

NALSC[®] NEWS

PRIOR EVENT TESTIMONIALS

Once again you outdid yourself. It was a fantastic conference. I can't believe that after almost 30 years in this business I still have things to learn.

Fantastic programming, meaningful connections, and the chance to give back—NALSC 2025 had it all!

As always, there was excellent content on the latest trends and best practices in legal recruitment, along with engagement with wonderful, collaborative colleagues. So rewarding to reconnect with old friends and make new ones.

The experience was truly outstanding—I had the opportunity to make valuable new connections and reconnect with familiar faces. Thank you for all the hard work and dedication that went into making it such a success. It was clear how much effort and attention to detail went into the planning, and it truly paid off!

I found the conference to be very informative and I loved the ability to meet with 5-6 targeted search firms in such a short time – in person! My MC was impressed by how much ground I was able to cover in a few days – lots of great opportunities and follow-up meetings – thanks so much for all you do.

A huge thank you for organizing a fantastic event and to everyone who attended for making this conference so productive, memorable, and fun! I'm looking forward to all the new collaborations from this wonderful week.

Incredibly well-run conference. Always leave with more knowledge and several new friendships.

The legal industry is a very large pie— and we all win by supporting one another and lifting each other up professionally, even when we work within the same geographic market. A productive exchange of ideas, questions and guidance.

Beyond the education, it was a fantastic opportunity to network with fellow legal recruiters and build meaningful connections within the industry.

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STAY TUNED: NALSC 2026 Annual Conference 2/26-2/28 in New Orleans. Details soon!

Welcome, once again! I am pleased to inform you that NALSC continues to grow and thrive under the leadership of our hardworking Board and headquarters.

Our committees have been very busy pursuing new initiatives, setting strong goals for the future of the organization, and delivering informative presentations and content—both in-person and online—for the membership. You'll read about many of these activities in this issue.

Our membership and sponsorship rosters are continuing to grow at an unprecedented pace (a 15% percent increase over the past year), with total membership at an all-time high of 265 search firms and 74 supporting law firms. Nearly 50 new member legal search firms joined the NALSC ranks over the past six months, with even more coming aboard almost every day. We at NALSC also appreciate our growing number of corporate sponsors, who provide the legal search community with such valuable goods and services. See our Membership Report for the details.

We continue to attract sell-out capacity crowds at our Conferences and Symposia along with robust participation in our online programs such as Recruiter Roundtables, Office Hours, and NALSC Presents. Additionally, we are expanding our outreach with our Recruiter Stories podcasts, social media presence, and brand awareness campaign all of which you can read more about in this issue. The podcasts can be accessed here: <https://www.nalsc.org/podcasts/>.

The 2025 Annual Conference at the Hotel AKA Brickell in Miami on February 27-March 1 attracted record attendance. As with our last several events, it was sold out with a waiting list of others wishing to attend. One attendee summed it up this way: "Fantastic programming, meaningful connections, and the chance to give back—NALSC 2025 had it all!" We extend a huge thank you to Akerman LLP for hosting our closing gala reception and to all of NALSC's sponsors for supporting this wonderful Conference!

We have another exciting event coming up in just a few weeks. Registration is strong for the 2025 NALSC Fall Symposium in Denver with a kickoff reception generously hosted by Polsinelli in their offices on Thursday evening, September 25, from 6-8pm, followed on Friday, September 26, with a full day of practical and insightful programming at the Denver Westin Downtown. Symposium sessions run from 9am to 5:30pm, with an afternoon champagne toast and capped off by a wine & cheese reception from 5:30-6:30pm.

Symposium sessions are tailored to reflect member feedback and suggestions from past events and are designed to maximize audience interaction and provide practical takeaways. Here's what you can expect at the Symposium:

- **What's Happening? Legal Industry and Hiring Trends**
- **Building a Magnetic Personal Brand to Elevate Legal Recruiting Success**
- **The Anatomy and Lifecycle of the Deal**
- **The Job is Perfect! How do I Get Candidates to Respond?**
- **Group Interactive Discussion: Navigating Sticky Situations**
- **Understanding the Business: A Nuanced Approach to Recruiting Financial Terminology**
- **Best Practices for Interviewing and Acquiring Lateral Talent**
- Our ever-popular **Roundtables**, including: What Goes into an In-house Lawyer's Compensation Package?; Partnership Agreements and Their

President's Message

by Melissa Peters, Esq.



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Role in Lateral Recruiting; To Scale or Not to Scale Your Recruiting Business, Reprise; Recruiting Nuts & Bolts; Proper Due Diligence in Lateral Law Firm Partner Movement; Pick Your Headhunter's Brain, Reprise; Going Up Against the Big Guys; Law Firm Integration; Working with Bots; and Opening the Black Box: A Day in the Life of a Law Firm Recruiter

We're especially excited about our keynote presentation, "Thriving through the Chaos: Science-Based Tools to Emotionally and Cognitively Thrive and Maximize Your Productivity," presented by former Skadden lawyer Jarrett Green. Since leaving law practice, Jarrett earned a master's degree in psychology, co-founded USC's Gould School of Law's Mindfulness, Stress Management & Peak Performance Program, and consults and leads programs for nearly half of the AmLaw 100 as well as for many Fortune 500 companies. Tailored to legal recruiters and backed by scientific evidence, Jarrett will show us how to experience less stress and more greatness—more happiness, heightened focus, improved productivity, optimized cognition, and enhanced overall success in our careers and lives.

As always, the Symposium program incorporates plenty of networking time to visit sponsors via exhibit booths, reconnect with old friends, meet new members, and interact with clients. As one of last year's Symposium attendees said: "Hanging out with colleagues from across the country was one of the best parts of attending."

We greatly appreciate our reception host, Polsinelli, and thank all our sponsors for making this amazing event possible. See the agenda and registration information on our website <https://www.nalsc.org/2025-nalsc-fall-symposium/>, and make sure to grab your space soon if you haven't already!

Speaking of events, our second Regional Meetup, held on June 26th at Goulston & Storrs' beautiful Boston offices, was another great success. The speaker, Labor & Employment partner Elizabeth Levine, and our own Advisory Committee member Karen Kupetz led a lively Q&A session on the latest exec-

utive orders and their impact on legal recruiting. Attendees loved the more intimate feel of the event, enjoying the opportunity to grab a drink and snacks, and mix and mingle with fellow NALSC members. We're hoping to have similar Regional Meetups around the country in the future. Law firm supporting members, please let us know at info@nalsc.org if you would like to host an event in one of your offices.

NALSC also is continuing to build our relationship with NALP, the National Association of Law Placement. As in past years, NALSC sent a contingent of our Board members to staff a resource table, interact with the 1200+ law firm and law school attendees, and further spread the message of NALSC and our Code of Ethics. Several Board members and long-time NALSC members also spoke on panels, further demonstrating our value to and deep knowledge of the legal industry.

I want to extend my thanks to our headquarters staff, helmed by our amaz-

ing Executive Director, Stephanie Ankus, and ably assisted by consultants Alice Perez and Valerie Fontaine, who keep everything operating smoothly.

Kudos, also, to the NALSC Newsletter Committee, chaired by Jennifer Gillman, assisted by former Newsletter editor Valerie Fontaine, along with the contributions of committee members Jordan Abshire, Kevin Bacon, and Natalie Thorsen Harris, for another excellent and informative issue. Past issues of the semi-annual NALSC Newsletter can be accessed through the NALSC website at <https://www.nalsc.org/newsletters/>.

I hope to see you at the Fall Symposium, kicking off on September 25th.

Best regards to all, *Melissa Peters*, President of NALSC®

Governing Documents Committee News

by Ethel Hong Badawi, Esq.

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Like changing air filters or batteries on smoke detectors, the work of the Governing Documents Committee is not glamorous, but it is necessary. The Committee is tasked with organizational governance—reviewing and updating NALSC governance policies and procedures. Given the Committee's charge, it operates primarily behind the scenes to ensure that by-laws are updated and policies meet the needs of the organization.

Over the past year, the Committee recommended amendments to address the eligibility requirements for Board of Director candidates and the nominations process for the Executive Committee. Each of these recommendations were voted upon and approved by the Board of Directors. We are excited to share these updates with the full membership and believe that these changes will allow NALSC to broaden our leadership opportunities and meet the needs of our growing and thriving organization.

Many thanks to Committee members, Esther Alpert, Kevin Bacon, Dan Binstock, and Melissa Peters who dedicated hours to these updates—their expertise and thoughtfulness were integral.

Eligibility to Run for the Board of Directors

The amendments to the eligibility criteria for candidates who seek to run for a Director position on the Board were expanded to accommodate for the evolving and expanding membership of NALSC. We hope that these changes will encourage more members to run for Board positions in the upcoming elections!

The full criteria are set forth in Article VI of the Bylaws and a summary of the key criteria and changes are below.

Article VI, Section 1 - To be eligible to serve on the Board of Directors, a candidate:

- must be a legal search consultant at any office of a NALSC Member company (*This change removes the previous requirement that candidates must be company owners*);
- must have at least three years of legal search experience placing attorneys in permanent positions (*The previous language required three years of experience with a NALSC Member company. This change expands the experience to include work at a non-NALSC member firm, but such experience must be in full-time, agency-side legal recruiting*); and
- must have attended three NALSC events in the last three years, two of which must be either the annual conference or symposium (*This is an additional requirement to ensure that Director candidates are active participants of NALSC*).

In addition, only one individual from any Member company is eligible to serve at a time, but multiple individuals from any Member company may be on the ballot (The highest number of votes from a Member company will win. Previously, individuals from the same Member company could not run simultaneously).

To ensure that the eligibility criteria are met, the Board of Directors also approved an amendment to the Bylaws assigning the Nominations Committee the responsibility of verifying candidate eligibility.

Finally, for individuals who have served on the Board previously and have reached their term limit of two consecutive three-year terms, a one-year waiting period was the standing practice before a former Board member could run again, and this practice was formalized in the Bylaws.

Nominations for Executive Committee

The Executive Committee of the Board consists of the President, Treasurer, Secretary, VP Membership, and VP Long Range Planning. Historically, the President selected the members of the Executive Committee which was then put to a Board vote for approval. In an effort to create opportunities for individuals to self-nominate and volunteer for Executive Committee positions, the Board voted to approve the following nomination timeline and procedure for the Executive Committee positions:

- 30-60 days before the Fall Board Meeting: Nominations Committee will announce/confirm the open Executive Committee positions (these positions are only open to members of the Board of Directors).
- Fall Board Meeting: Nominations for the Executive Committee positions open. Interested Board members may self-nominate or nominate other Board members for the Executive Committee positions to the Nominations Committee.
- October to late January: Nominations Committee accepts nominations, notifies candidates, and confirms the acceptance of nominations.
- Immediately after the general board elections: Nominations Committee sends the slate of Executive Committee candidates to the Board for consideration.
- Before the Annual meeting: Board votes on Executive Committee positions.
- Elected Officers begin term immediately following the Annual meeting.

These changes relate primarily to Board governance and apply only to Executive Committee positions. For all other Committee Chair positions, the President will identify a slate for Board vote following the Annual meeting.

Other minor amendments to the Bylaws

- **Article VI, Section 4** - Added language addressing Board members who are absent for three consecutive meetings.
- **Article VI, Section 14** – Set the number of Emeritus Directors to maximum of three at any time. Terms are for one year with a two consecutive term maximum.

We believe these changes, especially those that expand the eligibility to serve on the Board of Directors, allow more members to take on a leadership role with NALSC. Curious to learn more? The full text of the Bylaws can be found [here](#).

“These changes will allow NALSC to broaden our leadership opportunities and meet the needs of our growing and thriving organization.”

Upcoming Elections

There will be elections for Board seats early next year. Keeping in mind the new eligibility requirements outlined above, please contact any member of the Nominations Committee if you are interested in learning more about running. The Nominations Committee, chaired by Mary Clare Garber, includes Esther Alpert, Jennifer Gillman, Connie Rinaldi, and Mitch Satalof.

Are you interested in throwing your hat in the ring?

Looking forward to connecting with many of you at the Fall Symposium in Denver!

Social Media/Website Committee Update

by Stuart TenHoor, Esq.

The Social Media/Website Committee met a couple of times so far this year and has several exciting projects underway. The first is a complete modernization of the NALSC website. The Committee developed a list of recommendations which was forwarded to our web consultant, who now is in the process of implementing them. If all goes well, we will have an updated website by later this Fall.

Our (almost monthly) podcast series, *Recruiter Stories*, continues to air interviews on topics of interest to legal recruiters, hosted by our charming VP of Long Range Planning, Jordan Abshire. Jordan continues to do a superlative job recruiting a wide array of speakers, including NALSC members and other industry experts as well as special guest speakers who are featured at our online and live events. We have guests booked through (at least) November

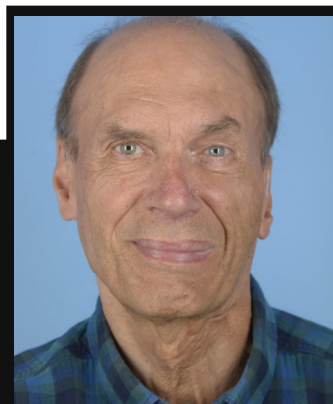
2025. Let us know if you have any suggestions for speakers or topics you would like to hear on *Recruiter Stories*. For links to all the episodes, see <https://www.nalsc.org/podcasts/>. You don't want to miss one!

As always, we invite and encourage you to interact with NALSC's and our Executive Director Stephanie Ankus' every weekday posts on LinkedIn. Please like, comment on, and repost them. Remember that taking those quick and easy steps increases your own online visibility as well as that of our organization.

Many thanks to our hardworking Social Media/Website Committee members: Jordan Abshire, Kevin Bacon, and Natalie Thorsen Harris.

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In the fast-paced world of law, where performance and productivity often take center stage, mental health often is overlooked. Recognizing mental health issues early is crucial for personal well-being and to foster a supportive culture where colleagues and candidates feel safe, respected, and heard. As legal recruiters, we're on the front lines of assisting candidates and clients. I strongly believe in the power of mental health awareness and education. I incorporate mental health education, when appropriate, into my recruiting practice and have spoken to both clients and candidates about this important topic with positive results.

For many, the early warning signs of mental health concerns include persistent feelings of sadness, irritability, or emptiness. Difficulty concentrating, changes in sleep or appetite, and a loss of interest in activities that once brought joy also are common. Awareness of these signs is our responsibility, and I believe we need to be vigilant and observant of those in our orbit.

Often, people try to push through, or suppress, these negative feelings, attributing them to stress or exhaustion as "just part of the job." In these moments, self-awareness is key. Taking time to acknowledge and validate our own emotional state, or seeing them in others, can be the first step towards feeling better.

As we know, law is a contact sport that can take its toll in a variety of ways. Billable hours, demanding clients, pressure to generate business, and competing deadlines all are part of our candidates' and clients' daily lives. As recruiters, we're invested in helping to manage and navigate the interview process within this shifting and tumultuous framework.

When it comes to colleagues, candidates, friends, or family, watch and listen for changes in demeanor, personal appearance, timeliness, and interactions that vary from their baseline behavior. Sudden shifts in communication style, mood swings, or an unusual level of anxiety during interviews or meetings also may indicate underlying issues.

While it's essential to respect boundaries and privacy, showing concern in a compassionate and nonjudgmental way can make a significant difference for someone who is struggling. When I talk about mental health in the legal profession, I tell people who want to help to "meet the person where they are and not where you think they should be." We all have different fears, phobias, and stressors, so we need to respect their perspective rather than imposing our own. Being a good listener means not rushing to "fix someone" or "solve their problems." As laypeople, we don't diagnose, treat, or cure, but we can provide compassionate support and credible resources that may be of assistance.

Understanding the basics of common mental health conditions can help demystify what many people experience. Professionals tell us that anxiety goes beyond occasional nervousness. It often involves persistent worry, racing thoughts, restlessness, muscle tension, or difficulty sleeping. It can be triggered by specific events or exist as a constant background hum that interferes with daily life.

Depression, on the other hand, is marked by deep and lasting sadness, hopelessness, fatigue, and a lack of motivation. People with depression may feel numb, disengaged, or overwhelmed by tasks they once managed easily.

"Showing concern in a compassionate and nonjudgmental way can make a significant difference for someone who is struggling."

Recognizing Mental Health Challenges in Ourselves and Others

by Joseph E. Ankus, Esq.

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These conditions aren't signs of personal failure but are medical issues that should best be treated by a professional. Telling a depressed person to "snap out of it" or an anxious person to "relax" is counterproductive. I promise that if they could, they would, since no one likes to struggle with either or both of these challenges.

Too often, people cope by turning to substances like alcohol, cannabis, or drugs to dull emotional pain or find temporary relief. This type of self-medication may feel effective in the short term, but almost always leads to greater mental health struggles and possible dependency.

Recognizing substance use as a negative coping strategy is a critical step toward recovery and resilience. That said, don't be surprised if the person struggling dismisses your concerns with an "I'm fine," "I don't need any help," or "leave me alone." Hearing these phrases is distressing when you want to help, but it's difficult, if not impossible, to force someone to speak with you. In these instances, don't be afraid to reach out for personal support. Mental health challenges affect more than the person struggling and bleed over into a variety of interpersonal relationships.

If a person is receptive to your overtures, you can gently suggest that instead of reaching for numbing substances, they might consider trying positive coping strategies that support long-term well-being. Positive coping doesn't eliminate the stress or sadness, but it helps manage them in healthier ways.

These strategies include mindfulness practices like deep breathing, meditation, and yoga; engaging in physical activity, which boosts mood and reduces anxiety; connecting with friends or support groups; seeking therapy or counseling; and establishing consistent daily routines. Even simple activities like taking regular breaks from screens, walking outside, listening to music, or journaling serve as powerful tools for emotional regulation. When it comes to self-care, "one size doesn't fit

all,” so a variety of options should be explored.

Unfortunately, one of the biggest obstacles to seeking help is shame and stigma. Many people fear being judged, misunderstood, or seen as weak if they admit to struggling emotionally. This stigma can be paralyzing, especially in competitive or image-conscious environments such as law firms. When I left a top AmLaw firm in 1991 after 9 months due to severe anxiety, no one talked openly about mental health, and it was largely considered a taboo topic. I’m grateful that we are much more open and communicative today than the stony silence of the past.

Combating stigma and shame begins with open conversations and modeling vulnerability. Talking about mental health in everyday settings in casual terms like “I’ve been feeling a little burned out lately, so I’m prioritizing rest” helps normalize the experience. Employers and peers alike can help dismantle harmful stereotypes by validating others’ experiences and reminding them that mental health struggles are common, treatable, and nothing to be ashamed of. I openly speak of my lifelong struggle with anxiety because it fosters an honest dialogue among a wide cross-section of people who otherwise might remain silent. For anyone reading this article, if you have questions about my personal experience, feel free to reach out to me directly if helpful.

I believe your brain deserves equal dignity with every other part of your body. If I had a cavity, you’d expect me to go to the dentist. If I had high cholesterol, you’d expect me to speak with a cardiologist. And if I had a broken arm, you’d expect me to go to the emergency room. In these examples, you wouldn’t think any more or less of me as a person. The same should be true for mental health.

The distinction between a mental health challenge and a physical ailment

“So many things I would have done, but clouds got in my way”
—Joni Mitchell, Both Sides Now

This past March, I had the pleasure of sharing a Zoom call with my fellow NALSC members on the topic of law firm associate recruiting. Two months removed from the start of the new presidential administration, there was a universal understanding among those on the call that associate recruiting was in a stagnant place, much as the national economy had been reported to be.

As the conversation homed in on corporate associate recruiting, the exclusive domain and long-term focus of my recruiting practice, I shared my own professional take and the recent victories that I had placing young talent in what my colleagues had concluded was a particularly (and negatively) affected space. When asked what I’d attribute my relative success to, I really had little to share about the then-current state of corporate legal practice. Instead, I offered up a philosophical shift in my thinking that has served me well irrespective of macroeconomic sentiments: that, as recruiters, we are economies unto ourselves.

For many years, well into my recruiting career, nothing got me more anx-

“Worrying about the fluctuations or outright downturns in the economy will get you nowhere but down and, once that happens, everything we do as recruiters gets more difficult.”

is that physical challenges can be seen using imaging or lab results, whereas you can’t easily “see” what someone is thinking or feeling. This opacity causes fear and confusion for both the person suffering and for those around them who don’t understand what they can’t objectively see. If someone tells you they’re struggling, please believe them. Thank them for their honesty in sharing how they feel and tell them that you respect their courage for speaking up.

If someone needs resources, consider reaching out to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). They’re a leading mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for millions of Americans affected by mental illness, and I am both a supporter and volunteer. NAMI offers education, support groups, and helplines to help individuals and families navigate mental health challenges. You can visit their website at www.nami.org or call the NAMI Helpline at 1-800-950-NAMI (6264), Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. ET.

For immediate support in a crisis, the nationwide 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline provides free, confidential assistance 24/7. Simply dial or text 988 to connect with trained counselors who can help with emotional distress, suicidal thoughts, or mental health crises. This service is available to everyone, regardless of whether you’re struggling with it yourself or are concerned about someone else. I recommend you put 988 in your cell phone right now and label it as “Suicide Prevention Lifeline” in case you ever need to contact them.

By learning to recognize the signs, understanding the basics of conditions like anxiety and depression, challenging stigma and shame, avoiding harmful coping methods, and embracing positive self-care practices, we can create a culture where mental wellness is prioritized and people are empowered to seek the help they need.

ECONOMIES UNTO OURSELVES: A Pragmatic Take On Recruiting During Down Times

by Raphael Franze, Esq.

ious and off my game quite like news of an economy in trouble. Be it the Great Recession of the late aughts, the Covid-19 Recession of 2020, or all the crises, crashes, and selloffs occurring throughout, reporting on such events served to distract me more than I realized in the moment. It was as though an ominous cloud had hung over my workday for weeks and even months on end, serving no other purpose than to disincentivize me from my best efforts.

Only after taking measures in recent years to minimize and isolate my media consumption did I begin to appreciate the perils of up-to-the-minute news on my productivity, not to mention my overall psyche. I’ve since learned to better understand my own reactions, both rational and irrational, to reporting on the macroeconomy and its impact on the interconnected microeconomy that is the legal industry. In time, I’ve grown to better compartmentalize these factors so as not to affect my own professional best practices and the optimal personal behaviors that support them.

The following are my top four takeaways from these experiences:

1. Put the economy in proper perspective

Worrying about the fluctuations or outright downturns in the economy will get you nowhere but down and, once that happens, everything we do as recruiters gets more difficult.

Instead of worrying about the economy and perceiving it as a dark cloud that casts a long shadow over one's work, view it instead as a measure of delayed gratification. Whereas a recruiter's best efforts in a good economy can literally pay off in three to six months, be reminded that best efforts in a down economy are still going to pay off (albeit in nine to 18 months) instead of being all for naught.

I believe this approach is one that a recruiter can readily adapt to, given that delayed gratification already is a key part of the job description.

2. Focus on the signal and remove the noise

In the context of media, "signal" and "noise" respectively refer to the authentic and informative content that we seek as opposed to the misleading and low-quality content and subjective elements that distract from it. With social media proliferating noise over signal, it is increasingly incumbent on the consumer of media to remain mindful of what exactly they are consuming.

Of course, heightened critical thinking skills go a long way in distinguishing signal from noise but the deluge of content in today's media environment has a way of affecting mental and emotional fortitude. For me, abstaining from certain forms of media for weeks and even months at a time has proven very helpful in returning me to a more objective and less affected state. Also, consistently "educating" the algorithms that formulate my feeds (including those in LinkedIn and YouTube) by tagging undesirable content, adjusting default settings and blocking certain parties has made for a more intentional social media environment.

3. Go all in on the key performance metrics that you can control

Interviews and offers can be harder to come by in a down economy where fewer employers are looking to add to their ranks. Despite a recruiter's best efforts, getting candidates through the latter stages of the recruiting process can seem akin to running waist-deep in mud. Alternatively, prioritize early stage recruiting activities like new prospect cold-calling, existing candidate

follow-up correspondence, social media marketing efforts, and other activities that will foster familiarity and greatly enhance your candidate pool for when activity on the employer side picks up.

4. Optimize personal behaviors

In a good economy, a recruiter can do quite well in spite of themselves. Successes may often lead to a decline in discipline that can get reinforced so long as demand for talent remains high. Once that demand diminishes, a new reality sets in and the approaches that can serve a recruiter just fine in a good economy just aren't cutting it in a down one. At this point, stepping back and reassessing one's approach is vital.

For me, this reassessment often starts with revisiting personal disciplines that may have tapered off. Taking the time to get my sleep hygiene, nutrition, fitness, and overall habits back on track often is the right starting place to get my physical, mental, and emotional health back where it needs to be to bring the right energy to my professional life and to better identify opportunities during challenging economic times.

In summary, a recruiter's success during poor economic times has so much more to do with preserving and protecting one's psyche than it does during prosperous ones. In taking the approach of being economies unto ourselves, recruiters can assume more control over their outcomes as they better navigate whatever landscape in which they find themselves.

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NALSC Membership Growth

by Mary Clare Garber

NALSC's membership numbers have increased by over 15% since this time last year. With total membership at an all-time high of nearly 340 total members, NALSC has 265 search firm members and 74 supporting members (law firms and providers).

The following legal search firms have joined NALSC since our last newsletter:

- [Above the Bar Legal Recruiting](#)
[The Agency Recruiting](#)
[AQUILA](#)
[Aspen Careers](#)
[BOS Legal Search](#)
[C&M Legal Search](#)
[Cardinal Search Partners](#)
[CB Consulting Group, LLC](#)
[Chain Bridge Legal Search, Inc.](#)
[Counsel Recruit](#)
[D'Arcy Search LLC](#)
[Edgewater Search Group](#)
[Esquire Talent Consultants LLC](#)
[Evolve Workforce Solutions, LLC](#)
- [First Chair Attorney Search](#)
[Fletcher Reed Legal Search](#)
[Forward Lateral](#)
[Henderson Scott - Legal Division](#)
[Interlink Talent Solutions](#)
[Invo Legal Recruiting](#)
[J. T. Legal Search](#)
[JC Hudson Search LLC](#)
[Klein, Landau & Edelman](#)
[Limitless Workforce Solutions, Inc.](#)
[Lionpoint](#)
[McClure Harrison](#)
[Michael Aaron Staffing LLC-Legal Div](#)
[Monzingo Legal](#)

- [Mosser Legal Search](#)
[MRA Search](#)
[Optimize Legal Search Group](#)
[Peak Partners—Legal Recruiting Div](#)
[People Consulting USA](#)
[Permanent Placements LLC](#)
[Principle Recruiting, LLC](#)
[Real Legal Recruitment Limited](#)
[Redwood Legal Search](#)
[The RMN Agency](#)
- [RuffnerRose LLC](#)
[Sacks Consulting](#)
[Talent Acquisition Partners](#)
[Tip Top Recruiting](#)
[Tobey Delano Consulting, LLC](#)
[Top of the Line Legal Search](#)
[Top Tier Legal Search](#)
[Trident Partners, LLC](#)
[TSSI Recruit US](#)
[VortexLegal](#)

We have welcomed each of them on LinkedIn and have a robust protocol for making sure new members immediately feel like a valuable part of the NALSC Community. Also, as the VP of Membership, I reach out to new members, and we have an Ambassador available to the new member to answer any questions and act as a resource.

To learn more about our new search firm members, see their profiles in the Searchable NALSC Membership Directory: <https://www.nalsc.org/members/>.

Since the last Newsletter, nine law firms have joined as sponsors or supporting members:

- [Baker Donelson](#) – Supporting Member
[Calfee Halter & Griswold](#) – Supporting Member
[Eversheds-Sutherland \(US\) LLP](#) - Sponsor as well as Supporting Member
[Falcon Rappaport & Berkman LLP](#) – Sponsor as well as Supporting Member

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We look forward to meeting, exchanging ideas, collaborating, learning from, and building relationships with our new members and sponsors, and we hope to see everyone at the Fall Symposium in Denver, on September 25-26th.

Do you know which of our NALSC Board members was a “trick” barefoot water skier and elected politician (but not all at the same time)? Meet Kevin Bacon, who also serves on NALSC's Newsletter, Governing Documents, and Website/Social Media Committees.

Raised in Defiance, in Northwest Ohio, Kevin played football, baseball, and basketball in addition to doing that fancy water skiing. He says that law was “always in my blood since a very young age.” He watched his lawyer father, and learned from him. Kevin reveals that his dad turned down careers with the CIA and FBI in favor of private law practice. (Is he allowed to tell us that?)

Kevin earned his undergraduate degree at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, where he studied Political Science and Business in preparation for law school. He played on the football team all four years and received the Miami Scholar-Athletic Award in 1994. While in college, Kevin interned with his congressman and met Bob Dole, President Clinton, Al Gore, Janet Reno, and an astronaut. Kevin met Janet Reno again years later, and he says he had a great conversation with her. Kevin graduated from Capital Law School, Columbus, Ohio, in 1998 and served on its Alumni Board from 1998 to 2008.

Kevin practiced law starting in 1998. Early in his career, he spent seven years with Farmers Insurance, five of which were in the Ohio Executive Office as a lobbyist and also handling government and regulatory affairs. He then served as an Ohio State Representative from 2007 to 2010 and as an Ohio State Senator from 2011 to 2018, all while continuing with his law practice. Upon being termed out, Kevin spent two years as a non-profit CEO before founding Bacon Legal Recruiting in January 2021.

A friend sparked his interest in recruiting and provided his training and consulting. He says the best advice he received was that the key to successful recruiting is “persistent calling and exceptional script writing.” This was Kevin's second business venture, his law practice being his first. He found that he “loved the flexibility and financial reward and kept going!”

*...the key to successful recruiting is
“persistent calling and exceptional
script writing.”*

His recruiting practice focuses on the placement of both partners and associates in a multi-state area but primarily, Ohio. His firm now also is assisting a firm with opening multiple offices nationally and making some interim (temp) and legal staff placements. He says, “We continue to



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Interview and article
by Valerie Fontaine

grow.” If he were to start his recruiting career today, Kevin says he wouldn't do anything differently.

The aspects of legal recruiting Kevin enjoys most are business development, interacting with partners, and—of course—receiving payments! He is most challenged by determining the best way to expand his business. When asked how he learned to deal with the inevitable disappointments that occur in recruiting, Kevin responded, “I was trained well as an elected official and attorney. Baptism by fire. I just roll with it.”

Of his pre-recruiting experiences, Kevin feels that his time as a state senator was most rewarding. He believes that serving in the Ohio State Legislature gave him an understanding of how to work with many different types of people and achieve measurable success. As a legislator, he worked on many issues, including developmental disabilities, judicial reform, and tax budget issues, and he says, “I liked all of it.” Reminiscing about his time in politics, Kevin shared:

“In 2011, when I was a state senator, there was controversial legislation pending in one of my committees, in which I was the chairman. I did many national interviews, many of which were live, on channels such as CNN, Fox, ABC, CBS, NBC & PBS. I did one live from Times Square. Reverend Jesse Jackson even made an appearance in one of my committee hearings.

“I also had the chance to meet many fascinating people while in office, including Speaker Newt Gingrich, VP Joe Biden, AG John Bolton, Gov. Jeb Bush, and others. I also enjoyed working with Governor (and presidential candidate) John Kasich on a regular basis and U.S. Speaker John Boehner on occasion. While working as a non-profit CEO, I worked on education issues with U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos.

"Connecting with famous newscasters was also fun. People like Sean Hannity, Dana Perino, Jesse Watters, Kimberly Gilfoyle, Chuck Todd, Juan Williams, and Andrea Mitchell, to mention a few."

These experiences probably come in handy when meeting with managing partners and candidates, and preparing his candidates for their own interviews, don't you think?

On the personal side, Kevin has three daughters, two of whom are out of college, and one currently is in nursing school. In his "free time," he spends a lot of time at his lake cottage in Michigan and, as he puts it, "other fun places." "Recruiting gave me the freedom to do that!" He has also travelled to some other interesting places in the past, including Alaska, Japan, Israel, Morocco, throughout Europe, and he studied in Spain. He also likes to spend time travelling to watch the Los Angeles Angels play, as his cousin, Nolan Schanuel, is the starting first baseman.

When it comes to music, Kevin loves "all things 80s." The same goes for TV. He says, "As a child, it was all 80's – *Three's Company*, *Fantasy Island*, *Love Boat*, etc. Later on, it was *Cheers*, *Friends* & *Seinfeld*. Now, mostly Netflix drama series." His favorite movies are "anything based on a John Grisham novel." Most recently, Kevin read two John Grisham non-fiction books (which is uncommon as he typically writes fiction). Kevin advises anyone in the legal industry to read (or listen to via Audible) *"The Innocent Man"* and *"Framed,"* real-life stories of wrongfully con-

victed individuals who were on death row and later exonerated. He says, "You will be shocked!"

One more interesting tidbit about Kevin Bacon: He loves to cook, grill, and smoke meat, and he admits, "I get rattled if my spice rack isn't precisely alphabetized with all labels facing forward!" He concludes: "LOL."

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Valerie Fontaine is a Principal of SeltzerFontaine LLC. Also, she is a past Officer and Board Member of NALSC. Valerie is currently a consultant assisting NALSC HQ as well as Newsletter Advisor.

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First and foremost, I want to extend a heartfelt "Thank you!" to all the members of the Belonging and Inclusion Committee. Thank you for your time, engagement, and energies around an initiative important to each of us and to NALSC. Our initiative has faced meaningful external challenges leading to difficult but necessary conversations, and I am thankful for everyone's contribution and participation. Most importantly, we remain committed to our goals.

Specifically, the B+I Committee has been working to actualize its mission to "actively promote belonging and inclusion within the NALSC Community and the legal community we serve." To that end, the Committee met with Executive Coach and Strategist, Jami de Lou, to create "Focus Areas" of *Community*, *Collaboration*, and *Communication* for the action steps and programming that the Committee will propose to NALSC going forward.

The Committee's past work, which can be expanded and built on in the future, includes reflecting a broad spectrum of viewpoints, experiences, and backgrounds in:

- Speakers
- Podcast
- Webinars
- Newsletters
- Event Presentations and Roundtables
- Participation with Outside Organizations such as NALP, Law Firm Legal Recruiters Associations, Affiliate Organizations (Affinity groups), and Business Groups
- Collaborating with the NALSC Law Firm Advisory Committee on programming
- Including M/W/LGBT+/Veteran-Owned Business Certifications in our online searchable directory.

The B+I Committee membership is open to all members of the NALSC community. If you are interested in joining us as we continue working to make the B+I Committee's mission central to NALSC and integral to NALSC programming, please contact Headquarters at info@nalsc.org.

B+I Committee Action

by Arthur J. Polott, Esq.



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Arthur Polott, Esq. is a NALSC Director Emeritus as well as the Chair of the Belonging + Inclusion Committee. Arthur is also the Owner/Recruiter of Gateway Legal Placements, LLC.

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How to Actually Use LinkedIn to Grow Your Business

by Stefanie Marrone

I talk about LinkedIn *a lot*. Probably more than most people. But that's because I've seen what it can actually do when you use it with intention. Not to chase attention. Not to copy what everyone else is doing. But to stay visible, build real relationships and create opportunities over time.

The problem is most people either ignore LinkedIn or post without a real purpose. They treat it like a résumé not a relationship-building tool and then wonder why it's not helping them.

If LinkedIn hasn't felt worth the effort, it might be because you're not using it in a way that plays to your strengths. A few thoughtful changes can make it feel less like a chore and more like a tool that works with you—not against you.

Optimize Your Profile to Be Clear, Client-Focused and Searchable

Your profile is often the first thing someone sees when they search for you. It should quickly tell them who you are, what you do and why they should want to connect or work with you. Here are a few sections to review and update on your LinkedIn profile:

- **Use a recent professional headshot:** Your profile photo is the first thing people notice. Make sure it reflects how you look today, not several years ago. You don't need a professional photographer, but the photo should be clear, well-lit and just of you. No cropped group shots or casual vacation photos. You want to be easily recognizable and look approachable.
- **Write a headline that goes beyond your job title:** Your headline should say more than just your role at a company. Instead of "Associate at XYZ LLP," or "Marketing Director at Some Company" use this space to explain who you help and how. Think of it as a mini pitch. Include keywords people might search for when looking for someone with your background. Make it specific and reflective of your expertise. Don't use buzzwords or jargon and don't sound overly self-promotional.
- **Make your About section clear and conversational:** Too many people copy and paste a version of their website bio into the About section. That's a missed opportunity. Use this space to tell your story in your own words as if you were having coffee with someone and talking about your background and strengths. Talk about what you do, who you help and what makes your approach different. Use short paragraphs, write in first person and aim for clarity over formality.
- **Add content to your Featured section:** The Featured section lets you spotlight work you're proud of. This could be a client alert, a blog post, a webinar or a speaking engagement. If you have an email newsletter or a blog or a podcast, highlight it here with a sign up link. Choose content that shows your knowledge and adds value. This is one of the first areas people see when they visit your profile, so make it count.
- **Fill out your experience with client-friendly language:** Don't just list your job titles. Describe what you actually do in a way that makes sense to someone outside your organization. Use clear language and highlight the types of work you handle or the impact you've had. Keep it focused on your contributions without sounding overly promotional.
- **Add relevant skills that reflect how you want to be found:** Be thoughtful about your Skills section. Add skills that reflect the work you do today and

the direction you're heading. These terms help with LinkedIn's search and recommendations, and they shape how others understand your value. You can also reorder your skills so the most relevant ones appear at the top.

- **Use strategic keywords throughout your profile:** Using the right words will help the right people find you. Think about the words your clients, prospects or referral sources might actually type into the search bar if they needed someone with your background. Are they looking for a "private equity lawyer," a "marketing consultant for law firms," or a "commercial real estate advisor"? Use that language in your headline, About section and work experience, not in a spammy way, but naturally. This helps with LinkedIn's search algorithm and also makes your profile clearer to the individuals reading it.

Connect with the Right People at the Right Time

The most successful people on LinkedIn are actively sending and receiving connection requests. They are consistently building their network. Please don't wait to receive connection requests because you may be waiting forever. You don't need to spend your day sending connection requests. You also don't have to personalize every message, especially if you're on your phone. But you do need to be intentional. A random list of contacts won't move your business forward. Real relationships will. Focus on people you know, people with whom you've worked and gone to school, and people you want to get to know for a specific reason.

- **People in your industry or niche:** These are the people who speak your language and understand your world. They're more likely to engage with your content and refer the kind of work you actually want.
- **Referral sources and past clients:** Don't let strong contacts drift away. Connecting on LinkedIn keeps you visible and gives them a reminder of what you do every time you post or comment.
- **Alumni from your undergrad or law school:** A shared background is an easy conversation starter. These connections can be unexpectedly valuable, especially when you're looking to expand your reach in a specific region or industry.
- **People who engage with your posts or your firm's content:** If someone is already paying attention to your content, don't miss the chance to bring them into your network. A quick connection request can turn casual engagement into a real relationship.
- **Professionals you meet at conferences or events:** Add them on LinkedIn while the interaction is still fresh. Most people forget to do this or wait too long. A timely follow-up shows you're engaged, keeps the connection warm and often opens the door to future conversations and opportunities.

If you're on your computer and have time to write a short message,

"Focus on people you know, people with whom you've worked and gone to school, and people you want to get to know for a specific reason."

Continued on page 11

great. If not, don't overthink it. The key is being intentional. Think quality over quantity every time.

Engage More Than You Post

I get asked all the time, "How often do I really need to post on LinkedIn?" The truth is, you don't need to post every day or even every week to build a strong presence. You just need to stay active in a smart, intentional way.

Engagement is one of the most underrated strategies on LinkedIn. When you leave thoughtful comments, react to updates or reshare something with a quick takeaway, you stay visible to your network without having to constantly create new content.

And here's the best part: LinkedIn often gives more visibility to comments. A thoughtful one can expand your reach beyond your own network. Over time, that kind of visibility builds recognition and can lead to new opportunities.

Here's a simple LinkedIn routine that takes just a few minutes a day:

- Comment on three posts, ideally from people you know, want to reconnect with or want to work with
- Congratulate someone on a job move, promotion or recent recognition
- React to client and contact updates, especially ones that are personal or meaningful
- Look through your LinkedIn notifications tab to see who's posting and find quick ways to engage

When you do this regularly, even a few times a week, your name starts to show up in more places. People begin to associate you with being engaged and thoughtful. It's a simple way to stay visible and build stronger connections without having to post all the time.

Commenting on someone else's post is a simple way to stay visible and engaged. It helps people see you're paying attention and interested in what others have to say. Even a brief comment can go a long way.

Share Value, Not a Pitch

People don't come to LinkedIn looking for a sales pitch. They come to learn something useful, to hear real perspectives and to find people who know what they're doing. That's where your content comes in.

Use your posts to explain what you do in a way that's clear and relatable. Break down complex ideas. Answer the questions you get asked most often. Share a lesson from a recent matter, as long as it's general and respectful of confidentiality. Talk about what you're seeing in the market and how it might affect the people you work with.

If you're not sure where to start, here are a few types of posts that work well:

- Tips that solve a specific problem or make something easier
- Lists of helpful tips
- Commentary on industry news or legal developments
- Lessons learned from a deal, pitch or speaking engagement

"Engagement is one of the most underrated strategies on LinkedIn. When you leave thoughtful comments, react to updates or reshare something with a quick takeaway, you stay visible to your network without having to constantly create new content."

- Common client questions and how you approach them
- Reflections on mentoring or being mentored
- Misconceptions you often hear about your area of practice
- A quote from a past article, panel or webinar with added context
- A behind-the-scenes look at your work or your team
- Pro bono or community work that aligns with your values
- Career advice or a professional insight that stuck with you

You don't need to overthink what you post. Focus on sharing content that is useful or relevant to the people to whom you're trying to stay connected. That's how you stay visible in a way that actually matters.

Use the Featured Section to Highlight Important Content

The Featured section is one of the most powerful parts of your LinkedIn profile, but most people skip it. This is your chance to show people what you do, not just tell them. Use it to highlight articles you've written, posts that reflect your perspective, panels you've spoken on or any work that shows your strengths. If you have a blog or podcast, include it here. Think of this section as your portfolio. It helps people quickly understand what you focus on, what you're good at and the kind of work you want to attract. If you leave it empty, you give up the chance to shape that impression yourself.

Here are some ideas on what to feature on your Featured section:

- Articles or blog posts you've written
- Podcasts or interviews where you've shared your perspective
- Panels or speaking engagements you've done
- Checklists, guides or other useful resources
- LinkedIn posts that performed well and are still relevant

Instead of hoping someone scrolls through your activity or reads your About section, you can point them to content that supports your brand and your business. Keep it current. Add links that reflect what you want to be known for. And use it to make your profile more engaging and helpful.

Using the Notifications Tab for Business Development

The notifications tab on LinkedIn is one of the most underused tools

when it comes to business development. It's filled with natural reasons to reconnect, stay top of mind and build relationships over time.

Use it to track the moments that matter. When someone starts a new job, gets promoted, celebrates a work anniversary or birthday, that's your chance to reach out. A quick note saying congratulations or just checking in can keep the conversation going and make you stand out.

If someone shares a post, article or mention in the news, leave a thoughtful comment or send a message. It shows you're paying attention and gives you a reason to follow up later.

LinkedIn also provides updates about your connections' activity, like when they follow someone new or engage with a post. This can help you discover new people to follow, potential clients to watch or mutual contacts to keep an eye on. Don't be afraid to follow someone first. It's a low-pressure way to start building familiarity before reaching out.

Here are a few ways to use notifications more intentionally:

- Check your notifications two to three times a week.
- Create a short list of people you want to stay in touch with and watch for their updates.
- Use birthdays and work anniversaries as low-stakes touchpoints.
- If someone gets promoted or changes roles, congratulate them and suggest a time to catch up.
- When someone joins a company you're targeting, that's your moment to reconnect.

It doesn't take much to stay on someone's radar. A quick comment or message at the right time can lead to a conversation, a meeting or an opportunity down the line. Most people aren't doing this. You should be!

Know When (and When Not) to Use LinkedIn InMail

InMail has its place, but it's often overused and easy to ignore. Many people are flooded with messages from strangers pitching services they don't need, which makes it harder for genuine outreach to break through. If your goal is to build real relationships on LinkedIn, cold outreach shouldn't be your first step. Focus instead on engaging with someone's content, finding a mutual connection or offering something of value before you ever send a message. That's what creates the foundation for a conversation that actually goes somewhere.

If you do choose to send a message, make sure it doesn't feel like a template:

- Be specific about why you're reaching out
- Reference something they've shared or worked on
- Keep it short and easy to read
- Don't ask for a meeting right away or sell your services
- Give them a reason to respond, like a relevant article, event or mutual connection

Before reaching out, take a moment to build some familiarity.

- Like or comment on their posts a few times so your name starts to feel familiar

- Share one of their articles with your network and tag them
- Look for a mutual contact who can make an introduction
- Respond to something they've published with a thoughtful follow-up in the comments

This kind of engagement takes more time, but it builds trust. And it increases the chances that when you do send a message, they'll actually read it.

Post at the Right Times and Be Smart About Tagging

There's no one right time to post on LinkedIn. But weekday mornings, especially before the workday starts, usually perform best. Don't get stuck trying to find the perfect time. Just focus on sharing useful content when your network is most likely to see it.

[Hashtags aren't as powerful](#) as they once were, but they still serve a purpose. They help organize your content and make it easier to find. Use one to three that are relevant to your topic and your audience. That's all you need..

When it comes to tagging people or companies:

- Only tag people who are directly involved
- Don't tag a list of names just to try to get more reach (this is the equivalent of spamming people)
- Be thoughtful when mentioning colleagues or clients
- Use tags to create connection, not to fill space

Write posts that invite conversation. When people feel like they have something to add, they're more likely to comment. That kind of interaction is what builds relationships and helps your content reach more of the right people.

"Consider creating a small content-sharing group with people on your team or across the firm."

Get Support From Colleagues

LinkedIn favors early engagement. When a post gets comments or reactions shortly after it goes live, the algorithm is more likely to show it to more people. That makes internal support an important part of your strategy.

If you're sharing something valuable like a blog post, media mention, client alert or award, send it to a few trusted colleagues or contacts and ask them to engage. Don't just ask for likes. Ask for a short comment. Even a single sentence can help spark visibility and conversations.

Consider creating a small content-sharing group with people on your team or across the firm. It could be a simple chat thread in email, Slack or Teams where you share posts and help each other build momentum.

And remember to give support too. Take a moment to like or com-

ment when someone else shares something worth amplifying. These small actions help your posts perform better, strengthen your relationships and keep you top of mind with your network.

Build a Content Tracking System

LinkedIn gives you basic analytics for every post. Don't ignore them. They're one of the easiest ways to figure out what your audience cares about.

Pay attention to which posts get the most views, reactions, comments and connection requests. Look at patterns. Are you getting more engagement when you share personal stories? Are your tips posts getting saved? Are certain topics consistently falling flat?

You don't need a fancy tool to figure this out. Just click "view analytics" under your post and see what's getting traction.

Then use that information to shape your next few posts. Double down on the formats and themes that are working. Try a different angle on something that underperformed. Test, adjust and repeat. This is how you build a content strategy that actually works by paying attention to what your audience is telling you.

Stay Organized With Your Outreach

It's easy to lose track of who you've contacted or who has engaged with your content. A simple tracker helps you stay focused and consistent. Start with a basic spreadsheet. Include columns for name, company, LinkedIn profile link, date of last outreach, type of interaction, follow-up date and notes. Use the tracker to log:

- New LinkedIn connections made through recent outreach
- Contacts who received posts, articles or updates
- Colleagues who engaged with your content in a meaningful way
- People you want to keep in your network going forward

Review the tracker regularly. Use it to plan small touchpoints like sharing something relevant, commenting on a recent post or checking in with a quick message. A clear system makes it easier to stay top of mind and follow through consistently.

Remember That Leads Don't Happen Overnight

Most of the people who reach out to work with you or refer business your way won't be the ones liking or commenting on your posts. They're paying attention quietly, forming an opinion based on how you show up and what you share. That's why consistency matters. It's not just about visibility. It's about building trust (and your network) over time while being top of mind through posting helpful and engaging content.

LinkedIn works best when you use it with intention. Share content that reflects your experience. Show your perspective. Be present. The more clearly you communicate who you are and what you do, the easier it is for people to remember you when an opportunity comes up.

That's how real business development happens.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Stefanie Marrone advises law firms of all sizes, professional service firms, B2B companies, recruiters and individuals on the full range of marketing and business development consulting services designed to enhance revenue, retain current clients and achieve greater brand recognition. She also serves as outsourced chief marketing officer/marketing department for small and mid-size law firms.



Over her 20-year legal marketing career, she has worked at and with a broad range of big law, mid-size and small firms, which has given her a valuable perspective of the legal industry.

Connect on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), [Instagram](#), [sign up for her email list](#) and [follow her latest writing on JD Supra](#).

Greetings from Long-Range Planning!

By Jordan Abshire, Esq.

Our Strategic Planning Committee met in March to create a calendar for NALSC virtual events for the next 12 months. So far, we've had Office Hours in May, a Recruiting Roundtable focused on In-house Recruiting in June, and a NALSC Presents on Financial Planning for Recruiters in July. The rest of the line-up is as follows:

- ⇒ August 28th (Th) - NALSC Presents (How to Build Your Credibility and Influence on LinkedIn with speaker Stefanie Marrone)
- ⇒ September - No virtual event - Fall Symposium takes place 9/25-9/26
- ⇒ October 23rd (Th) - Recruiting Roundtable - Partners
- ⇒ November 20th (Th) - NALSC Presents (Well-Being in the Law)
- ⇒ December 10th (Wed) - NALSC Presents (AI's Transformation of Legal Recruitment and Law Firm Operations with Richard Singer, Co-founder of KnowDroids.ai)
- ⇒ January 22nd (Th) - NALSC Presents (Recruiting Tactics with Tricia Tamkin and Jason Thibeault)
- ⇒ February - No virtual event - Annual Conference takes place 2/26-2/28
- ⇒ March 26th (Th) Recruiting Roundtable - Associates

⇒ April 24th (Th) - NALSC Presents (Career Coach)

We also have been discussing NALSC in-person events and how we can best accommodate our growing membership's interest in attending. Following the Fall Symposium, we will be limiting sponsors to the seats specified at their specific sponsor level; sponsors will be able to purchase additional seats, but only after the search firm member waitlist has been cleared.

We also have been assessing sponsorship levels and event registration fees, as we may need to secure hotel meeting space more often for our Symposia, to accommodate the growing number of attendees.

Please feel free to reach out to any Committee members with thoughts, questions, or ideas via email or in person at NALSC virtual or live events.

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COUNSEL'S CORNER: The U-LPQ and Employment Discrimination Investigations: What Recruiters and Candidates Need to Know

by Hilary Gerzhoy, Esq.

Legal recruiters are no strangers to the intricacies of lateral partner questionnaires. These documents—especially the Uniform Lateral Partner Questionnaire (U-LPQ)—serve as a foundational part of the target law firms' due diligence when assessing lateral candidates. They inquire into a candidate's practice, financials, client relationships, and personal and professional conduct. One set of questions that has taken on heightened significance in recent years pertains to employment discrimination investigations.

The relevant question from the U-LPQ reads:

*"Have you ever been the subject of a legal malpractice claim, breach of trust claim, employment discrimination claim, employee discrimination grievance, employee discrimination investigation (including harassment or retaliation)?"*¹

This broad question reflects a fundamental shift in the legal industry: firms are no longer willing to rely on whispered reputational checks or assume that prior employers will quietly usher out problematic behavior. In a post-#MeToo era, and in a market where firm culture and reputational risk are top of mind, law firms are demanding transparency, and recruiters play a pivotal role in ensuring it.

What This Question Means for Candidates

For candidates, particularly those who have been the subject of such a complaint or investigation, this question raises significant personal and professional stakes. But it is important to understand what is being asked, and what is not.

First, the U-LPQ does not limit the inquiry to formal complaints filed with government agencies or courts. It explicitly includes "grievances" and "investigations," which are often entirely internal to the existing firm. A fact-finding process undertaken by a firm's HR department, a compliance officer's inquiry, or an outside investigation conducted by retained counsel all fall within the scope.

The breadth of this inquiry reflects the seriousness with which firms now treat workplace conduct. Still, the U-LPQ does not ask the candidate to characterize the result. It asks only whether they have been the subject of such a matter. That includes situations where no finding of wrongdoing was made.

Critically, a "yes" answer does not automatically disqualify a candidate. But it does prompt further scrutiny. Firms will ask for a narrative explanation and may request documentation or contact with prior employers. If a candidate fails to disclose a known complaint or investigation and the hiring firm learns of it later—whether from references, prior firm partners, or press coverage—the nondisclosure can be more damaging than the underlying issue itself.

Ethical and Practical Considerations for Recruiters

For recruiters, this question presents a complex, but critical challenge. Recruiters must balance loyalty to the candidate with candor and professionalism towards the target firm. What happens if a recruiter knows a candidate has been the subject of a prior discrimination investigation, but the candidate does not disclose it in his or her U-LPQ? Can the recruiter en-

"In a post-#MeToo era, and in a market where firm culture and reputational risk are top of mind, law firms are demanding transparency, and recruiters play a pivotal role in ensuring it."

courage disclosure? Must the recruiter intervene?

The recruiter's legal obligations will vary depending on contracts and jurisdiction, but the professional and reputational considerations are clear. A recruiter who knowingly presents a candidate without disclosure of a material fact that later emerges risks eroding trust with the target firm and damaging their own credibility in the market. For recruiters who are licensed lawyers, the ethics rules impose an additional burden: mandating honesty in interactions with third parties², and a requirement to report lawyers whose violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct "raises a substantial question as to that lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness as a lawyer in other respects."³ It should also be noted that the NALSC Code of Ethics requires recruiters to disclose all facts material to the hiring decision.

While recruiters are not investigators, once they are aware of a relevant issue—particularly one within the scope of the U-LPQ—it is best practice to have a direct and confidential conversation with the candidate. That discussion should clarify what the question covers and the importance of transparency. It is at this point in the process where consulting with an ethics lawyer can be paramount. Recruiters can, and should, flag the issue, but they should not be providing legal advice to candidates. Advice on how to frame a response to the question, and the ramifications of both doing so and failing to do so, must be given by a practicing lawyer. Legal ethics lawyers help frame the candidate's disclosure, provide necessary context, and anticipate firm concerns. By flagging the issue, and looping in an ethics lawyer, recruiters can balance helping the candidate navigate a sensitive part of the process while protecting the interests of the target firm and the recruiter's industry reputation.

A Culture of Accountability?

The inclusion of this question in the U-LPQ reflects the profession's increasing emphasis on accountability. Firms want to ensure that potential partners align with their values and do not pose cultural, legal, or reputational risks. And they are right to ask.

But the process must also be fair. Not every complaint has merit. Not every investigation concludes with a finding. Context matters. Recruiters and firms must resist the instinct to treat any disclosure as disqualifying and instead engage in a nuanced review of the facts. I have personally represented lawyers who answered "Yes" to this question and landed terrific placements. The details matter.

As the U-LPQ becomes more widely adopted, candidates and recruiters should expect that conduct-related disclosures—especially around employment discrimination, harassment, and retaliation—will become a standard part of the lateral conversation. Those types of questions already appear on many, if not most, individual firm LPQs. The conversations they spark may be uncomfortable, but it is also a step forward for professionalism in the legal industry.

Best Practices for Recruiters

To navigate this terrain effectively, consider the following best practices:

- **Start early:** Educate candidates at the outset about the scope of the U-LPQ and individual firm LPQs and the importance of honest disclosure.
- **Encourage candor:** Create a confidential, judgment-free space where candidates feel comfortable discussing past complaints or investigations.
- **Engage an ethics lawyer to help craft the narrative:** An ethics lawyer can guide candidates in presenting facts truthfully and contextually and act as an intermediary between the candidate and the target firm.
- **Know your clients:** Understand how each firm handles these disclosures so you can prepare the candidate and manage expectations.
- **Keep records:** Document candidate disclosures and communications in case questions arise later.

In today's lateral market, a partner's portable business is crucial—but so is their track record of conduct. Recruiters are both dealmakers and

gatekeepers, helping firms avoid risk and making sure candidates put their best foot forward.

[1] *Uniform Lateral Partner Questionnaire (U-LPQ)*, 2023 ed., Question 36. The full question reads: "Have you ever been the subject of a legal malpractice claim, breach of trust claim, employment discrimination claim, employee discrimination grievance, employee discrimination investigation (including harassment or retaliation)?"

[2] See ABA Model Rule 8.4(c) (prohibiting conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation).

[3] See ABA Model Rule 8.3(a) ("A lawyer who knows that another lawyer has committed a violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct that raises a substantial question as to that lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness as a lawyer in other respects, shall inform the appropriate professional authority.")

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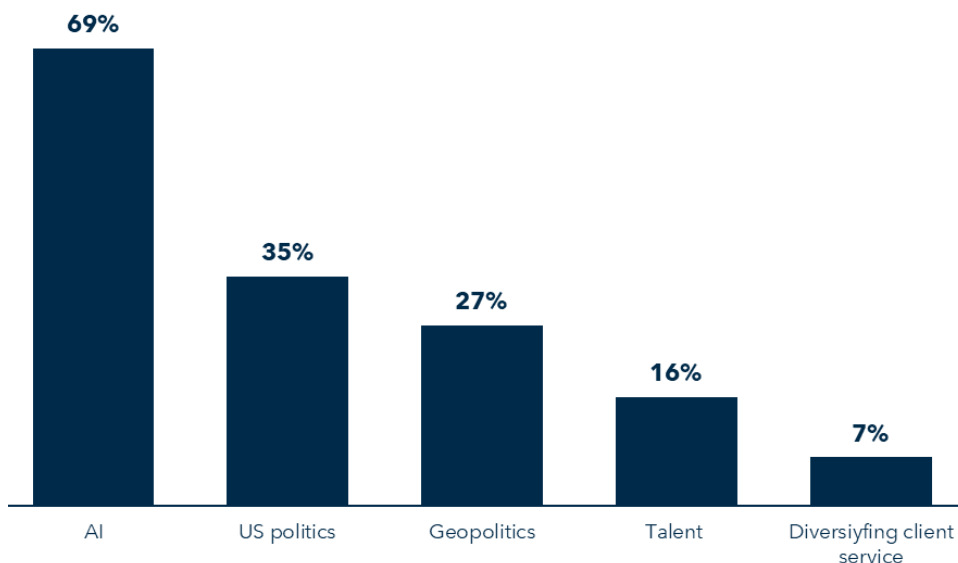
The View from Above: Here is What Keeps the Managing Partners of Big Law Up at Night

by Sose Ebodaghe, US Content Lead at Chambers & Partners

Every year at *Chambers Associate*, we get the pleasure of having one-to-one conversations with the senior leadership of some of the biggest law firms in the country – and the world. Largely, we conduct these interviews to get a sense of the firm's market position, commercial strategy, and targeted areas of growth straight from the source to feed back to our readers. We also get to hear some of the fun stuff, too. [Here's last year's article](#) in case you're curious about what a managing partner's favorite legal drama is (spoiler alert: you should be).

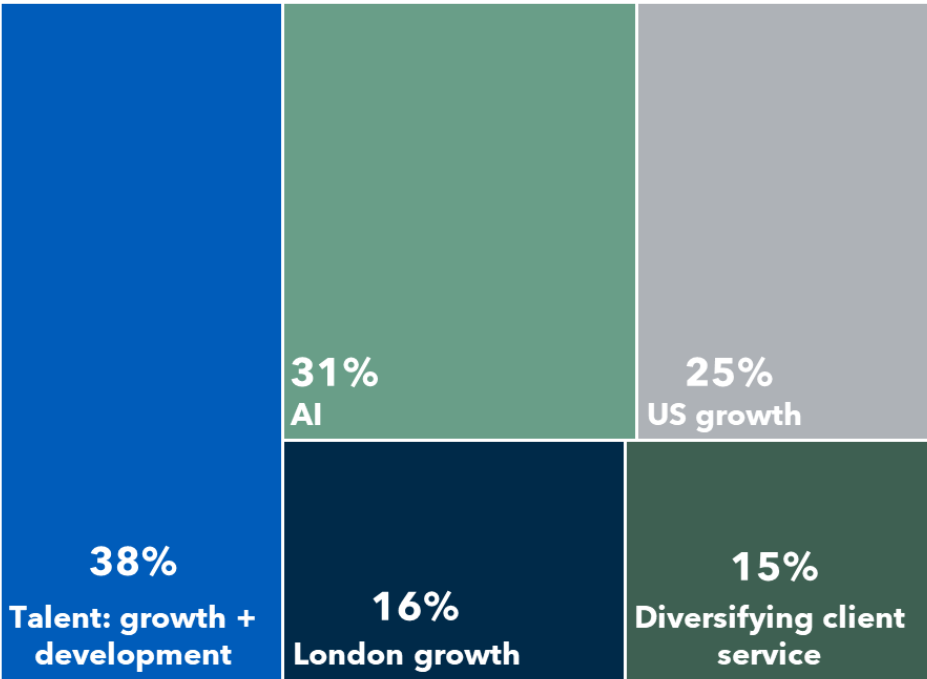
But let's take a look at some of the serious stuff we learned. As part of the interview, we ask managing partners to tell us about their market position, which trends are most affecting the legal industry, and what their commercial strategy is focused on. Our interviewees usually rattle off a couple of different points, but interestingly enough, many of them mentioned the same things. Check out these graphs:

What are the top 5 things managing partners say are impacting the legal industry the most?



Continued on page 16

What are law firms' focusing their commercial strategy on?



Artificial Intelligence

As you can see, the words on everyone’s minds were *artificial intelligence*; understandably so, as the technology has made major strides in the last few years. 31% of managing partners interviewed highlighted AI as the most significant focus in their commercial strategy, and a huge 69% of them said that it was the trend impacting the legal industry the most. Many firms are quickly adapting to using AI in the workplace, particularly with generative AI models to help with tasks like legal research, drafting, and doc review. This type of approach was echoed by Douglas Clark, managing partner at Wilson Sonsini:

“We look at AI in two primary ways at the firm. One is representing great companies that are developing platform AI technology, and we continue to do that...Internally, we’re closely studying how AI can benefit us and beginning to deploy AI in terms of back-office efficiency which is important, and it’s a strong use case for AI and, where appropriate, for practice efficiency on the client side. Our focus is very much on data governance to make sure client confidentiality is first and foremost in any application of AI.”

Naturally, there is a degree of caution around how AI will shape the industry. In our associate research, we hear whispers of AI replacing some of that work which traditionally falls to junior associates. Something which some fear could have a domino effect of layoffs or less need for junior talent. But Morgan Lewis’ chair, Jami McKeon, puts that speculation to bed:

“There’s a lot of fear that the legal profession is going to change in a way that will eliminate jobs for associates, and that’s not true. Technology has not hurt us. We were one of the first firms that created an e-data practice more than two decades ago. Before that, we had to crawl on the floor and go through boxes and take handwritten notes. Has that resulted in less jobs for associates? No. E-data is a \$100 million practice for us. And we have grown exponentially in every way since then. Technological advancements have never slowed the need for excellent legal help; it just changes the tools available to use in that effort.

“The challenge for every law firm is figuring out to how to use tech in a way that’s advantageous for its client and helps expand the practice for

its lawyers. We have to make sure that people don’t lose the mindset of looking for opportunities to be creative, be thoughtful, and be engaged because of their fear that these jobs will go away. I don’t believe they will go away.”

Indeed, many managing partners we interviewed embraced the potential AI may have on the industry, and Ira Coleman, chairman of McDermott Will & Emery, had some sage advice for how to best adapt to these changes:

“It’s going to be those that can harness the power of AI and accept it and learn from it and shape it who are going to be some of the most successful people in the legal profession as we move forward in the future.

“So, my advice to young people in law school now is to spend any spare time you have learning about AI, understanding how it works – at least keeping a list of questions and potential answers and solutions for how AI can improve the legal profession for our clients. I wouldn’t spend a lot of time worrying about whether AI is going to put law firms out of business or whether we’ll hire less associates because of it; I would focus on understanding what it can do, understanding what the potential capabilities are, how to marry those two, and then really learning what’s next.”

Talent

Another key takeaway is talent. 38% of managing partners underlined talent growth and development as a focus for their commercial strategy. One of them was Rachel Proffitt, chief executive officer of Cooley:

“Another trend is there is a lot of talent mobility in the legal market and it’s critical that we continue to identify that talent that is going to be the most additive to our goals so that we remain competitive and protect our unique culture.

“As the industry goes through this evolution with talent mobility, it’s important that we find talent that is deeply connected to our core values and commitment to providing excellent service, together.”

Indeed, targeted lateral hiring will continue to be a prominent feature of firms’ long-term strategy, particularly when we are starting to see more

segmentation in the market among the elite of Big Law, as Barry Wolf, executive partner and chair of Weil's management committee tells us:

"I think that we will see further stratification of the top of the market. We will continue to see the amount of lateral activity and that will probably accelerate as an industry matter, so the competition for clients and talent will remain intense and will continue to grow. We have already been seeing particular firms that are not necessarily in the top tier merging, and that trend will probably continue and accelerate."

What this means for recruiters is that connecting the right talent to the right firm will continue to be very important. Jami McKeon illustrates how crucial it is for firms to not just attract, but also retain the right talent in order to stay at the top of the game:

"It's really important to be a place that welcomes and nurtures the best talent. What we've said for a long time, and I firmly believe, is that inclusive teams are important because better decisions get made for clients as well as for the firm when you have a variety of perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences at the table. If I'm speaking to people with identical backgrounds and life experiences, the likelihood of me getting a well-rounded perspective is low. Instead, you want a wealth of perspectives when tackling a problem."

"We're very thoughtful about that and being thoughtful always moves the needle. We are in the business of solving tough problems for clients; to do so, we need the best talent and the broadest perspective."

Location & Growth

We all know it's cool for firms to be in growth mode these days. Whether that's practice growth or location, or both together. We do see some trends emerge from our interviews. In terms of global growth, 15% of managing partners signposted London as a market focus. Bill Malley, managing partner of Perkins Coie, was one to mention it:

"We are continuing to make strategic investments and are excited about the growth potential of our European tech focus. A big focus is attracting talent. London is an opportunity to meet the needs of tech clients, ultimately bringing the strengths of Perkins Coie to European clients while also benefiting our US clients."

Then, a quarter of our interviewees highlighted growth on home soil as forming their commercial strategy. Justin King, finance and investments partner at King & Spalding, noted that, for them, it was Texas which was the focus:

"We're always looking for strategic opportunities to grow our footprint, and so, this past year we opened an office in Dallas, our third in Texas and 24th globally. We recognized that a lot of good things are happening in the Dallas market, so we're doubling down on growing some of our key practice areas including corporate, restructuring, business litigation, and the like."

Many managing partners feel that their location and their client-focused approach set them apart from their peers in the market, but not all firms are growing for growth's sake. Take Herb Washer, chairperson at Cahill:

"I would say that we are quite New York centric. I think there has been a trend in the law to really build out these global law firms that have practices in every jurisdiction and cover every substantive area of law; our model is a bit different and a bit more focused. Our goal is to be 'best in class' in specific areas in London, New York, and Washington DC, but we're really not focused on other locations."

The emphasis on a particular location/s demonstrates a clear focal point for four-office firm Cahill and other firms like it. It bodes well for potential associates or laterals to join a firm that is cognizant of exactly where it's positioned in the market. As Scott Luftglass, vice chairman of Fried Frank, puts it:

"We start from the following premise that really great law firms don't have to be and can't be all things to all people. Instead, I think law firms have to focus on what their core practices are and build out from there. Law firms need to find practices that are complementary to those core areas of work that allow for a team-driven provision of legal services."

Diversifying client service

Pursuing growth at home or abroad typically ties into conversations about client service and expanding their client base. Firms are client-focused by nature, but this is something managing partners like Freshfields partner Andrea Basham really hammered home in our interviews:

"The firm made a strategic decision many years ago that—although it was already a powerhouse in Europe and Asia—it was necessary to build a premier, market-leading US practice in order to serve clients at the highest level on a global basis. Freshfields US [...] is a destination practice for all the large clients you would expect — not only in the US but globally."

But it's not enough to just open up offices here, there, and everywhere in the interest of client service. Nowadays, firms have to focus on developing their services to go beyond just the practice of law for their clients. This approach is becoming crucial for the top firms in order to retain their clients and an edge on the competition. Take the below from Mike Renaud, chair of the IP division at Mintz:

"The changes that have been occurring in the industry mean that you'll fail in the market if all you're offering is awesome legal services — the market wants more. It's not good enough to just be a great lawyer, you have to really know your client's technology and the business of it, too... As costs increase, the value of legal services goes up and clients get tired of paying more per hour without getting more in exchange. Investment in teaching, and the knowledge of clients, is going up."

"If you're not clued in to your client's business and don't understand their challenges, business plan, and corporate needs, you're not going to be successful. Even though we're an AmLaw 100 firm, we can't rest on our laurels. We have to continue to learn, innovate and train, and that has to line up with clients or we won't get the work. Clients won't pay the premium that firms like ours ask for if you don't give them something they couldn't get from AI themselves, or from a lawyer working as a sole practitioner. Subject matter expertise and business knowledge are critical today and will only get more so."

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