



Networking: An Effective Method for Job Seekers in the Legal Field

By Christine Cristiano

According to a recent survey, one of the most effective methods for legal support professionals to uncover suitable work is to network. The survey, developed by Robert Half Legal and conducted by an independent research firm, reported that 51% of the lawyers responded that personal, or peer referrals and networking are the most effective methods for finding support staff. The survey also revealed that 21% of the respondents ranked staffing or placement firms as the second most effective method for finding qualified staff. Robert Half Legal is the legal staffing division for Robert Half International and specializes in the placement of legal professionals.



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When asked "which of the following resources do you feel is most effective for recruiting

skilled legal professionals", the results revealed that 12% of the respondents believed that college and technical school recruiting programs were effective, 8% were in favor of Internet and job boards, and 4% chose classified advertisements. (The remaining 4% of the respondents cited 'other' or 'did not know'.)

The survey involved 300 lawyers from some of the largest legal firms and corporations in Canada and the United States. In order to participate, all the respondents were required to have at least 3 years of legal experience. Jonathan Veale, LL.B., division director of Robert Half Legal's Toronto operations, offers that "to fill legal support roles in growing

practice areas such as bankruptcy and litigation or to staff large projects, many lawyers are turning to their professional or personal contacts for recommendations." Veale also noted that "with increased competition for job seekers, it is essential for legal assistants and law clerks to refine their networking skills."

Veale advises that individuals seeking work in the legal field should consider registering with a legal staffing firm as part of their job search strategy. "Many full-time positions and project-based opportunities are never advertised, staffing firms can help tap into the hidden job market since they have established relationships with a variety of law firms and corporations." Veal concludes that specialized staffing firms "can also provide insight on career management, hiring and compensation trends, as well as offer free professional development training."

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