

# TAKING THE CALL

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**I**f you aren't looking for a job, should you take a call from a recruiter? From the legal recruiter's point of view, the answer is an unequivocal "Yes." What follows are the responses to this question by several recruiters with offices in California and other locations.

"The most obvious benefit is to build a relationship of trust," says **Delia Swan**, founder of **Swan Legal Search**, a Los Angeles-based firm that recently opened a San Francisco office. "If and when the time for a change does arise, you'll know who to call." **Swan's** initial call to an attorney is simply to find out if that person is content or if she or he has any questions about the market. Instead of presenting opportunities, **Swan** says she's "finding out where they are now, where they want to be, and how they want to get there." For **Swan**, "It's all about building trust. We want them to call us. If I do a great job for someone, we'll get the referrals."

Developing a relationship with a recruiter can be an integral part of your career path. "If you maintain a relationship," says Carol

Francisco-based **Kearney Boyle and Associates**, "your recruiter already knows what you're looking for when the time comes. Then she can tell you what options are available." Another benefit, **Kearney** points out, is that a recruiter can help you stay on top of the job market and let you know if your salary is current.

Before you decide to work with a recruiter, it is a good idea to have an existing relationship. After all, you want to know that the search firm has your best interests at heart. Take the opportunity to find out about the recruiter's reputation and integrity as well as its ability to keep information confidential. Then you can have confidence that your career is in good hands.

Many search firms contact lawyers with opportunities. "Recruiters often call with offers that aren't generally in the marketplace," says **Stacy Miller**, president of Bay Area-based **Miller, Sabino and Lee**. "A recruiter would not be calling you if she didn't think that your background and experience are a good fit for the specific opportunity she is calling about." The majority of her candidates are not looking for a position. According to

**Miller**, if recruiters have done their research appropriately, they should be offering you a position that is a step up.

Search firms can also be an invaluable resource. Some have expertise in a particular region of the country or in certain practice areas. **Kearney Boyle and Associates** specializes in intellectual property placements in the Bay Area--everyone from paralegals to attorneys. "We know just about everyone involved in IP," says **Carol Kearney**. "We know what salaries are being paid and we know what's going on in the different offices." Her firm's specialized knowledge is the result of more than 10 years in the business.

Prospective candidates can take advantage of a recruiter's breadth of information. **Major, Hagen & Africa** was founded more than 20 years ago and has offices in the U.S., Hong Kong, and London. **Chuck Fanning**, a partner at the firm's San Francisco office, says, "If someone wants to know about the differences and similarities among firms, we're the ones they contact." When a wave of firms opened offices in the Bay Area, **Fanning** says **Major, Hagen and Africa's** inside

knowledge of New York and Chicago firms was fortuitous. "We've worked with those firms for many years so we can tell people how a firm is governed or about the history of a firm."

A recruiter's job is to know the marketplace and be aware of trends. "We can synthesize the barrage of information and apply that knowledge to an attorney's specific circumstances," says **Delia Swan**. "We're all former practicing attorneys so we understand what their situation is." A lawyer can also find out that he is in a good position where he is and a move would not be the right decision.

"You never know what that recruiter is calling about," says Stacy Miller. "If it's a good recruiter, they have a good handle on where you are." Regardless of your position, when a recruiter calls, that opening conversation may be the beginning of a lasting and beneficial relationship."