LATERAL PARTNER CHECKLIST[1]

The following is a checklist which can be used to help remember many of the myriad steps that need to be taken when bringing a lateral partner on board. The same steps can easily be used when integrating in a small group of practitioners into a larger enterprise as well.

The administrator can facilitate the process significantly by completing the columns entitled Responsible Party and Target Completion Date. The primary focus for the date structure should be driven by the partnership admission date and the target move date. Once you know what those dates are you can determine when each of the steps before and after need to be completed.

It is extremely helpful to identify who will be responsible for each action. Some of these actions need to be done by the new partner; some need to be done by the new firm. Depending upon the staffing structure in the new firm, you may wish to identify which individuals, whether at a partner, manager, or employee level, are responsible for each action or task.

This list, including responsible parties and targeted completion dates should then be distributed to all interested parties.

[1] This list is intended to offer up an opening framework to assist in identifying critical issues to be considered in conjunction with lateral hires within a BVFLS practice and is not intended to be all inclusive for any specific application. In addition, a timeline and critical path analysis should be established to optimize the use of a resource of this type. Note that the title of Partner and Partnership, as used here, is intended to be synonymous with Shareholders in a corporate form of practice and, for that matter, be trimmed down for application to an experienced lateral hire that is not at partner level status.

TASK	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TARGET COMPLETION DATE
Identify lateral partner candidate		
Coordinate interviews		
Assess practice and fit within firm		
Review client list		
Review multiyear performance history, including originations, billable hours, bills rendered, write off history, and any other pertinent data		
Hourly rate, and rate structure, and firm philosophy regarding deviations from standard rates up or down		
Prepare complete and thorough conflict of interest check on all current clients of partner and all contacts a partner		
Negotiate compensation		
Discuss business plan		
Research partner to see what information is available on the Internet		
Check references from former firms is possible		
Check references from clients, if possible		

TASK	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TARGET COMPLETION DATE
Partnership admission vote		
Determine admission date		
Prepare client communication letters regarding transfer of files		
Track receipts of authorization letters		
Prepare physical files for whom authorization letters have been received for relocation		
Prepare all electronic/digital files for whom authorization letters have been received for copying or transfer		
Confirm target moved date		
Confirm that partner has given notice and departure is public		
Determine office assignment for partner		
Discuss with partner, secretarial and administrative support needs and prepare coverage, as is appropriate		
Determine whether partner will be bringing		

TASK	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TARGET COMPLETION DATE
furniture were will be furniture from firm		
Make arrangements with movers, including contacting building managers from old firm and new firm to arrange for access		
Assess lineal feet of file storage needed, arrange for moving boxes, and plan for file relocation a new office		
Determine who in old office will pack files and personal possessions for partner		
Prepare list of partners files located in off-site storage for whom authorization letters have been received that need to be transferred		
Ensure that office equipment will be available for first of employment, including computer, phone, laptop, iPad, cell phone.		
Prepare contact list for partners contacts who will receive moving announcements, and firm clients who will receive moving announcements		

TASK	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TARGET COMPLETION DATE
Cross-reference with existing from list		
Prepare draft press release		
Prepare a list of special recipients a press release desired by partner		
Draft announcement and determine publications, where this will be printed		
Have photograph of partner taken if necessary		
Open all new clients and new matters in firms computer system for all clients for whom authorization letters have been received		
Determine hourly billing rate		
Contact firms, professional liability insurance carrier		
Determine whether tail coverage will be necessary		
Notify licensing authorities and any other bodies, as appropriate		
Notify any appropriate parties, where there are pending litigation matters		
On day before move, convert all electronic		

TASK	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TARGET COMPLETION DATE
documents, calendars, contact information, and any other digital information		
Send out announcement internally in firm to introduce new partner providing phone number and office location and summary background		
Review all benefits with partner		
Provide general orientation for partner		
Plan welcoming lunch with other partners on a first date		
Prepare tour of office to introduce partner to all employees as is appropriate		
Provide computer and systems training for partner		
Review with partner schedule of all partner meetings and or practice group meetings		
Specifically review partner expectations regarding billable time entry and billing guidelines		
Introduce partner to all Associates and the		

TASK	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TARGET COMPLETION DATE
paraprofessionals in practice area as appropriate		
After several weeks, Check back to see that files have been opened up in computer system and that time has been entered		
At beginning of first month checking with partner to ensure appropriate billing practices		
Give copies of this to do list to new partner, and to all appropriate senior personnel at firm, who will be involved with process so that each will know his or her responsibilities and target dates		
Communicate regularly with lateral partner and with senior management regarding the status of all issues related to the new partner's join the firm		
Periodically check in with partner to ensure all is going well		