

FROM LAWYER TO RECRUITER

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The decision to move from legal practice wasn't easy, however after months of searching the internet for something different, I realised my interests were outside of a practising role.

Why legal recruitment?

I did my articles at Maddocks and worked in the property team for nearly two years. It is a great firm and team, so the thought of starting again at another firm as a lawyer was not very appealing when I had everything I needed where I was.

Staying within the legal industry was an easy decision, it was just a question of what I was suited and qualified to do outside of being a lawyer and match that with my interests. I know that I'm a relationship-driven person and thoroughly enjoyed this component of my role at Maddocks. After many months of thought, it was my involvement with graduate recruitment at university and my former firm, including careers fairs and interviewing seasonal and articulated clerks, that I kept returning to. I then made a decision that I wanted to help lawyers take the next step (or steps) in their career.

What do I do?

On a daily basis I'm liaising with lawyers and firms, reviewing curriculum vitae, giving advice about firms, practice areas and teams, preparing lawyers for interview as well as assisting in the negotiation of employment contracts and best of all, securing the perfect role for lawyers, in either Australia or overseas.

I've learned about new areas of law and different firms and countries – having travelled to Auckland, Dubai, London and Dublin for work over the past few years. Most importantly, I assist lawyers in brainstorming in relation to their career and aim to be there to guide them for the duration.

How is it similar?

- Everyday there's a new challenge or scenario.
- You must be able to think outside the square.
- High level service required for clients.
- Importance of knowing your lawyers and clients in depth (similar to knowing your clients and files in detail).

- In terms of service, the more lawyers you meet the more people you need to keep in mind for positions. In this way it is similar to managing hundreds of files at a time, which requires organisation, systems, efficiency and promptness.

How is it different?

In a law firm you are (generally) in control of the matter from the time the file is opened to its conclusion, whereas in the recruitment process you're relying on your client and the lawyer to guide you regarding the next step they wish to take.

Although a recruitment can take anywhere between two weeks to 10 months, things move faster than your average property file. Firms and lawyers are generally grateful for your assistance.

No "too-hard basket" – I remember those advices/memos that I just didn't want to do – we all have them. In comparison, if you can't assist a lawyer obtain a new position you tell them, but you give helpful advice or information regarding their curriculum vitae or next career move.

In practice you need to know the law (or get up to speed on it quickly) and get it right the first time. In recruitment you need to be able to match the exact skills/knowledge/personality of the lawyer to the right firm.

Is it a waste of six years of study and three in legal practice?

The short answer – absolutely not. We pride ourselves on not only being able to "talk the talk". We bring with us the ethical standards, morals and professionalism we expect of our clients and lawyers, coupled with the knowledge and skills acquired during practice.

Did I make the right decision?

Absolutely. Over the past four years I have developed strong relationships with clients and lawyers. When the time at work zooms by and you look forward to going to work each day, you know you made the right decision.