unless a client specifically asks you to come and work for them, the problems with getting a position this way can be quite pronounced. For example, if you ask your clients if you can come work for them, how does that make your current firm look? What's more, what if word of your inquiry to the client leaks back to your law firm. You would be surprised how many attorneys this has happened.

Another strategy for getting an in-house position is by responding to ads on job posting boards. The problem with this way of looking for a position is that most in-house employers who post positions on job posting boards receive well in excess of 1,000 responses. In addition to often being confused about what to do with all the responses and frustrated with having to respond to them all, in-house employers are flooded with resumes of top attorneys seeking a better lifestyle, more predictable hours and no billable hours.

Probably the least common way for attorneys to get an in-house position is through a legal recruiting firm. The legal recruiting firm typically operates in the following manner in conducting an in-house search:

First, the recruiter cold calls numerous General Counsels or other corporate staff in an attempt to induce them to give them an opening. More often than not, the recruiter demands a meeting and goes to the meeting with a great deal of propoganda about the search firm. The General Counsel then will often speak with other search firms in an effort to negotiate fees and decide whom they believe will provide the best possible service. As you can imagine, it is a great deal of work for recruiters to get in-house positions; however, as discussed below, the benefits of the recruiter getting an in-house position can often pay dividends far greater than simply filling the in-house position.

Second, most of the time the recruiter will demand both an “exclusive” and a “retainer” 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 a recruiter is granted an “exclusive” they also require the corporation to forward to them all resumes they receive for the attorney position for the length of the exclusive. Because recruiters want to use the name of the



company in advertising the position, this prevents candidates from contacting the company directly (in which event the company would not have to pay the recruiter any fees).

In addition, the recruiter will typically demand that the company pay them a "retainer". The "retainer" is typically set at a dollar amount which is between 1/3 and 1/2 of what the placement firm's expected placement fee will be. Attorney placement firms typically charge corporations and other employers a fee to introduce you to the employer that is typically 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.

When a placement firm places an ad for an in-house position they typically receive numerous, numerous, numerous inquiries. Out of what is often well in excess of 1,000 inquiries, the placement firm will very quickly whittle down the inquiries to less than 10 candidates and introduce these candidates to the corporation. A placement then, hopefully will be made.

From a recruiter's standpoint, much of the beauty of doing in-house placements is that it very quickly provides the recruiting firm with hundreds and hundreds of candidates the recruiting firm knows are interested in alternative employment. Accordingly, while the recruiter will very 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 the candidates in them.

At Legal Authority we believe that the best method for finding an in-house position is by using our service. The beauty of using Legal Authority is that it counteracts most of the traditional obstacles to you getting an in-house position, which are (1) recruiters and (2) job boards. If you are playing games with these two methods for trying to get a position you may be waiting a very long time indeed.

Legal Authority assists attorneys in contacting every potential in-house employer in the area of the country they are interested in. 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. In addition, most in-house employers do not use recruiters to fill attorney positions. Using Legal Authority can help you contact the ones you are most interested in regardless of whether or not they use recruiters or typically advertise their openings on job posting boards.

In addition, Legal Authority can help you focus your search in the most appropriate way possible. For example, if you are seeking a position as a General Counsel, it would likely not be the most appropriate to contact the General Counsel about a potential position. Instead, you would be better served contacting a high level executive within a firm. This is something that Legal Authority can assist you in doing.

Legal Authority is the most effective way for getting an in-house position and when an attorney is switching positions it is often the only way that actually makes sense. Are in-house positions easy to get? We are the first to admit that an in-house position is not easy to get. However, using Legal Authority hundreds of attorneys have successfully gotten in-house positions and we believe that we get far, far more attorneys in-house positions each month than any recruiting firm in the United States.