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11:00 AM - 2:30 PM

Client Meeting

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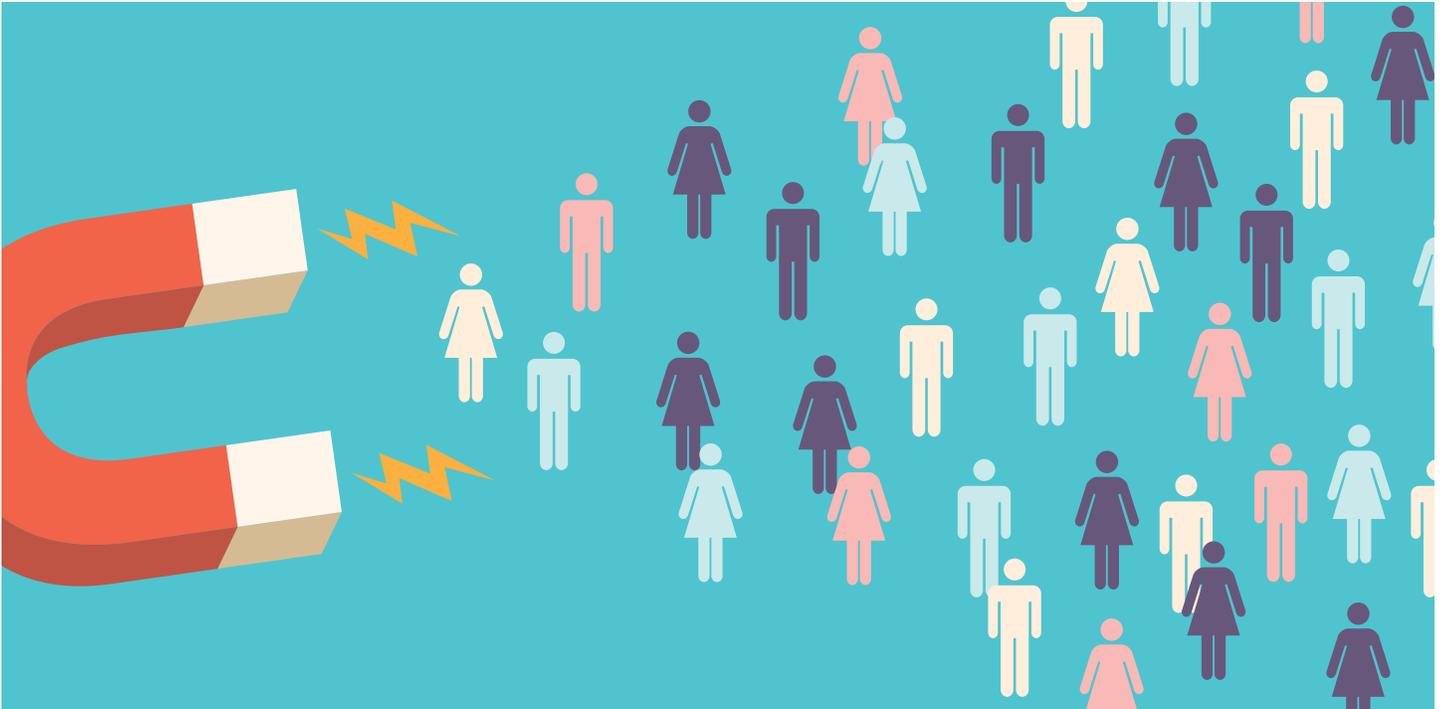
- Invite attendees
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- IT requests
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# 6 Strategies for Attracting Top Talent in a Tough Market

These ideas can ensure you'll get quality candidates through your door.



**KYLIE ORA LOBELL**  
Freelance Writer

**Your employees, including your partners, attorneys and their support staff, are the backbone of your law firm. When you hire and retain excellent employees, you are ensuring your firm's success.**

Though you know how important it is to hire the top talent in the legal field, the ultra-competitive job market makes it challenging. Unemployment is at 3.7 percent — the lowest rate in 50 years. While this is good news for workers, who have their choice of positions to pick from, it makes it harder for firms to snag qualified, top-performing candidates.

In this environment, law firms have to do what they can to ensure they are staying competitive and getting the right people in the door. "Inertia and self-selection are strong trends (culturally) in the legal community, so you may be surprised at just how small your actual, available talent pool is," says Michael A. Ellenhorn, Co-Founder and General Counsel at Decipher Global. "It takes a well-thought-out plan, the right intelligence and persistence."

And staying competitive is crucial to your law firm's survival. "The bottom line demands it. The rainmakers that can bring in new business are essential to the law firm's success," says

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David Reischer, an Attorney and Chief Executive Officer of LegalAdvice.com.

Ellenhorn says it also communicates that your firm is “dynamic, forward-thinking and relevant. These market messages will resonate with laterals, clients and internal stakeholders, reinforcing the firm’s brand value, so that when a real gap/need emerges, the firm will already be relevant in the given market.”

To guarantee that you are competitive among other law firms, take the following advice into consideration.

#### **CONDUCT REGULAR INTERVIEWS, EVEN IF YOU AREN'T HIRING**

When you have an opening at your law firm, does panic ensue? Do you typically end up hiring the first candidate who seems good, instead of taking your time to find the exact right fit? This is not a best practice, and should be avoided by regularly interviewing strong candidates, says Matt Starosciak of Proven Law Marketing. “If you’re interviewing qualified candidates all the time, you’ll have a constant pipeline of potential hires,” he says. “It’s also a subtle reminder to existing employees that they must do good work to keep their position.”

#### **CULTIVATE CULTURE AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

Company culture is a big deal to the candidates applying today. A good company culture communicates that your law firm cherishes its workers and wants and expects them to flourish.

Jason Savage, Chief Operating Officer at the Law Office of Kenneth Berger, says his firm offers employees the opportunity to become the best at their job. “We require our staff to embrace professional development both internally and externally. They are evaluated on it. A commonality among our team members is the desire to become great and be the best in their positions.”

#### **OFFER FAIR COMPENSATION, BENEFITS AND BONUSES**

When you spend more on your employees, you’re going to see better results. Savage says he believes that compensation

is not where you should be cutting costs, because in the end, you pay more. “I would much rather have a high-revenue producer that is a bit more expensive than hire a less motivated or talented person and try to push them to create revenue and extraordinary outcomes.”

Savage also says that benefits should be incorporated into the compensation when your law firm can afford it. It’ll be attractive to prospective employees, but also strike a positive cord with your current staff — they’ll see the positive changes you’re making and want to stay. “Many companies just freeze at the prospect of increasing costs and adding benefits,” Savage says. “Adding them as you can will build a great package before you know it.”

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Along with compensation and benefits, you can provide performance incentives, especially for non-attorneys that do new client intake or human resources work, suggests Starosciak. “For many candidates, the opportunity to earn a bonus can move them from one prospective employer to another very quickly.”

#### **UPGRADE YOUR OFFICE SPACE**

When candidates walk into your law firm, you want them to be wowed. At the same time, you also hope your employees feel comfortable and productive in your office, where they spend so much of their time.

Luke Raimondo, who is Senior Managing Director at Savills, says good working environments have conferencing space outside of leased premises, are near restaurants and retail options, and have convenient parking spaces.

“Good news travels fast and bad news travels even faster. If an organization has a bad reputation for the way they treat employees, you can be sure that potential new hires will hear these bad things. Treat your employees like the valuable asset that they are.”

“A healthy building and well-designed space encourage people to spend more time at the office,” Raimondo says. Accessibility is also key — being in a location that is timely and convenient to commute to and from for employees.

### UPGRADE YOUR TECHNOLOGY

Today’s employees use technology for personal tasks outside the office, so make their lives easier at work by upgrading your systems.

Peter Wallqvist, Vice President of Strategy at iManage, says law firms need to use technology that resembles what junior candidates are using in their personal lives. “The existence of tools to perform many of the aforementioned routine tasks should be embraced and seen as a tool to be used by the more technologically savvy junior lawyers, rather than them having to be the tool themselves.”

### A BIT OF KINDNESS GOES A LONG WAY

Your employees should feel as if you care about and are invested in them. By putting money toward the proper office space and technology, providing fair compensation and benefits, offering career development opportunities,

interviewing on a continuous basis and cultivating culture, you can do just that.

“Make sure your existing employees have good things to say about your law firm,” says Reischer. “Good news travels fast and bad news travels even faster. If an organization has a bad reputation for the way they treat employees, you can be sure that potential new hires will hear these bad things. Treat your employees like the valuable asset that they are.” ■

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Kylie Ora Lobell** is a freelance writer living in Los Angeles. She covers legal issues, blogs about content marketing, and reports on Jewish topics. She’s been published in *Tablet Magazine*, *NewsCred*, *The Jewish Journal of Los Angeles* and *CMO.com*.



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