

## Hottest Law Practice Areas of 2017



*Summary: What practice areas are most desirable for law firms looking for lateral hires?*

**Read the full report by Harrison Barnes here: [The BCG Attorney Search 2017 State of the American Lateral Law Firm Legal Market Report](#).**

The practice of law is going to change in 2017. That's according to industry expert Harrison Barnes of BCG Attorney Search. Barnes has recently published [an analysis of the 2017 legal market](#) and the hot and weak practice areas. He noted that it is normal for all practice areas to go through cycles; and this year, niche areas with few attorneys such as employment, ERISA/executive compensation, and healthcare were in high demand. This year, he stated that generalists will have a hard time if they wanted to move laterally.

"Going into 2017, the practice of law seems to be changing for lateral attorneys—law firms in the last four months of the year were hiring more attorneys in niche practice areas, or with niche skills (in major practice areas), than at any time I have ever seen in the past. Firms were avoiding generalists. The majority of attorneys hired in every practice area had some sort of “niche” skill that was not normally found in the market,” Barnes stated.

In his report, Barnes concluded that [Employment Law](#) was a “very vibrant” practice area in 2017. From 2015 to 2016, BCG Attorney Search saw a 45.25% growth of employment attorney placements and a 74.13% growth of interviews in that area.

"There is enough demand in the market that unlike litigation and corporate, for example, law firms do not necessarily require the attorneys they hire to have “high-brow” qualifications,” Barnes said. "For example, we saw several major law firms hire attorneys from second-tier law schools and smaller law firms. Attorneys with top law school and firm qualifications can practically write their tickets at the associate level in this practice area."

Another hot practice was [ERISA/Executive Compensation](#).

"By every single measure, this practice group went gangbusters in 2016. Whether the attorney was senior with more than 10 years of experience, or junior with only one year of experience—firms at every level were “biting” and eager to hire attorneys in this practice area,” Barnes said. "Compliance has become extremely important in the ERISA and executive compensation field, and this is keeping attorneys busy."

[Healthcare](#) is another hot area for lateral attorneys this year. According to Barnes, this market is the best it has ever been, and lateral healthcare attorneys are desired all over the country. Additionally, because of the new presidential administration, there is likely to be changes with the Affordable Care Act. This will result in even more demand for this specialty.

In addition to the aforementioned fields, data privacy, finance, immigration, insurance coverage, technology transactions, and trust and estates are also hot areas in 2017.

Source: [BCG Attorney Search](#)

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**What do you think about the hot areas listed? Let us know in the comments below.**