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## Lateral lawyers: Insights for partners seeking a new firm

November 2014 | First Focus



**Adam Weiss**

Every year, about 5 percent of partners in law firms nationwide change jobs, typically moving to become a partner in another firm, according to lawyer and legal recruiter Adam Weiss, who specializes in the placement of partner-level candidates. His new book, "[The Lateral Lawyer: Opportunities & Pitfalls for the Law Firm Partner](#)," was released in October by ABA Publishing.

In "The Lateral Lawyer," Weiss draws upon his background in the law, management consulting and business development to offer prospective partner candidates a roadmap on how to switch firms either midway or later in one's career.

He tackles some of the key issues a lawyer-partner should consider and explains the process for an effective transition to another firm. Based in the New York area, Weiss brings 20 years of experience in the legal industry and more than a decade in legal recruiting.

He talks about his new book, the lateral hiring process and the qualities of a successful lateral candidate in this short video below.

### Pitfalls, or common reasons why candidacies fail

Excerpt from "The Lateral Lawyer"

It is important to understand some of the major reasons why candidacies fail—and how proper interview preparation can help prevent such failure. Here are some suggestions for how partner candidates can avoid interview pitfalls and turn face-to-face

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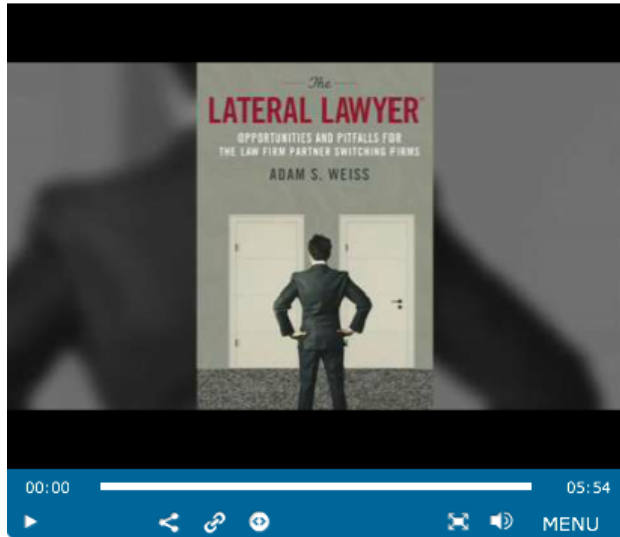
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## Adam S. Weiss

The Lateral Lawyer



conversation opportunities to their advantage:

**The book of business.** What if your book of business is currently low? This is the number-one reason candidacies fail. In such cases, it makes sense to de-emphasize the past (the low book) by stressing the future business you'll bring to the firm (your business plan), and explain two things:

How you intend to build up your book

How being at the target firm will put you in a better position to build that book than being at your current firm can.

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A classic

example of this situation is where you would have been able to bring in significant business but for client conflict situations at your current firm. If this has been the case, make sure you say so.

- **Potential for cross-selling.** Firms love cross-selling opportunities—indeed, cross-selling is part of the bedrock underlying the very existence of large firms. Inability to speak to this issue jeopardizes your candidacy. Make sure you can speak intelligently to your own clients' potential to be cross-sold additional services that the target firm has to offer.
- **Personality.** I cannot emphasize enough how often this is a genuine issue. Whether based on a stray remark at an interview lunch, or on a series of impressions left on multiple interviewers, or on general professional reputation in the field, assessments of personality count—and they are more likely to count against a lateral candidate than to count in his or her favor. Keep jokes to a minimum, avoid politics, religion, and sex, and think of interviews as an opportunity to win the Mr./Ms. Congeniality award.