

Law firms make a strong case for rehiring seasoned hands

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Mumbai: Growing competition for legal talent is prompting leading law firms to rehire former lawyers with experience gained outside the firm.

The "[boomerang hiring](#)" strategy not only brings back experienced professionals familiar with the firm's culture and clients but also reduces the time and cost of onboarding recruits, experts said. The trend has picked up in recent months, with firms turning to their alumni networks to woo former employees back into the fold. For instance, Hiral Motta quit K Raheja Corp this month to rejoin [Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas](#) (CAM) as a partner in its real estate practice in Mumbai. Last month, Akshay Sachthey left Pine Labs to rejoin Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co as a partner in the general corporate practice in Delhi.

In March, Pranav Kumar Singh rejoined HSA Advocates from AM Green Group as a partner in the firm's corporate and infrastructure practice in New Delhi. Around the same time, Lall & Sethi rehired Naval Kastia as a partner. In February, Anjali Menon rejoined Poovayya & Co as a partner in the firm's Bengaluru office.

Talent acquisition specialists say the benefits are clear for both sides. Divya Vikram, founder of legal talent acquisition firm Strider Search, said that in a tightening lateral market, where good [partner-level hires](#) are hard to find and slow to close, firms are increasingly looking to former employees.

"From a firm's perspective, the economics are compelling: no search fees, shortened onboarding timelines and a significantly lower risk of mis-hire," said Vikram. "For lawyers, returning to a former firm can be a rare combination of comfort and growth, the familiarity of a well-known environment, combined with the experience, commercial perspective and relationships they have built during their time away."

Top executives of several law firms said they have come to regard alumni mobility not as defection but as a professional cycle that can strengthen the partnership.

"We view talent mobility as a natural part of the profession," said Akshay Chudasama, co-managing partner at Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas. "While lawyers may explore new opportunities during their careers, many also choose to return to firms where they find the right culture, opportunities and long-term fit." JSA Advocates & Solicitors sees returning talent as an institutional signal. The firm has seen some rejoining across seniority levels. Last year, Amitabh Sharma rejoined the firm as a partner.

"We believe this is a strong endorsement of the firm's culture, people, professionalism and reputation in the legal industry," said Vivek K Chandy, joint managing partner at JSA. However, not every firm treats returning lawyers in the same way. Some have structured frameworks that govern when and how a "return" is considered. Parul Gupta, chief human resources officer at Trilegal, said there have been a few instances in which partners have left the firm to pursue external opportunities and subsequently expressed interest in returning, either to continue building their practice with us or to take on a new role. "Such decisions are evaluated on a case-by-case basis, taking into account practice requirements and the specific expertise of the individual concerned," said Gupta.

Khaitan & Co adds a conduct-based filter to its assessment. Amar Sinhji, executive director at Khaitan & Co, said the firm has criteria regarding the time frame within which it considers someone rejoining the firm. "We also look at performance over the past two to three years prior to their departure from the firm and whether the person was a good or bad leaver," said Sinhji. "If the person was a good leaver, left for personal, health, or professional reasons, was a good cultural fit, and has been a good ambassador for the firm, we will view their rejoining very positively," he said.