

## What's the State of the Legal Job Market in 2016?



*Summary: BCG published a detailed analysis of the 2016 state of the legal market.*

The strength of the legal market can be assessed by how often law firms step outside the hiring paradigm, says top legal recruiter [Harrison Barnes at BCG](#). The general paradigm for lateral hiring is that firms hire employed attorneys from top law firms and who have one to six years of experience and strong academic credentials. Additionally, firms want attorneys with some ties to the area, have passed the bar exam, and appear stable and interview well.

Generally, firms who want to hire attorneys with more experience than six years want those attorneys to have significant business or be extremely specialized in their field.

Barnes writes that this paradigm has been present for decades, but it is how law firms adhere to these rules that show us the state of the market. Essentially, if law firms make exceptions to this rule, the market is good. If law firms adhere strictly to these rules, then the market is poor.

From his extensive experience recruiting attorneys, Barnes saw that 2015 was a good market and this year promises to be the same. He derived his conclusions based upon law firms' exception to the hiring paradigm. For instance, American law firms were hiring foreign attorneys as well as in-house attorneys. Additionally, in 2015, BCG placed attorneys with out-of-the box credentials. For example, he assisted one lawyer turned editor who was making \$25/hr after the attorney was laid off by a Southern law firm. Barnes found this attorney a \$300,000 position in California, even though this attorney never practiced law in the state.

So what does 2016 hold? For some fields, Barnes predicts a slowdown in hiring. For instance, 2016 may mark a bubble for corporate attorneys due to a decline in hiring at the end of 2015, and real estate attorney hiring may also slow due to the increase in interest rates.

However, while some fields slow, others benefit. For example, Barnes predicts that the market for litigators will pick up in 2016. With rising interest rates, the economy will slow, and when the economy slows, litigation rises.

Overall, Barnes offers the following advice for 2016. "In my humble opinion, if I were an attorney I would try and be in the most stable law firm possible in 2016, whether that means moving or staying right where I am," Barnes writes.

For detailed analysis of the legal market in 2016, see [the full article here](#).

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