



HOW TO ENSURE YOU ATTRACT & RECRUIT PROFESSIONAL SENIOR LEGAL HIRES



WHERE LAW FIRMS COME
TO RECRUIT LEGAL TALENT

The last couple of years has had a transformational impact in recruitment.

Issues with company lockdowns and reduced budgets led to a massive exodus for some law firms and many legal professionals started rethinking their career plans, and priorities evolved.

A state of global uncertainty prompted a significant shift in the attitude towards the workplace, and new trends began to emerge among employees from every industry.

Today's legal associates are more discerning about where and who they work with, with culture and management being at the top of the list as reasons to exit. The most talented people in your team are no longer willing to settle for anything less than the best.

Even though the storms in the recruitment market are beginning to settle, the influence of the [Great Resignation](#) remains strong. We're seeing ongoing demand for companies to rethink their hiring and recruitment strategy for a new age of work.

In this guide, we'll be looking at the steps law firms will need to take to ensure they can continue to attract and hire legal leaders in a disruptive and unpredictable landscape.

Let's dive in.

Start Identifying Your Ideal Senior Hires

The first step in successful recruitment is understanding exactly what you need. Countless law firms make the mistake of talking to recruiters without a clear person specification.

It's crucial to be as detailed and specific as possible when identifying your future leaders. These future stars have the power to transform and augment your law firm in a range of different ways. Not only will they make a significant difference to the success of the firm, but they'll also be responsible for leading, motivating, and guiding the rest of your team.

The Characteristics of Great Legal Leaders

Failing to recruit the right leader from day one could mean you risk having to replace not just your senior staff member but all the employees they drive away to. Choose the right leaders for your legal team, and you could benefit from higher levels of motivation, reduced turnover, and better business outcomes.

While the exact characteristics you need to look for in your leader will depend on the role you're trying to fill, the following characteristics are crucial for all effective managers, supervisors, and motivational staff members:

Vision and Adaptability

The first thing any business leader needs to thrive is a clear vision for your team and your law firm. They should understand exactly what goals your organisation is trying to achieve and what kind of path they need to follow to see results. However, in [today's transformative landscape](#), it's also important for leaders to be able to pivot and adapt their strategies quickly to achieve a goal.

A great leader will always keep your company's values and mission in mind while remaining open to new ideas and adaptable in times of transformation.

A good way to test for vision and adaptability is to ask your leader how they believe they'll be able to help your law firm achieve specific goals.

Clear Communicators

Communication skills are admittedly crucial to every position in a business. However, they can be particularly important for leaders. At all levels, leaders must communicate messages clearly, in a language their audience can understand.

Your senior people may need to be able to connect with shareholders regularly and get their buy-in for specific business strategies.

They'll also need to regularly communicate with employees and keep team members engaged and informed wherever they are. Increasingly, maintaining strong communication is beginning to evolve through various tools, from video conferencing apps to collaboration software.

Impactful Influencers

Communicating with the right people in a team effectively is one thing, but leaders also need to be able to convince the people they connect with to do specific things. A good leader will be inspiring, persuasive, and data-driven.

They'll know how to gather the right information before a presentation to shareholders to make their argument as compelling as possible. A good leader will also know how to assess the most important motivating factors driving your team and use them to encourage action.

Influential leaders can rally an entire team behind a cause and keep your employees focused, even during confusion and disruption. A good way to test the influence of your potential team leaders is to ask them to describe a time when they inspired, motivated, or persuaded a team to do something which led to positive outcomes.

Decision-Making Based on Data

Most of us make daily decisions, from which tasks to do when we sit down at our desk to when to take a lunch break in a flexible office. However, leaders make choices more often than most, and their decisions greatly impact the wider law firm.

When you are looking for leaders for your team, it's important to look for people who feel comfortable making decisions quickly and accurately with access to the right information.

Look for people with an analytical approach to making complex choices. The best leaders should be able to research and build a case for their decision based on the information they find. Asking applicants to discuss difficult decisions they made in their past roles and how they arrived at their choices can be useful here.



Problem Solving Skills

No matter how streamlined and efficient your law firm is most of the time, there will always be problems to overcome.

Some simple issues, like re-arranging a team's schedule when someone calls in sick. Others are far more complex, like deciding how to organise your team when a Global pandemic causes you to shut down the office.

Great leaders should be able to face problems head-on and look for creative solutions to overcome them. While leaders might not have answers to every issue on their own, they'll feel confident seeking guidance, doing their research, and presenting optional routes to consider.

Make Your Business More Attractive to Senior Candidates

Once you've decided on the key characteristics of your leaders, the next step is making your business more attractive to the senior figures you want to reach.

Recent studies show that the priorities and expectations of leaders are changing due to the pandemic. In fact, according to the [LinkedIn Work trends](#) report, employees are completely rethinking their needs and relationships with employers.

To appeal to the most attractive leaders in your sector, you'll need to build an employer brand that emphasises the crucial things your candidates want.



EMPLOYER BRANDING

Building an Employer Brand

Most experts agree that great remuneration and benefits packages aren't enough to impress candidates alone. Law firms need to fine-tune, or completely overhaul their company culture, to meet the rising demand for [empathy, inclusion, and equity](#).

Working on your employer brand means building an image (both online and offline) that makes you more attractive to active and passive candidates.

[72% of recruitment leaders](#) agree that an effective employer brand directly impacts hiring success. Look at companies like Apple and Netflix; they all have attractive brands that appeal to customers and make candidates want to join their teams too.

For a successful employer brand, you'll need:

- **An online presence:** When we talk to candidates about a role with your law firm, more candidates than ever will check you out online before the conversation moves on. Your law firm should have a strong, attractive website where you can share information about your values, highlight employee growth opportunities, and advertise new roles. It's also good to be active on social media, where you can interact with candidates through channels like LinkedIn.
 - **Brand guidelines:** Candidates should have a consistent experience of your brand wherever they interact with it. A set of brand guidelines will show your recruiters, and hiring managers, exactly which values they should highlight when interacting with recruits. Use your brand guidelines to showcase your law firm's mission and provide an insight into how your business makes the world a better place.
 - **A strong voice:** Your voice comprises all the reviews left by your employees (past and present), the content your leaders share on social media, the job descriptions you post, and the speeches you give at industry events. It should help your candidates to understand what your business stands for. Ensure your voice is clear, and your language speaks to your target candidates.
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Know What Senior Legal Professionals Are Looking For

You need to offer a lot more than the right salary to stand out in today's skills-short market. Employee priorities are changing and appealing to the right candidates means knowing what they want.

Some of the most significant factors to accept job offers include:

- **Flexibility:** One-size-fits-all job opportunities are becoming less attractive in today's digital world. Employees want flexibility in how, when, and where they work. Where possible, offering your leaders the freedom to work remotely at times or even reduce their hours to a four-day work week can make your jobs instantly more attractive. Flex work can significantly reduce employee stress and make your team members 2.6 times happier in their role, according to LinkedIn.
- **Well-being:** A focus on better well-being in the workplace is growing significantly. Employees want companies who treat them like human beings, which means understanding their limitations and health requirements. Even leaders need care, compassion, and trust. Show your willingness to embrace better well-being by posting stories about your mental health policy on your website or asking team members to write stories about how they feel cared for at work. Well-being strategies can make employees up to 3.2 times happier in the workplace and 3.7 times more likely to recommend working for a brand.
- **Growth:** A desire for growth and purpose has always been strong among leaders. More than ever, your team members want to see a secure future with your brand. With this in mind, it's worth showing your team members how much you're willing to invest in them. Providing access to training opportunities for leadership professionals and even sending them to events for networking experiences can be a great way to show your commitment to growth.

If you're not sure exactly which factors matter most to your leaders, consider asking existing supervisors and managers what they would appreciate most in their jobs.

Upgrade Your Recruitment Strategy

The evolution of the workplace and hiring world in the last couple of years has meant many old-fashioned recruitment plans are quickly growing outdated. Posting a job ad on a single forum and hoping for the best is a thing of the past.

Today's Legal organisations need to invest in a focused, intelligent, digitally charged recruitment strategy to generate the best results. A key driver today is to look for a diverse team.

Prioritise Diversity

Standing out in a competitive hiring landscape means ensuring you have a strong plan for diversity, equity, and inclusion. This strategy should begin with the hiring process. Working with a specialist [legal recruiter](#) will allow you to attract candidates from a wider range of environments.

A specialist legal recruitment company can help you utilise niche job boards, posting your jobs on social media, and even connect with new graduates from the educational landscape. It's also important to ensure you do not let bias get in the way of who you pick to move to the next stage in the interview process. Your recruiter can help by sorting through your applicants on your behalf.

Create a Long-Term Legal Talent Pipeline

Reactive recruitment strategies are rarely the best choice in today's fast-paced market. Law firms need to constantly access a stream of people with leadership skills to fill the gaps in their team quickly.

Think about the leaders in your firm you would be lost without and start building a talent pipeline [with Clayton Legal](#) to keep more people with the same talents waiting in the wings. It's also worth expanding your pipeline to include people with skills you don't need now but might want to embrace in the future.

Though we are in a skill-short market, recruitment partners like ourselves already have a broad network of candidates connections we are cultivating daily. Because of this, we can help you fill talent gaps faster and guide every step.

Enhance the Interview Process

Once you've successfully upgraded your recruitment and hiring strategy, the next stage is getting the interview right. Interviews are one of the most important stages in the recruitment journey, as they can make or break whether your candidate decides to join your team. Skilled professionals are 39% less likely to take a role if the interview experience is poor.

Start by speaking to your leadership team about the questions you should ask and the processes you should use during the interview.

Competency-based interviews are often an excellent way to ensure your leaders have the skills you've identified as crucial to your role. These involve asking questions like:

- Tell us about a time when you had to lead a team through a difficult task. How did you handle the challenges, and were you successful?
- Give us an example of a situation where you faced an unexpected setback. How did you deal with the problem?
- Tell me about a time when you had to inspire and motivate your team. What did you do to engage your people, and what were the results?

Making Interviews Future-Ready

Aside from asking the right questions, you can also improve your chances of success by creating a strategy for how you will make effective hiring decisions. Whether you're using ATS equipment or not, you need to make interviewing a more data-driven process.

Create a list of potential "scores" for the answers your employees can give, so you can assign numbers to their responses and make it easier to define which candidates meet your needs later on. It's also worth using the same strategic questions in your interview with every candidate to effectively compare leaders.

As well as standardising and scoring interview questions, it's also worth thinking about how you can make your interviews more efficient and future-proof. For instance:

- Use virtual interviews: Video interviews, online tests, and phone conversations make it easier to assess a candidate at a distance for a remote or hybrid role.
 - Train your interviewing teams: Provide training for hiring managers and other experts to help them make better decisions.
 - Collect feedback: Curate feedback from your candidates to find out what they liked and disliked about the interview process.
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Set Your Legal Leaders up For Success

The challenges of finding and recruiting the best legal talent today doesn't stop when someone accepts your job offer. You also need to consider how you will welcome your employees into the team and set them up for success in their new roles.

When employee turnover is higher than ever, and there are [endless new jobs](#) to switch to if they're not happy with your team, make sure you master the onboarding process.

Your recruitment experts should be able to advise on what the onboarding process should include, but some great ways to get started include:

- **Using onboarding techniques:** Preboarding involves immediately introducing your new leader to their colleagues, welcoming the team, and giving them an overview of what to expect when they accept your job offer. This process can help make your new staff feel more accepted immediately.
- **Customising the onboarding process:** Customising the onboarding process to the exact needs of each leader is important. Think about exactly which information your leader will need to get up and running, and try to avoid overwhelming them with details not specific to their job. A more streamlined onboarding process personalised to your staff member will help them feel more prepared to thrive in their role.
- **Prioritise inclusion:** Around [64% of employees](#) say diversity and inclusion are crucial considerations when deciding which jobs they want. With this in mind, try to make your employee feel as included as possible. Welcome them into team meetings immediately, and look for opportunities to build bonds between new and existing staff members. Even if your team members are working remotely, they should feel like one of the family.
- **Plan for the future:** Sit down with your new senior hire early into the onboarding process, and ask them about their goals. Talk about the skills your team members want to improve and look for ways you can help them reach their targets. Regular meetings where you can discuss their progress will help them see a future in your firm and show you're invested in their growth.

Remember, regularly collecting feedback from your senior hire on what they feel you can do to improve their work-life can also be a great way to boost retention.

Find Your New Senior Hires

The recruitment landscape has been moving through a complex period of transformation for the last couple of years. Senior hires are harder to find than ever in a marketplace where turnover is high, and employee expectations are changing.

If you want to ensure you're attracting, hiring, and retaining the right people to help your law firm grow, you'll need to implement the right strategy. The steps above will give you several crucial tools to boost your brand appearance, seek out the right employees, and convince them to join your team.

Of course, the best way to upgrade the hiring process and improve your chances of getting the right hires is with support from a [specialist recruiter](#). A legal recruiter can keep you one step ahead of the competition in the search for talent and help you to build a pipeline, so you never run out of amazing candidates to add to your team.

What's more, with a legal recruiter, you can also get guidance on everything from making your interviews more effective to write the best job descriptions.

If you need help getting the best leaders for your team in the new recruitment age, reach out today to Clayton Legal to start your recruitment revolution.

Do you have a vacancy to fill?

[CLICK HERE](#) and we will be in touch with you to go through your requirements.

CLAYTON LEGAL

We understand that while talent is your greatest asset -it can also be your scarcest resource -which is why you need a recruitment partner with the market expertise, insight and network to deliver the right people at the right time.

Clayton Legal has been partnering with law firms across the country since 1999 and during that time has built up an enviable reputation for trust and reliability.

We provide an experienced and credible voice in the market by being able to demonstrate a detailed knowledge of the legal sector's talent agenda. Talent is all about people and just like you, our consultants are true experts in theirfield with a real drive for excellence which informs everything they do.

From Partners and Associates through to Solicitors, junior fee earning positions and support staff, Clayton Legal is the only name you'll ever need -and what's more -we are nice people to do business with!

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