

## Business & Careers

# Applying recruitment lessons to your practice



**Warren Smith**  
**The Headhunter**

The challenges faced by recruiters offer some interesting insights into how highly sophisticated individuals make decisions on some of the most critical aspects of their life.

Here are five lessons top recruiters invariably internalize that lawyers could equally apply to their practice.

You are responsible — In recruitment, the axiom is no search moves unless you drive it. While recruiters

obviously love those “fall into your lap” moments, the reality is recruiters are more often required to reach out to prospective candidates to drive their market. Similarly for lawyers, all too often there is a temptation to rely on firm brand, prior client relationships and reputation to drive practice success. It is important for lawyers to recognize they too must drive their market. One partner I know makes a point to have at least one lunch a week with a promising contact — someone he finds personally interesting and/or represents a future prospective client. Not surprisingly, he has one of the largest practices in the city.

Pick up the phone — There is a tremendous temptation in recruitment to rely heavily on e-mail to reach out to lawyers. However, the

very best recruiters are those who can break through and connect directly. This requires picking up the phone. The reality is the often complex details of a potential opportunity or career discussion can be lost when communicated by e-mail. For lawyers, while obviously there are times when e-mail is required to communicate specific ideas (or where a written record is required of a conversation), the reality is a phone call or in-person exchange allows you a far better chance to gauge the client's reaction, and tailor your conversation to better address his or her needs.

Don't make assumptions — Recruiters work in a real-time environment; clients invariably need their next hire “yesterday.” Recruiters not only have to anticipate client needs, but also not

make assumptions about who might currently be in play. How often have you read about a lateral move in the market and wondered: “I thought that partner was a lifer at their old firm?” Similarly for lawyers, don't make assumptions about potential clients in the market when anticipating where to expend your marketing efforts.

Control your conversations — When dealing with lawyers as a recruiter, we are frequently faced with sophisticated, bright, and adept candidates who excel in driving conversation. The challenge is to maintain control over the scope and direction while maintaining an appropriate level of deference. The key for effective recruitment is to always retain control of your conversations.

Often setting the agenda up front is a useful strategy. Similarly for lawyers, while a client will often set the parameters of his or her needs, establishing control of your conversations can be critical to delivering exceptional service, while also maximizing time spent with your clients.

Do what others won't — Success as a recruiter often comes by doing what others can't or won't. Similarly for lawyers, often going that extra mile, making that one extra inquiry or committing to provide that additional level of service can be the difference between securing some of a client's work, or all of it.

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS



We are proud to welcome The Honourable Dennis O'Connor, Q.C., in his role as counsel to Borden Ladner Gervais LLP. Dennis was an outstanding senior litigator with the firm for many years and then had a distinguished career on the bench for 14 years. He was appointed to the Court of Appeal for Ontario in 1998 and served as the Associate Chief Justice of Ontario from 2001 until he retired in December 2012. He was recognized with the 2013 Advocates' Society Medal, the highest expression of esteem that the Society can convey to one of its members.

Dennis brings exceptional insight and depth of experience to litigation cases. He will be a tremendous asset to our clients and to the BLG Litigation Group. He also will be available for arbitrations and mediations. We are honoured to have Dennis return to BLG.

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## BRUDER SPRINGSTEAD LLP

Bruder Springstead is pleased to welcome the following associates to the firm:



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