

PRIVATE PRACTICE UPDATE

April 2011

Are you in demand?

During 2010 there were clear signs of recovery in private practice, especially amongst the Top 20 and many of the US firms, in terms of recruitment requirements where in addition to a continuing flow of instructions in various areas of litigation and employment law there was a marked increase in the need for mid-level associates in mainstream transactional areas and in financial services and IT/commercial. This remains the cautiously optimistic pattern in 2011 and the indications are for a continuation in these trends as confidence continues to grow. Salary increases are expected to be modest with greater flexibility in the use of discretionary bonuses in individual cases to reward and retain key performers.

Main areas of demand include:

- Litigation (including specialist areas like banking, insurance, professional negligence and property)
- Employment
- Corporate
- Finance
- Financial services
- IT/commercial
- EU/competition

Lawyer stories

Hays Legal's Alison Pendleton has helped many private practice lawyers make a smooth move between firms during her career in recruitment. In this short interview she talks us through some of her experience with candidates making a move to a new career.

Alison Pendleton
Business Director
Hays Legal



A. What tips would you give to someone wanting to get ahead in private practice?

Be prepared to work very hard and for long hours. It is very important to know the law, however perhaps more so to develop a good understanding of and relationship with your client.

B. What is most fulfilling about a legal career?

Most of my candidates tend to talk about the intellectual challenge. It can be a rewarding profession in terms of salary and status, but unless you enjoy what you are doing and feel appreciated it can be very difficult.

C. What key factors push a candidate to move?

There can be a number of factors out of a candidate's control, however when candidates chose to move it is often for a new start. After several years in the same organisation, especially in recent years with pay freezes and increased workload, a fresh challenge can be incredibly appealing. Candidates also move to improve their CV, and are attracted by places with clearly defined prospects.

D. What is the most unusual/entertaining experience a jobseeker has had?

One candidate I knew had a really interesting meeting, when he discovered his interviewer was an old sports team-mate! You can imagine there was a lot of shared extra-curricular activity that was not mentioned over the course of that meeting.

E. What do candidates think of the recruitment experience?

It can be a very interesting experience, and provide a sense of worth following a difficult time for lawyers. If you have experienced pay freezes, it can be very validating to go to the market and see what your skills are actually worth.

Moving and shaping the market

Remuneration for solicitors has stagnated in the last couple of years. In conjunction with Legal Week, Hays Legal has recently conducted extensive benefits and skills surveys of both employers and candidates.

Read the full report and watch several Q&A videos, including one where Yvonne Smyth from Hays Legal and John Maples from Legal Week discuss the future for the legal market.

Key moves Q4 2010

Every quarter we produce the 'Key Moves newsletter', a comprehensive list of the important appointments in recent months throughout the country and a recommended reading in order to know who's and where. Click here to learn more.

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A career in-house

The last few years have seen a rise in demand for in-house lawyers, as companies seek to reduce the cost of external instructions whilst having their own specialist closer to the business. Across the UK, almost a quarter of solicitors practice in-house, where they benefit from a refreshing style of work and where the proximity to the business and commerciality is prized above one's billable hours.

Hays Legal is proud to work closely with C&I Group, which represents in-house solicitors all over the country as well as organising social events and seminars. They provide help and support for members throughout their in-house careers. If you would like to learn more please go to www.cigroup.org.uk.



Latest private practice opportunities

To view and apply for current job opportunities please **click here**

Feedback

We would be keen to hear any feedback or comments you would have about the newsletter. Do drop us a message at infolegal@hays.com

