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Dear Career Doctor

I am a fourth-year corporate/mergers and acquisitions lawyer at a top-tier firm in Melbourne. Now that the economic climate in Australia is stronger and the recruitment market appears to have bounced back, my partner and I are keen to experience living and working either in the UK or US. I know that those markets were hit a lot harder than we were. Have their markets fully recovered too? Also, how should I go about positioning myself to get a good job?

LEGAL TRAVELLER

DEAR LEGAL TRAVELLER

Taking your legal career into the international market is a very exciting idea and one that has been a well-worn path.

The global financial crisis did temporarily halt many international aspirations. Now that the effects of the crisis are diminishing, many Australian lawyers like you are looking again at international opportunities.

Unfortunately, the international markets have not improved at the same pace as the Australian legal market, mainly because their markets were hit harder and for a longer period. That said, there are some exceptional opportunities available to quality lawyers with strong backgrounds.

Fortunately for you our country's lawyers enjoy an excellent reputation internationally. This can be attributed to the high quality of training both at our law schools and at our leading law firms, our strong work ethic, and the fact that Australians are viewed as pleasant and adaptable – so the path has been made easier for you.

In terms of the London market, it is continuing to slowly and steadily improve. At present, UK firms are recruiting in many areas including corporate. However, firms are considerably more selective

than they previously were, given the dearth of roles compared to previous years and the high quality of candidates currently on the market.

The US is still feeling the effects of the financial crisis. Recruitment of Australian lawyers is still rare and opportunities are only offered in exceptional cases.

To assist you in a potential move, I have set out below a couple of factors that are important to consider throughout the planning stage:

Sponsorship

Unless you are a citizen of the specific country you wish to work in, you will require sponsorship. It follows that if you do not require sponsorship, you will certainly be ahead of your competitors. That being said, large global law firms will be in a position to sponsor you in most circumstances.

Academic results

Although academic results are not the only factor underpinning a successful application, they still hold a high level of importance in the recruitment process. Law firms in the UK and US always request a copy of a solicitor's academic transcript to be forwarded together with a resume.

You have an exciting time ahead of you, good luck. If you need further information on how to set yourself up for the move, it would be worth seeking advice from a recruitment consultant who specialises in international recruitment. •

Career Doctor

Do you have a question for Career Doctor?

If so, email younglaw@liv.asn.au.

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