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LEGAL SEARCH

A KINTILLO GUIDE FOR PARTNERS

Should I stay or should I *go?*

Seven questions for partners considering a move

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BEFORE YOU START

For a partner, the question of moving touches more than the next platform.

It can touch identity, relationships, economics, ambition and the kind of professional life you want to build next.

The question often starts quietly: after a difficult partnership meeting, a disappointing compensation round, or a conversation with a former colleague who seems happier somewhere else. You may be actively exploring, quietly curious, or simply aware that something no longer feels quite right. You do not need to have made a decision to benefit from taking stock.

These are the questions I explore with partners in our first conversations. They are designed to help you step back, understand what is driving the question, and define what a good next chapter would look like.

> **A USEFUL STARTING POINT**
>
> Answer honestly, rather than as you think a recruiter, your firm or a prospective firm might want you to. Take your time, ideally with a pen. The exercise may point towards a move. It may equally show you what needs to change where you are, and that is a good outcome too.

PART ONE · START WITH THE REASONS

1. What is prompting you to think about moving now?
2. What would you be moving towards, not just away from?
3. Is the issue your firm, your role, or the way you want to work?
4. What does the right platform need to offer, and what would you bring?

PART TWO · PRACTICAL AND PERSONAL

5. What does a good financial outcome look like?
6. What would you need to protect, and what are you prepared to risk?
7. Looking back in three years, what would make it the right decision?

1 What is prompting you to think about moving now?

Is there a particular event, frustration or change in circumstances? Or has a feeling been building over time? A poor year, a lost client or a new managing partner can feel decisive in the moment. A pattern that has built over several years is different.

QUESTIONS TO SIT WITH

- What, specifically, is no longer working for you?
- Is this about the firm, your practice group, one person, or the stage of your career?
- If the immediate frustration disappeared tomorrow, would you still be asking the question?

> *Notice whether your answers describe what you want to leave, or what you want to find.*

YOUR NOTES

2 What would you be moving towards, not just away from?

If you left, what would you want more of? Think about the quality of work, clients, colleagues, leadership, autonomy, recognition, influence and the chance to build something. Priorities at 40 are often different from those at 55: the question is less whether you still want to be a partner than what you want partnership to look like now.

QUESTIONS TO SIT WITH

- Which of these matter most to you over the next five years?
- Which does your current role already give you, and which is missing?
- How long do you want to keep practising, and what would make those years worthwhile?

> *Frustrations we move away from often travel with us. What we move towards tends to last.*

YOUR NOTES

3 Is the issue your firm, your role, or the way you want to work?

Would a different team, leadership arrangement, practice focus or working pattern address what is not working? Or have your ambitions and priorities moved on in a way that needs a different platform?

QUESTIONS TO SIT WITH

- ○ What would your firm need to change for you to be genuinely happy staying?
- ○ Have you asked for it clearly, and to the right person?
- ○ What happened when you did, or what has stopped you?

> *A clear "no" from your firm is useful information. So is discovering that the answer might be "yes".*

YOUR NOTES

4 What does the right platform need to offer your practice, and what would you bring?

Consider the firm's strategy, reputation, client base, conflicts, appetite to invest, cross-selling opportunities and support. Then look honestly at what would follow you. Firms hiring partners look hard at portability, and being clear-eyed now avoids overpromising later.

QUESTIONS TO SIT WITH

- ○ Which clients instruct you, rather than your firm, and would they follow?
- ○ Would conflicts, rates or a firm's sector focus get in the way?
- ○ How are partners measured and rewarded, and what happened to the last few lateral partners who joined?
- ○ Where would you sit in the firm's plans: at the centre, or on the edge?

> *Every firm describes itself as collaborative. Talk to people who have left, as well as those who are there.*

YOUR NOTES

5 What does a good financial outcome look like?

Look beyond headline compensation. Consider drawings or salary, bonus, capital contribution, guarantees, profit share, the timing of payments, tax and the risks attached to any offer.

QUESTIONS TO SIT WITH

- ○ What is essential, what is negotiable, and what would make a move commercially worthwhile?
- ○ When are bonus, profit share or deferred payments due where you are, and what would you forfeit by leaving?
- ○ When would your capital be repaid?

> *Timing can change the economics of a move as much as the offer itself.*

YOUR NOTES

6 What would you need to protect, and what are you prepared to risk?

Think about client relationships, colleagues, your team, ongoing matters, your reputation and the practical demands of a transition. What would a responsible and credible move look like?

QUESTIONS TO SIT WITH

- ○ What does your partnership agreement say about notice, garden leave and approaching clients or colleagues?
- ○ How would you look after clients and matters during a notice period?
- ○ Who in your team would you want with you, and would they come?
- ○ What else is happening in your life over the next year, and how much change can you take on at once?

> *A well-planned move protects your reputation as well as your practice. Taking advice on your contractual position early is part of that.*

YOUR NOTES

7 Looking back in three years, what would make you say it was the right decision?

Define success in your own terms: the practice you have built, the work you are doing, your influence, your financial position, your quality of life and the people around you.

QUESTIONS TO SIT WITH

- ○ What would need to be true for you to feel a move had been worthwhile?
- ○ And what would need to be true for staying to feel like the right choice?

YOUR NOTES

STEPPING BACK

What have you learned?

Having worked through the questions, complete these three sentences.

The three things that matter most in my next chapter are...

Before making a move, I would need to understand...

The changes that might make staying the right choice are...

A FINAL THOUGHT

You do not have to be ready to move to have a useful conversation.



Sometimes the most valuable first step is not discussing a particular role. It is a confidential conversation about what is happening in the market, how your practice might translate to another platform, or whether what you are looking for is realistically available elsewhere.

Equally, a thoughtful conversation may confirm that staying is the right decision, perhaps with a clearer sense of what you need to ask for or change.

If it would help to talk through your thinking, I would be happy to have an informal, confidential conversation. No CV is needed, there is no expectation that you are looking to move, and I will be candid, including if I think you should stay.

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Arrange a confidential call

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Get in touch

ABOUT KINTILLO

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This guide is a personal reflection tool. It is not legal, financial or tax advice. Any potential move should be considered in light of your individual contractual, regulatory and professional obligations.

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