

Briefs

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More Than One Fourth of Lawyers To Hire in Second Quarter

More than one-quarter (26 percent) of lawyers surveyed plan to hire full-time legal staff during the second quarter of 2012, while 4 percent anticipate staff reductions, according to figures from Robert Half Hiring Index.

The net 22 percent increase in hiring activity compares with a net hiring increase of 27 percent forecast in the first quarter of this year. Fifty-seven percent of attorneys polled expect no change in staff levels in the next three months. More than half (59 percent) of lawyers said it is challenging to find skilled legal professionals, up eight points from the previous quarter. Hiring activity is expected to take place predominantly at law firms, and bankruptcy/foreclosure is the practice area predicted to see the most growth in the coming months. Among the most significant findings:

- The net 22 percent of lawyers expecting to hire is down five points from a 27 percent net increase in



hiring activity projected last quarter. Lawyers interviewed plan to add an average of two full-time positions.

- The three most in-demand positions are lawyers (85 percent), paralegals (39 percent) and legal secretaries (24 percent).
- The practice areas expected to see the most growth in the second quarter are bankruptcy/foreclosure, litigation and general business/commercial law.
- Fifty-nine percent of lawyers said it is challenging to find skilled legal professionals, up eight points from the previous quarter.

“Hiring is expected to remain active as law firms see renewed demand for their services,” said Charles Volkert, executive director of Robert Half

Legal. “As the number of bankruptcies, foreclosures and lawsuit filings continues to increase, the need for legal counsel in these areas should remain strong. Law firms are recruiting experienced candidates to expand lucrative practice groups and pursue new business opportunities.”

“To manage rising caseloads and supplement the work of full-time employees, many law firms and corporate legal departments are bringing in legal professionals on a project basis who possess expertise in key areas,” Volkert said. “Experienced, tech-savvy paralegals who can take on increased responsibilities, such as assisting with document management and discovery-related projects, are highly marketable.”

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59 percent of Millionaires Feel Obligated to Give Back

America's millionaires recognize that with their wealth comes responsibility to help America through its challenges, according to survey findings by PNC Wealth Management.

More than half of the millionaires surveyed feel an obligation to "give back" and few are concerned with their ability to give, according to the eighth annual Wealth and Values Survey, entitled "Responsibility and Money: How the Wealthy View Their Role in Society" that was conducted from Sept. 15 to Oct. 11, 2011.

Despite the continued trials of the U.S. economy since 2008, the number of millionaires who believe "I have an obligation to give back to my community" has remained stable under this survey. This year, 59 percent agree or strongly agree, the same number as in the 2008 survey.

Meanwhile, the number of millionaires concerned about their ability to give to charities has declined to 11 percent from 20 percent in 2008, according to the survey of 555 millionaires. The survey also revealed that 21 percent of these wealthy donors plan to increase their giving, while 46 percent plan no change and 22 percent intend to cut back on the amount they give to charity. In addition, 70 percent believe they bear a special responsibility in society to help the less fortunate, and 64 percent believe they should give substantial sums to charities to improve society.

The survey asked about billionaire Warren Buffett's call on wealthy individuals to pay more in taxes as well as give more to charitable causes. Nearly half, 49 percent, said they agreed with Buffett, but did not believe they "are in the same league" as he is, while more than one-fifth (22 percent) agree that they are able to help in the way Buffett

suggests.

"It is encouraging to see that millionaires, considering today's economic headwinds, recognize a personal responsibility to give back to perpetuate the legacy of a 'cared for society,'" said R. Bruce Bickel, senior vice president of PNC Wealth Management. "While constantly re-evaluating one's financial position to determine where, to whom and how much one can give, the wealthy may be guided not by the wallet, but by the heart." ■



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IN MEMORIAM

Richard Curtis
Dec. 18, 2011, Age 67

Steven Dranoff
Jan. 22, 2012, Age 68

I. Steven Levy
Jan. 7, 2012, Age 54

Antoinette R. Stone
Jan. 30, 2012, Age 65

Allan L. Marmon
Jan. 11, 2012, Age 73

John P. Kelley
Feb. 21, 2012, Age 74

Bernard L. Siegel
Jan. 17, 2011, Age 73

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For information, call Lynne Brown,
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More Smart Phone Evidence Being Used in Divorce

People are using their smart phones for almost everything these days and the evidence is now following them into divorce court. A resounding 92 percent of the nation's top divorce attorneys say that they have seen an increase in the number of cases using evidence taken from iPhones, Droids, and other smart phones during the past three years, according to a recent survey of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers. In addition, 94 percent of the respondents have cited an overall rise in the use of text messages as evidence during the same time period.

"As smart phones and text messaging become main sources of communication during the course of each day, there will



inevitably be more and more evidence that an estranged spouse can collect," said Ken Altshuler, president of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers. "Text messages can be particularly powerful forms of evidence during a divorce case, because they are

written records of someone's thoughts, actions and intentions."

Overall, 92 percent of AAML members cited an increase in the use of evidence taken from smart phones during the past three years, while 8 percent have said no change. Also, 94 percent of respondents have noted an increase in text message evidence during the same amount of time, while 4 percent have seen a decrease, and 2 percent observed no change. As far as the most common forms of evidence taken from smart phones, text messages hold the top spot at 62 percent, emails follow at 23 percent, phone numbers and call histories at 13 percent, and GPS and Internet search histories each at 1 percent. ■

Firms Increase Recruiting at Law Schools, NALP Finds

Entry-level recruiting has not returned to the robust levels found in the years leading up to the recession, but 2011 marked the second year in a row in which law firms returned to law school campuses in somewhat greater numbers than the year before after slashing their recruiting efforts in 2008 and 2009, according to NALP's Perspectives on Fall 2011 Law Student Recruiting.

Despite the additional recruiting volume, law firms continue to bring in small summer classes, barely increasing class size from recession-era lows. By contrast, offer rates have returned to the highs seen before the recession as firms follow through with their stated intent to make offers to the majority of their summer associates when they can. For the third year in a row, few firms ventured back into the 3L market, and thus, students with offers from their summer program found few competing offers on the table. Between that and smaller class sizes, it is no surprise that the overall acceptance rate of offers from summer programs remained at historic highs in 2011.

For members of the Class of 2012, those who were summer associates in 2011, the offer rate for entry-level associate positions climbed up four percentage points, to 91.4 percent,

following an approximately 18 percentage point jump the year before, those jumps coming on the heels of a 2009 rate that plunged to only 69.3 percent. At 91.4 percent, the 2011 offer rate is the second highest in more than 17 years, topped only by the 92.8 percent rate measured in 2007. The offer acceptance rate for these summer offers, after dipping slightly in 2010, returned to 85 percent, very close to the rate of 84.5 percent for 2009. It is important to keep in mind that the average summer class size did not increase from its historic recession-driven size, remaining at just 8 for the second year in a row, while the median class size bumped up by one, from 4 to 5. Only 18 percent of offices reported returning to the market to look for 3Ls who had not previously worked for them, and of those, one-quarter made no offers at all. Of those offices that made an offer, most made only one. (This compares with 42 percent of offices recruiting 3Ls in 2007 and 53 percent in 2006 on the high end, and on the other end of the scale, a bare 3 percent in 2009.)

"This is not a hot recruiting market," says James Leipold, NALP's executive director. "But this sort of modest growth may well represent the best we can hope for with year on year comparisons

going forward. I would anticipate volatility in the recruiting market for some time. For instance, 2012 is off to a slow start economically for law firms, and we may see that reflected in the recruiting numbers this August."

In 2011, both law schools and law firms reported a net increase in recruiting activity as measured by the number of campus visits made, though in the aggregate both schools and firms reported both increases and decreases, with the numbers reporting increases edging out those reporting decreases in almost every market.

While law firm recruiting activity and volume vary greatly from one office to another, these national aggregate numbers clearly demonstrate that recruiting volumes continue to inch up for the second year in a row as law firms try to gauge the new normal. It seems clear that in the near future summer class size is not likely to return to what it was before the recession, and in fact may never return to what it was in 2007. Competition for one of the coveted summer associate spots is likely to remain keen for the foreseeable future, as law firms are likely to remain conservative in their overall approach to entry-level hiring. ■