



Inside Out

Finding the right candidates

What experience do you have with recruiting talent and what are some of your most important lessons learned?

Martini: I served as the Chicago office's hiring partner for five years and very recently took on the role of national hiring partner of associate recruiting. I have learned a lot in these roles. First, you need to ask the right questions to determine whether a candidate will be a good fit. Second, if you find that you are lukewarm about a candidate, you probably should not make them an offer.

Be sure to analyze candidates not only based on their resume, but also on how they handle their interview with your company. They should perform well under pressure. Also, follow your intuition about candidates — if something just does not add up, then ask them about it. If you still do not get a good answer, it probably means they are not a good fit.

Susler: The majority of legal recruiting I have done is as a hiring committee member for the Association of Corporate Counsel's Chicago diversity law student summer internship program, recruiting first-year law students for our in-house summer internship program.

When interviewing 1L students, remember that for the vast majority this may be among the first professional job interviews they have ever had, so adjust your expectations. It is also important for the interviewer to prepare a set of standard questions to ask all candidates in addition to questions specifically tailored to each candidate. This is an important tool in the hiring process.

What advice do you have for attorneys who are interviewing for a job?

Martini: It is always important to thoroughly prepare for your interview. This includes reading publicly available information,

talking with people at the organization and asking in advance for the names of the people with whom you will be interviewing.

All of this preparation will enable you to think carefully about the questions you would like to have answered, to consider whether this organization is a good fit for you and what your short- and long-term potential is in the position. It will also demonstrate a high level of interest, which may help set you apart.

And if you find during the course of your interview that the position will not be a good fit for whatever reason, you should be honest with yourself and your potential employer. Finally, be positive and realistic about your prospects for employment. This includes developing a search strategy that will maximize your prospects for finding a great job.

Susler: My No. 1 piece of advice is to be yourself during interviews. Do not try to be who you think the interviewer is looking for, as they will see right through it. Second — this is important enough to repeat — do your research. Know who you are interviewing with. Third, prepare good questions to ask the interviewer. This is an opportunity to demonstrate you have put thought and effort into this process and shows you are a serious candidate. For me, the tipping point between otherwise equally qualified candidates is often the questions they ask. Last, but definitely not least, chase what you are genuinely interested in, don't chase the dollars.

What advice do you have for employers who are interviewing candidates?

Martini: First, you need to have the right people doing the interviewing. As the faces of the organization, they should do a great job of representing you. They must also be discerning and exercise good judgment in who they recommend hiring.

There should be consensus about what a successful hire looks like. Interviewers should stick to the script and not fall victim to what I call "freestyle interviewing," which is more likely to lead to hiring someone just because you have had a nice conversation with them.

Finally, it is always helpful to look back at the past few years of hires and focus on who has been successful and why. Are there certain qualities and characteristics that your best hires have had? By doing this exercise, you can develop a predictive index that will help guide your hiring process.

Susler: Know what you are looking for. Know what the job is, what the necessary skill set is and who will work with the person hired. Next, ask questions designed to get to know the candidates as human beings and to get a sense of their emotional intelligence. Third, be nice and be professional. You are helping to create your reputation and that of your firm or organization. Leave the candidate impressed so they speak well of you and your firm — even if they are not hired. ■

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