

Alliance – Asia and USA

Introduction to Green Light Consulting

Established in 2011, the Green Light Consulting team covers Asia and the US, with director Andrew McGrath based in Hong Kong and director Amy Falkenstein based in New York. Andrew and Amy worked together at Clifford Chance and both have decades of law firm business development and marketing experience internationally.

Andrew is a qualified lawyer who practised in Sydney before moving to a successful career in business development and marketing. He has held leadership roles at several leading law firms in the Asia Pacific region for over twenty years. He also worked as a National Director of Marketing at JLL.

Amy is a senior marketing and business development professional with over twenty years of experience advising leading law and financial services industry firms.



Introduction to our market

Asia (Hong Kong, Singapore, China)

Asia is one of the most competitive legal markets, with well over 100 international law firms in Hong Kong and the Big4 making a concerted push into the legal space.

As a result, the demand for roles in Asia remains strong at all levels. On the whole, roles tend to be quite broad in scope (covering the full range of activities including business planning, pitching, events, marketing, PR, directories etc). Specialist roles (for example, client/industry focus and MarComms) are on the increase.

Magic Circle firms and firms such as Baker McKenzie, White & Case and Herbert Smith Freehills have larger teams (and now some global roles from Asia).

At the more senior end, there are opportunities for practitioners to demonstrate specialist skills, mentor team members and introduce client, industry and thought leadership programs.

At the junior level, available roles provide exposure to all BD and marketing activities, with a high level of partner and client contact.

There is a demand for Chinese language skills (and obviously these are mostly essential in Mainland China) – however team “fit” and relevant skills are often viewed as more essential than the language skills. International candidates are highly regarded on account of team management experience and overall skill set.

USA

The US legal market is the largest in the world, and the demand for top talent is fierce. AmLaw 100 firms tend to be more sophisticated in terms of their marketing needs, with a much stronger focus on business development and strategy than tactical marketing.

Typically, business development teams are structured to support practice areas and at times industry groups. A small percentage of US-based law firms compared with internationally-based firms have client teams in place, with a focus on providing a higher level of attention and resources to key client initiatives, though the number of firms is growing. Marketing services teams provide support firmwide with staff focusing on functional specialities, such as website, graphic design, events and CRM. Communications teams work alongside business development with a focus on both external public relations and internal messaging, awards and directories.

Having foreign language skills is generally not a requirement or benefit in the US, with the occasional exception of firms focusing on the Latin America market.



Visa issues

Asia (Hong Kong and Singapore)

Granting of visas is not an issue in Hong Kong and Singapore, where law firms are prepared to sponsor non-locals. Experience from the UK, Australia and the US is sought after, as these markets are more sophisticated in law firm BD and marketing. The work visa process takes approximately 6 weeks in Hong Kong and the initial visa is for two years.

In Singapore, the application for an Employment Pass takes 5-6 weeks and the validity of this varies, but is usually two years. There is also the right to work as a dependant to someone who holds a valid visa. Mainland China visas are a little more complicated but still manageable.

Renewal of visas (or transferring a visa to a new firm) is straight-forward. Firms will often assist with relocation costs and initial accommodation. This makes locations such as Hong Kong and Singapore accessible and exciting locations to work in diverse teams.

USA

Because of the complex nature of obtaining a work visa in the US, the majority of firms are not open to recruiting talent from overseas for work in the US. There are exceptions of course, specifically when the CMO has experience working abroad or is based abroad. The more likely scenario would be for a valued employee based outside the US to be rewarded with the opportunity to transfer within the firm to one of the US offices.

In the US, Australians are eligible for an E3 visa – a specialty occupation visa, available only to Australians. It is valid for two years and is renewable indefinitely. It does not require sponsorship and there is no cost to the employer – the employer simply needs to provide relevant documentation which the candidate takes to a US Consulate for a visa interview.



Salaries

Asia

Whilst salaries in Asia appear lower than in other jurisdictions, Hong Kong and Singapore benefit from low taxation rates (around 15%), which can make your “take home” salary just as high as in the US, UK and Australia.

The cost of living in Singapore is lower than in Hong Kong, and so salaries are around 10-15% lower than Hong Kong. With the high demand for roles, salaries are becoming increasingly competitive, in particular for senior manager and director roles. Taxation rates in Mainland China are closer to those of the UK.

USA

Salaries vary across legal markets within the US, driven by cost of living disparity as well as competition for talent.



Skills and benefits

Asia

The benefits, both personal and professional, of working and living in Asia cannot be over-estimated. Hong Kong and Singapore provide a safe and fast-paced lifestyles in truly diverse and international cities. Often candidates comment on there being “less bureaucracy” than in head offices, enabling them to take more “risks” and try out new approaches to BD and marketing. Asia is a great place to develop professionally at all levels, in a truly multicultural environment.

Having leaner teams also provides more opportunities to be closer to the business and greater exposure to a wide range of activities. The close proximity of work and social life – along with efficient and cheap transport – makes Asia a relatively easy lifestyle and one where both international and local hires are made welcome. Add to this approximately 15 public holidays each year (in addition to generous annual leave) and the ability to travel to many Asian countries, and it is an experience to be cherished.



Roles

<http://www.greenlightconsulting.com.hk/eng/recruitment/>



Contact

Andrew McGrath
Director – Asia

M: +85 297 578 057

E: andrew@greenlightconsulting.com.hk

www.greenlightconsulting.com.hk

Amy Falkenstein
Director – USA

M: +1 91 790 200 30

E: amy@greenlightconsultingusa.com

www.greenlightconsultingusa.com

