

# RECRUITMENT

## RESOURCE GUIDE

### WHAT A DIFFERENCE A YEAR MAKES

The landscape of the legal market has changed dramatically in the last year. At about this time in 2010, law firms were just starting to hire associates again—and very conservatively. While they intermittently enlisted the assistance of legal recruiters, many firms ultimately rehired attorneys they had previously laid off, or directly hired from among the staggering number of highly qualified applicants clamoring for a single open position. It was very much a buyer's market; there was little to no room to negotiate offer terms such as salary. In fact, although recruiters' candidates were getting interviews, few associates were ultimately hired at all—whether presented through recruiters or not. Many recruiters stopped recruiting. They were as frustrated by the state of the market as the candidates were.

But what a difference a year makes. Now, many major law firms are hiring several positions at a time—and no longer just in general and employment litigation, two of the few relatively busy areas during the down economy. Individuals and corporations are once again engaging in business transactions, new companies are emerging, and law firms are looking for associates to restaff their down-sized transactional practice groups. The legal market does not yet look as strong as it did in 2007, but many recruiters and hiring partners are optimistic that it will continue to improve.

With law firms' growing need for lateral associates, legal recruiters are able to add value once again. They can streamline the recruitment process, allowing hiring partners to spend less time on recruiting and more time building their practices. Recruiters often prescreen candidates who meet the job description exactly, pursue

“needle in a haystack” candidates for niche practice areas, and identify candidates who were not actively pursuing a job change. From a job-seeking attorney's perspective, recruiters help by keeping abreast of new positions, leveraging information about specific internal needs at prospective firms. Using their insight into firms' previous hiring practices, recruiters can also assist candidates in perfecting their résumés, preparing for interviews, and negotiating offer terms—all while maintaining confidentiality.

Working with legal recruiters has the potential to be very useful, but it is important to find the right recruiter—especially in this rebounding legal market, when some attorneys are receiving multiple cold calls each day. When choosing a recruiter, there are several important questions an attorney should ask: How well does the recruiter know the market in which I am looking? What is the recruiter's reputation in the industry, and was the recruiter referred to me by a trusted friend or colleague who used his or her services? How long has the recruiter been in this industry? Has the recruiter ever practiced law in a law firm or in-house environment (if this matters)? Has the recruiter been responsive to my follow-up questions in previous conversations? Is the recruiter pushy, or in tune with my understanding of my ideal position? Attorneys who take the time to identify the right recruiter for them will gain invaluable help and insight into navigating their options in this dynamic legal market. ■

*Courtesy of attorney Lee L. Kuhn, Ryder Smith Legal Search, LLC*

*Kuhn founded the California-based Ryder Smith Legal Search ([www.rydersmithlegal.com](http://www.rydersmithlegal.com)), which specializes in the permanent placement of exceptional attorneys and attorney groups with client law firms and companies.*



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Established: 1999

We take pride in being voted one of the top two legal recruiting companies in California and were voted the Best Legal Recruiting Company in 2009 & 2010. For over eleven years, we have provided attorneys to a diverse range of clients from Fortune 500 companies to local, national and international law firms. We are proud of what we do and are dedicated to finding our clients the best possible attorneys to fill their needs and locating attorneys jobs that suit their long-term goals, lifestyles and employment preferences.

Our services are strictly confidential, prompt and personal. Our clients are only provided information regarding thoroughly screened candidates that specifically meet their hiring needs. Our candidates are provided with a wealth of information garnered from years of experience and research about potential legal employers and the Bay Area legal marketplace so that they are better able to make informed decisions about their legal careers.

Founded by a preeminent recruiter and advisor in the legal placement field, Stacy Miller Azcarate, we have first hand knowledge of the intricacies and intensity of practicing law. Stacy has placed numerous large groups, assisted firms with mergers, opening branch offices and single attorney placements. She has authored articles that have appeared in California Lawyer Magazine and the Daily Journal. She has been quoted in the Wall Street Journal, The Recorder, The National Law Journal, The American Lawyer, The Wall Street Journal Blog, AboveThelaw.com and GlassHammer.com. She frequently lectures and gives presentations on legal recruiting, professional development and the business of the legal profession.

Stacy is an active member of the California Bar, the American Bar Association, and serves the Governor's Board of the USF School of Law and the USF Women Lawyer's Council. She is the current President of the Lawyer's Club of San Francisco. She is also active in the Women's IP Lawyers Association, ACC, the San Francisco Bar Association and the Queen's Bench.

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- Anne Nicolas practiced law at O'Melveny & Myers before founding Advocate Legal Search in 1988.
- Mary Lee Augustine served on the Board of Directors of NALSC for 10 years and practiced in law firms and in-house before joining Advocate Legal Search as a partner in 1992.



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### Over 20 years of legal recruiting experience.

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Levenson Schweitzer, Inc. is a member of NALSC. Barbara Levenson is a graduate of Stanford University and Tulane Law School.

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With 21 years of experience, the founders of this award-winning legal search firm have achieved significant results for clients and candidates. McClure & Feuer has represented a dynamic array of law firms and companies located throughout the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles. With extensive experience recruiting groups of attorneys, individual partners and associates from all major practice areas, the firm has helped launch new offices in Northern California and has been instrumental in guiding and securing law firm mergers.

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Ryder Smith Legal Search is a boutique California-based attorney recruitment agency, with recruiters in San Francisco and Los Angeles, specializing in the permanent placement of exceptional attorneys and attorney groups with client law firms and companies.

Ryder Smith focuses on quickly matching clients with qualified attorney candidates, and on making the right placement.




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