NALSC® 2027 Annual Conference

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 25 **SESSIONS & RECEPTIONS AT THE OMNI LOS ANGELES**

2:00-3:00pm PT **Registration**
Totes sponsored by Chambers, Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP, and Practus
Lanyards sponsored by SurePoint Technologies

Registration Refreshments *sponsored by Hanson Bridgett LLP*

3:00-3:15pm PT **Welcome by NALSC President** Melissa Peters, Esq., Founder of MP Legal Search
Welcome by Reception Host Norton Rose Fulbright

3:15-4:30pm PT **Opening Session "The Credibility Code"**

Opening Speaker: Cara Hale Alter, Author of *The Credibility Code*

"Credibility. Leadership presence. Personal power. We know these qualities when we see them, but what are the cues that lead us to these impressions? In her signature presentation, Cara Hale Alter deconstructs what it takes to carry yourself like a leader. Using the criteria laid out in her book The Credibility Code, she emphasizes the power of the "sub-textual" conversation and identifies the specific "codes of conduct"—for posture, gestures, vocal skills, eye contact, and more—that influence the perception of credibility. Individually, these behaviors are easy to implement; together they form a skill set that can transform your career."

LAW FIRM AND SEARCH FIRM RECRUITERS CAN DISCOVER HOW TO
- Cultivate personal presence
- Recognize/Prevent the "tells" of nervousness and intimidation
- Strike a balance between authority and approachability
- Demonstrate composure under pressure
- Avoid unintentional behaviors that may lower your status

Opening Session sponsored by Ashurst Perkins Coie as well as Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP

4:30-4:45pm PT **Coffee Break and Sponsor Tables** *Coffee Break sponsored by Brown Rudnick LLP and Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP*

4:45-5:30pm PT "**State of the Legal Industry Session"**

Panelists:
Phil Flora, VP of Sales at SurePoint
Jennifer Gillman, Esq., President of Gillman Strategic Group
John Lively, Esq., Managing Partner at Practus, LLP
Michael Nguyen, Director of Talent Acquisition at Davis Wright Tremaine LLP

"Building on SurePoint Legal Insights' 2026 State of the Legal Industry research, this panel brings together industry experts to discuss the key trends shaping attorney hiring and mobility. The conversation will connect market data with real-world recruiting experience, giving attendees practical insights into where the legal hiring market is headed and how recruiters can position themselves for success."

Session sponsored by Bracewell LLP as well as Davis Wright Tremaine LLP

5:30-7:30pm PT **Networking Reception** *Sponsored by Kyth*

7:30-9:30pm PT **Hospitality Suite with Entertainment**
Sponsored by SurePoint Technologies

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 26 **SESSIONS/MEALS AT THE OMNI LOS ANGELES & RECEPTION AT CITY CLUB LOS ANGELES**

8:00-9:00am PT **Breakfast / Business Meeting** (all attendees welcome and encouraged to attend)
Breakfast sponsored by Crowell & Moring LLP and Michelman & Robinson, LLP

9:00-9:45am PT **Friday Opener: "From Offer to Start Date: Navigating A Critical Phase of Legal Recruiting"**

Moderator: Arthur Polott, Esq., Owner of Gateway Legal Placements, LLC

Panelists: Raphael Franze, Esq., Founder of LegalSummit
Lesli Hutchinson, Associate Director of Lateral Associate Recruiting & Engagement at Morrison Foerster
Melissa Peters, Esq., President of MP Legal Search
Leslie Rice, US Director of Partner Recruitment at Norton Rose Fulbright

Your candidate accepted the offer to join a law firm or corporate legal department, so you're done, right? Wrong. The period between a lawyer's verbal acceptance and their first day at a new firm is one of the most fragile stages of any engagement and even experienced recruiters can watch a placement unravel. One process is over, but another fraught process is just starting. Conflict and background checks, counteroffers, a spouse's cold feet, delayed start dates, bonus cycles, vesting schedules, formulaic, confusing, ambiguous, or negative language of offer letters, and other "surprises" can give candidates anxiety and prolong or even derail the process. This session will walk through the full arc of the offer and acceptance process and will provide helpful takeaways for how to anticipate and smooth out challenges.

Topics to be covered will include how offers should be structured and communicated, the role of written offer letters versus verbal commitments, the specific language of offer letters and the concerns they raise with candidates, timing considerations around bonus cycles and vesting schedules, and coordinating the candidate's resignation and notice period. We will also discuss best practices for keeping employer-side and candidate-side recruiters aligned, how to handle competing offers, and the practical and ethical issues that may be involved when a candidate is weighing multiple opportunities.

Session sponsored by Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner LLP and Morrison & Foerster LLP

9:45-10:10am PT **Coffee Break and Sponsor Tables** *Coffee Break sponsored by Fennemore as well as Well Oiled Machine*

10:10-12:30pm PT **Concurrent Breakout Sessions** *(three rotations so attendees can attend three topics)*

Concurrent Breakouts currently include:

1. **"Privacy and Cybersecurity Risks of AI for Recruiters"**

Moderator: Diana Iketani Iorlano, Esq., Founder/Managing Attorney at Iketani Law Corporation

AI tools are now part of nearly every stage of recruiting – sourcing, screening, communications, and data management. But what happens to the sensitive candidate and client information you feed into these tools, and who else can see it? This session covers the privacy and cybersecurity risks AI introduces for all types of legal recruiters: data exposure when using AI platforms, discrimination/bias liability in AI-driven candidate screening, vendor due diligence and contract terms, and whether your privacy policies and practices need updating for AI use. Bring your questions – this session leaves plenty of room for discussion.

Breakout session sponsored by McGuireWoods LLP as well as Sterlington

2. **"Post-Mansfield Hackathon: What Can Legal Employers & Legal Recruiters Do to Level the Path to Success?"**

Panelists:
Regina Robbins, Director at VOYLegal and Chair of NALSC's B&I Committee
Brian P. Seaman, Esq., Partner and Chief Inclusion Officer at Stradley Ronon
Sanford S. Williams, MBA, JD, Lecturer in Law at UCLA School of Law and Deputy GC of Somos, Inc.

Recent developments have chilled efforts to increase belonging and inclusion in the legal profession. How can legal employers and recruitment professionals facilitate the recruitment, retention, and advancement of a broad range of lawyers?

Breakout session sponsored by Bullhorn as well as Nixon Peabody LLP

3. **"How Changing Law Firm Economics is Affecting Hiring"**

Moderator: Patrick Fuller, Chief Strategy Officer at Client Insight Ventures

Breakout session sponsored by Eversheds-Sutherland as well as Troutman Pepper Locke LLP

4. **"The Perfectly Productive Day: Time Management Tips"**

Moderator: Sarah Tetlow, Founder and CEO of Firm Focus and author of *The Perfectly Productive Day*

Designing the Perfectly Productive Day is a practical, research-informed workshop based on Sarah Tetlow's top-selling book, The Perfectly Productive Day: Time Management Tips. The program helps professionals intentionally design a full 24-hour day (not just their work hours) by aligning habits, decisions, and routines with how the brain actually works. Participants are guided through six key categories of the day to understand how small, strategic choices compound to improve focus, energy, and decision-making. The result is a realistic, sustainable approach to productivity that replaces willpower and overwhelm with clarity, consistency, and control.

Takeaways will include: A proven framework for designing a full 24-hour day that supports productivity without burnout; practical strategies to reduce decision fatigue and intentionally structure days for focus, energy, and follow-through; and a repeatable method for making small, high-impact changes that compound into sustainable performance for all law firm and search firm professionals.

Breakout session sponsored by Duane Morris LLP as well as Federate Legal Inc. (Recruiter Partnerships Division)

5. "A Sea of Sameness: How Small Search Firms Can Stand Out and Win"

Moderator: Megan Braverman, Owner and Principal of Berbay Marketing and PR

Candidates and legal employers have more recruiting options than ever, from large national search firms to AI-powered tools. Yet for search firms, the challenge is not demand. It is differentiation.

In this session, Megan Braverman will share practical strategies for building a distinctive brand and market presence in a crowded industry where many search firms look, sound and price themselves similarly. Drawing on her experience helping professional services firms stand out in competitive markets, Megan will discuss how search firms –whether you specialize in associate, partner, &/or in-house recruiting– can develop a memorable brand, and leverage marketing channels to drive referrals and business growth.

Attendees will leave with actionable ideas for moving beyond the "sea of sameness" and becoming the search firm that candidates and clients remember, recommend and hire.

As Owner and Principal of Berbay Marketing & PR, Megan Braverman leads a national, award-winning agency specializing in creating the visibility and credibility that fuels revenue growth for law firms. She works closely with clients as a strategic partner, trusted advisor and creative asset, helping them to exceed their business objectives. Since 1995, Berbay has partnered with hundreds of law firms across nearly every practice and geographic area to implement results-driven marketing and public relations solutions for clients so that they can concentrate on what they do best – run their businesses.

Breakout session sponsored by Husch Blackwell LLP and Latham & Watkins LLP

6. "The New Generation of Recruiters Speak (Perspectives)"

Co-Moderators:
Katie Kuska, Legal Recruiter at Miles Partner Placement
Beth Mountford, LL.B., Director of Legal Recruitment, Toronto of Smith Legal Search

In this presentation, co-moderators offer a next-generation perspective on legal recruiting, shaped by their experience building practices under the mentorship of seasoned industry leaders (Gary Miles and Warren Smith). Now, several years into their careers, they reflect on how a younger lens is influencing the way recruiters engage with talent and advise firms.

They will explore how communication styles have evolved when working with younger partners and associates, the role of technology and AI in streamlining candidate identification and market mapping, and how modern tools have transformed processes that were once manual and time-intensive.

The presentation will also address one of the more nuanced aspects of the role: establishing credibility and building trust with senior partners. Drawing on their own experiences, they will discuss strategies for connecting with high-profile, experienced attorneys and effectively positioning themselves as trusted advisors despite generational differences.

Together, they offer a candid look at how the next wave of recruiters is reshaping the profession while building on the foundation laid by those who came before them.

Breakout Honorary Sponsors: Adams & Reese, LLP; Akerman LLP; Arnall Golden Gregory LLP; Baker & Hostetler LLP; Baker McKenzie LLP; Bass, Berry & Sims PLC; Benesch Friedlander Coplan & Aronoff LLP; Bilzin Sumberg Baena Price & Axelrod LLP; Blank Rome LLP; Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney PC; Cox, Castle & Nicholson LLP; Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson LLP; Gibson Dunn & Crutcher LLP; gunnercooke LLP; Hogan Lovells Cadwalader; Jackson Walker

LLP; Jones Day; Lowenstein Sandler LLP; Moore & Van Allen PLLC; Norton Rose Fulbright LLP; Polsinelli; Reed Smith LLP; Stradley Ronon Stevens & Young, LLP; VedderPrice P.C.; Wiley Rein LLP; Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati; Wolf, Greenfield & Sacks, P.C.; Womble Bond Dickinson

12:30-1:30pm PT **Luncheon with Door Prize Drawings**
Luncheon sponsored by Holland & Knight LLP and Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton LLP
Door Prize Drawings sponsored by The Cluen Corporation

1:30-2:25pm PT **Keynote Session: "Building Relationships to Drive Your Recruiting Business"**

Keynote Speaker: David Ackert, MA, Co Founder and CEO of Pipeline Plus and bestselling author of *The Short List: How to Drive Business Development by Focusing on the People Who Matter Most*

This session will introduce the Short List framework from the Keynote's book, with a clear focus on how all recruiting professionals can build stronger relationships, increase trust with candidates and clients, and ultimately make more placements. The content is designed to be actionable, with specific tools and customized outreach tactics that the NALSC audience can apply immediately.

Keynote sponsored by Cozen O'Connor P.C. as well as Seyfarth Shaw

2:25-3:00pm PT **Keynote Book Signing** *Books with Bookmarks sponsored by Pirical*
Coffee Break and Sponsor Tables
Coffee Break sponsored by Allen Matkins Leck Gamble Mallory & Natsis LLP as well as Robinson & Cole LLP

3:00-3:45pm PT "**Lessons From the C-Suite: What Hiring Authorities Wish Recruiters Knew"**

Moderator:
Kristina Lawson, Esq., Chief Executive & Managing Partner, Hanson Bridgett LLP

Panelists:
Kerin Cantwell, Esq., Director and Managing Attorney, Law Department at Southern California Edison
Steven Jansma, Esq., Head of Litigation and Disputes, United States with Norton Rose Fulbright
Sanford L. Michelman, Esq., Co-Founding Partner of Michelman & Robinson, LLP
David C. Whitestone, Esq., Managing Partner of Holland & Knight LLP

What separates a trusted search partner from just another recruiter? In this candid conversation, managing partners and hiring leaders from both law firms and in-house will share an unfiltered view from the client side of the table. Hear what THE C-suite values most in external recruiters (hint: "collaboration, transparency, and efficiency," according to Sanford Michelman). Learn the behaviors that build strong partnerships, the missteps that undermine credibility, and how they evaluate the candidates recruiters present. Whether you're a legal search professional or an employer-side recruiting leader, this session offers a rare opportunity to hear directly from the executives who make the ultimate hiring decisions and gain practical insights for becoming an indispensable talent advisor in today's legal marketplace.

Session sponsored by Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo, P.C. and Rimon, P.C.

3:45-4:15pm PT **Champagne Toast**, **Coffee Break and Sponsor Tables**
Coffee Break sponsored by Loeb & Loeb LLP and Potomac Law Group PLLC

4:15-5:00pm PT **Concurrent "Section" Sessions**

Search Firm Attendees Only – Nuts & Bolts (Episode 3): "Managing the Interview Process"

Moderator: Dan Binstock, Esq., Partner at Garrison

This interactive session will cover preparing candidates effectively, debriefing after interviews, and preventing candidate mistakes that can kill offers, and more. Share and learn valuable strategies for partner, associate, and in-house recruiting

Section Session sponsored by Firm Prospects and Goulston & Storrs PC

Law Firm Attendees Only –
"Breaking Down the LPQ: Assessing Firm Financials, Portable Business, and Reputation for Long-Term Success"

Co-Moderators:
Ralph Allen, Chief Operating Officer at Kelly Drye & Warren LLP
Jessica Grayson, Chief Growth Officer at Stradley Ronon Stevens & Young LLP

Section Session sponsored by Greenberg Traurig, LLP as well as Kelley Drye & Warren LLP

5:30-6:00pm PT **Buses to City Club Los Angeles**

6:00-9:00pm PT **Networking Reception at the City Club Los Angeles**

We greatly appreciate our esteemed co-host Norton Rose Fulbright.
Also, a special thank you to Chambers, Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP, Pirical, and Practus.

8:30-9:00pm PT **Buses from City Club Los Angeles to The Omni**

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 27 **SESSION/MEAL AT THE OMNI LOS ANGELES**

8:30-11:00am PT **Breakfast Town Hall Meeting/Sticky Situations**

Conference highlights including a recap of Breakouts and Section Sessions as well as industry questions and sticky situations.

Breakfast sponsored by Falcon Rappaport & Berkman LLP as well as Goodwin Procter LLP
Town Hall Meeting sponsored by Offit Kurman, P.A.

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