



# Monday Monday

*Connecting the Dots with Karen Kaplowitz*



*Helping you create and reinforce the habits of successful career building,  
gleaned from my work as a business development strategist, trainer and coach*

Volume 14, Issue 20

October 12, 2020

## **Is It Safe for Candidates to Get Back into the Lateral Recruiting Market?**

NALSC, the National Association of Legal Search Consultants, invited me to co-lead a breakout session on onboarding and offboarding partners during the pandemic at [NALSC's Virtual Fall Symposium](#) along with Tracy Newirth, the Director of Senior Talent Acquisition at Greenberg Traurig. Back in April, I wrote an [article](#) which concluded that based on early observations of lateral moves during the pandemic, that lateral integration seemed to be working as well — or even better — than pre-pandemic. It is too early for hard data but it is clear that working virtually has added a new dimension to firms' daily operations which may have triggered more attention to the process of onboarding laterals.

Historically, there has been a high rate of failure in lateral partner moves, often reported to be close to 50 percent. Many lateral failures are the result of firms' lacking a process for integrating laterals and the result of gaps between promises made to laterals while they were being recruited and their experience upon arrival. Even though the pandemic has drastically reduced the opportunities for in person meetings, the challenge of working remotely during the pandemic may have encouraged more effective lateral integration. Because firms cannot assume that the integration process will just happen "organically" with casual "watercooler" conversations or meals or meetings, firms appear to be stepping up to be more organized and intentional about integrating new partners.

It is always critical for potential lateral candidates to manage risk. See these articles, [Minimizing Risks in Lateral Moves](#) and [Minimizing the Risks in Lateral Moves Part 2](#). But risk management is even more important at a time of so much change and uncertainty. To gauge whether it is safe to consider making a lateral move during the pandemic, here are some additional questions to pose to your recruiter and to prospective firms:

- How many lateral partners has the firm hired during the pandemic?
- What was the firm's pre-pandemic process for lateral integration?
- How has the firm adapted its previously established process to the virtual world?
- Who from the staff and my practice group would be assigned to work with me?
- Has the firm been able to introduce new laterals virtually to clients of the firm? Would they introduce you to laterals who joined the firm since March to hear about their experiences?
- Has the pandemic affected the firm's plans to consider new equity partners at year end? If so, will that create a backlog for the following year or two which will impact consideration of you and other laterals for equity partnership?
- Are there plans for layoffs or pay cuts under consideration?

The fact that we are all facing a lot of uncertainty does not mean that this is a bad time to consider a move. This is a great time to assess what you need to move your career to the next level and to keep your antennas out for opportunities. The ultimate question to ask is are you making career choices which support what is important to you. Or will you look back on this period and regret that you did not take advantage of opportunities that would have allowed you to emerge from the pandemic in a stronger position?

Stay well and safe!