

Executive Summary

Given the degree to which law firms view lateral partner hiring as a cornerstone to their growth strategy, one would expect firm leadership to have a structured and disciplined approach to evaluating candidates. Surprisingly, however, law firm processes around lateral candidate evaluation are often unstructured and ad hoc. As a result, unmet expectations are all too common, and complaining about the results of lateral partner investments has become an industry pastime.

Through surveys, interviews and secondary research, ALM Intelligence has found that firms on the leading edge of lateral hiring program development have introduced a rigorous and holistic process that stresses objectivity, repeatability, consistency and accountability. Moreover, the best firms navigate the entire lateral partner hiring life cycle – beginning with needs assessment, through due diligence, and ending with an extended period of integration – all in furtherance of clearly established strategic objectives.

The report, *Minimizing Risk in Lateral Partner Hiring: Effective Due Diligence*, examines the obstacles firms face when navigating the due diligence stage and equips firm leaders with practical tools for improving the objectivity and value of candidate evaluations. Intuitively, one would expect lawyers to excel when executing this phase of the hiring process. Lawyers are members of a profession known for rewarding its practitioners for being skeptical, cautious and detail-oriented, where conducting due diligence is a regular occurrence. However, many firms struggle to apply to their peers the same rigorous process and cautious skepticism that they employ daily on behalf of their clients. That contradiction serves to make an examination of the lateral partner hiring due diligence process surprising, compelling and sorely needed.

Report Contents Include:

- **Roadmap for Conducting First-Rate Due Diligence:** Step-by-step walk through of the issues, obstacles and decisions firms encounter when conducting lateral partner due diligence;
- **Lateral Partner Questionnaire (LPQ) Framework:** Detailed tool providing guidance to firms in developing a comprehensive, efficient and effective LPQ;
- **Book of Business Portability Evaluation Worksheet:** Tool designed to assist firm evaluators in conducting an independent evaluation of the portability of a lateral candidate's book of business.