



HR Trends and Outlook: Talent Acquisition and Retention in the Legal Sector

REPORT

HR TRENDS AND PERSPECTIVES

Talent Acquisition and Retention in the Legal Sector

The legal sector plays a crucial role in protecting individual rights and freedoms, resolving conflicts, and maintaining public order. Legal decisions and interpretations often have significant societal impacts, influencing public policies and social norms. However, recruiting in this sector is challenging, with legal personnel quite open to new opportunities. According to **Robert Half's** report "Demand for Skilled Talents," 40% of legal professionals were looking for a new job in the first half of 2024.

Let's delve deeper into the HR challenges faced by the sector and explore solutions to better attract, recruit, and retain talent.

I. Specific Challenges in the Legal Sector

The legal sector faces several challenges: .

Characteristics of this sector:

- » **Rapidly Evolving Legal Landscape:** National and international laws, regulations, and legal interpretations are constantly changing. Lawyers, judges, and other legal professionals must be able to find, interpret, and apply relevant laws to each case.
- » **Variety of Specialties:** The areas of practice are varied (civil, criminal, business, labor, family, international law, etc.), each with its own rules, challenges, and specific skills.
- » **Increased Competition:** The rise of new law firms, independent lawyers, alternative legal service providers (ALSPs), and technology platforms offering low-cost legal solutions forces traditional law firms to differentiate themselves and offer high quality, innovative services to attract and retain clients.
- » **Growing Use of Technology:** The increasing adoption of legal technologies (LegalTech) is transforming legal practice with document management software, AI for contract analysis, and online dispute resolution platforms (ODR). Robust cybersecurity measures are also deployed to prevent breaches of sensitive data and cyberattacks.
- » **Unequal Access to Justice:** Access to justice is a growing problem in many countries, with legal service costs sometimes being inaccessible for certain individuals (minorities, low income).

Main HR Challenges in the Legal Sector:

The legal sector faces several HR challenges, including:

- » **War for Talent:** The competition to attract and retain the best talent is fierce, especially in large cities and renowned firms. 81% of leaders of medium and large legal enterprises report that their associates are less loyal than in the past (**Lexis Nexis**). Professional mobility is significant in the sector.
- » **Employee Well-being Concerns:** Stress, burnout, and other mental health issues are common, leading to decreased productivity, increased absenteeism, and high turnover. 79% of lawyers believe mental health issues have reached a crisis level in the legal sector (**ABA Journal**).
- » **Skills Development:** The role of lawyers is evolving with new technologies and service delivery models for which they must acquire new skills.

II. Solutions and Best Practices

Tips to Attract Legal Sector Talent:

To attract, recruit, and retain talent in the legal sector, consider the following solutions:

- » **Develop a Strong Employer Brand:** Highlight the excellence and ethics of the firm or legal institution, promote its achievements and values.
- » **Offer Competitive Benefits:** Revise salaries as 84% of the top 100 law firms have done (**PwC UK**), offer performance bonuses, advantageous health and retirement insurance plans, wellness programs, flexible working hours, and remote work. Only 1 in 4 positions offered hybrid work in 2023 (**Robert Half**).
- » **Optimize the Recruitment Process:** Beyond educational background and experience, carefully identify all candidate skills and use **psychometric tests** to assess their personality and crucial soft skills in the sector (communication, critical thinking, analytical reasoning, problem-solving, etc.).
- » **Promote Inclusion:** Create a safe work environment to foster innovation and creativity.
- » **Invest in Skills Development:** Offer personalized training and development programs to allow employees to acquire new skills and advance in their careers. Encourage mentoring. Promote inclusion within teams for a more innovative and productive workforce, cited at 17%.

Integrating Psychometric Assessments in Legal Sector Talent Recruitment and Development

In addition to technical and legal skills specific to their specialization, legal professionals are expected to have behavioral, cognitive, and emotional skills to manage their cases well:

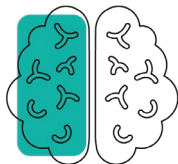
- » Demonstrate a great ability to analyze and understand information;
- » Possess excellent communication and argumentation skills, both oral and written;
- » Adhere to strict ethical rules with integrity, honesty, and objectivity;
- » Have good relational skills and empathy to understand clients' needs and concerns;
- » Continuously adapt to new laws, regulations, and jurisprudences.

HR professionals must evaluate these general human skills, these soft skills, when recruiting candidates or supporting the development of current employees. They can use reliable psychometric tests designed according to rigorous scientific standards:

- » Critical Thinking Tests to measure the ability to take a step back, identify and analyze problems, and seek and evaluate information to draw relevant and logical conclusions and make better decisions.



- » Cognitive Abilities Tests to assess intellectual potential, learning, and adaptation abilities, skills in data analysis,



grasping new concepts, reasoning, and solving problems by finding innovative solutions.

- » Personality Inventories to learn more about communication and collaboration skills and dysfunctional tendencies inventories, as a complement, to ensure no tendency to adopt inappropriate, unethical, or counterproductive behavior.



- » Career Planning Tools can also help develop professional projects that consider individual's key interests and motivations to better retain them.



- » Motivation and Satisfaction Questionnaires will also be useful, equivalent to regular pulse surveys suggested by **Moira Slape, HR Director at Travers Smith**, to measure lawyer engagement levels and retain them.



Attracting, recruiting, and retaining legal professionals with the right skills is essential to a law firm's or legal enterprise's success and reputation. The sector is not spared from a war for talent and evolving technologies and practices. The approach to talent acquisition and retention must be intelligently thought out and conducted, strategic, and effective. Psychometric tests will be a valuable ally to assess and develop crucial skills for excellent practice.



Evaluate your talent's skills with Pearson TalentLens psychometric tests!

Unleash your company's human potential by refining your approach to talent acquisition and retention.

Contact us

About TalentLens

TalentLens is a central component of Pearson's Workforce Skills division, a global publisher of learning solutions and an international leader in individual assessment and support.

The Workforce Skills division consists of Pearson TalentLens – a publisher of psychometric tests in the professional environment, known and recognized in the market, as well as Faethm AI – the world's first company to use data to operationally project a company's future skills, and Credly – the global leader in certifying digital badges.

Drawing on over 70 years of research, our psychometric tests, such as the WATSON-GLASER™ III test, are used by hundreds of companies worldwide for the recruitment and skills development of their employees. As experts in the professional world, our primary goal is to help you assess your practices, understand and define your needs, and support you in choosing and using our assessment solutions.