



Successful lateral hiring

10 tips to successfully onboard a new lateral hire.



‘Sink or Swim?’: Tips on how to successfully onboard a new lateral hire

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You've done an internal audit of your existing skill set and identified a deficiency. It might be that you never had that particular skill set in the first place. Or it could be you've recently lost the skill to a retirement or departure. Either way, you don't have it, and you need it.

So, you call up your favourite head-hunter and ask them to come in for a chat.

Often viewed as a quick win to a problem, unfortunately many lateral hires simply don't live up to the initial hype, lasting two to three years at best before moving on to pastures new.

But why is that, particularly given the fact that YOU identified a need for THEIR skills?

The answer to that question is not as simple nor immediately apparent as you might think.

Onboarding a new lateral into your firm can be a complex process. To help you with this, here are 10 tips that should go a long way to helping you better enable a smooth transition of that new star that gives both them and you the best chance of longevity at their new home.

10 tips for a successful lateral hire

Pre-acquisition

Due diligence

Understand the new lateral's client base, practice area, and expectations. This helps in aligning their integration with your firm's goals. In particular, ask yourself at this stage whether there are likely to be conflict or commercial issues onboarding a lateral with this type of client base.

Clear objectives

Set clear objectives and expectations for the transition period to follow, including short-term and long-term goals.

Onboarding

Welcome and onboarding

Create a comprehensive onboarding program to help familiarise the new lateral with your culture, systems, and team members.

Client introduction

Arrange meetings between the new lateral and your firm's existing clients to introduce them and discuss ongoing matters. Likewise, arrange meetings between the new lateral's clients and you to introduce your firm's capabilities to the new lateral's clients.

Define roles and responsibilities

Clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of the lateral, as well as how they fit into your team's existing structure.

Communication

Internal communication

Inform the firm's staff about the new lateral's arrival, their role, and how they will be contributing to the firm (remember that skill set you were missing in this communication chat!).

External communication

Communicate with external media channels about how the new lateral will boost your firm's offering.

Support

Mentorship

Assign a mentor to help the new lateral with their transition – for example, who do they ask to approve their expenses?

Resources

Provide access to necessary resources and support, including administrative assistance (like business development support) and technology.

Integration

Team building

Organise an offsite or team-building activity to help the new lateral integrate with the existing team.

You cannot guarantee the successful integration of a lateral hire into your business, but you can set them up to fail. To avoid this problem, schedule regular check-ins to assess how well the onboarding is going and make adjustments as needed. After a set, pre-agreed term, conduct a formal evaluation to review how well things are going and address any outstanding challenges.

When you think about how much you just paid that favourite head-hunter of yours, make sure to follow these easy onboarding tips to help ensure your new star gets the second-best possible start.

And if you want the best possible start onboarding your new star lateral, contact us.

In case you missed it!

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- [5 tips to make your next client business development meeting a success!](#)
- [10 rules for business development success](#)
- [10 ways to leverage your referral network and win more work](#)

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