

# Littler Continues Run on Lateral Market With Kaiser Permanente Attorney in San Francisco

**Littler has hired six shareholders since July, as the firm rolls out a new talent strategy that includes leaning on firm members to reach new talent and a focus on flexibility and well-being.**

**By Jessie Yount**

## What You Need to Know

- Littler hired Noah Garber, a former Kaiser and NLRB attorney, as a shareholder in San Francisco.
- Garber is the firm's sixth shareholder hire since July and the fifth in California since March.
- The recent hiring spree is the result of a new talent strategy that the firm began developing last year.

Littler Mendelson has hired San Francisco shareholder Noah Garber, a former in-house attorney at Kaiser Permanente, as the firm continues to celebrate the rewards of a talent acquisition strategy that it developed in 2021.

Garber, who has practiced labor and employment law for nearly 15 years, has conducted more than 900 workplace and compliance investigations. Prior to his time at Kaiser, he

was an attorney at the National Labor Relations Board for about a decade.

He brings expertise in two complex areas of the law—L&E law in California and the unique issues in the health care sector, according to Littler managing shareholder Erin Webber, who noted the importance of the California market, where the firm has about 300 attorneys across 10 offices.

Garber is the fifth shareholder to join the firm in California since March. Recent arrivals have included Best Best & Krieger partner Allison Borkenheim and Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan partner Michelle Ann Clark.

But the firm's growth hasn't been limited to the Golden State. Garber is also the sixth shareholder to join the firm since July, which Webber attributed to a new talent manage-



(Photo: Jason Dojy/ALM)

ment strategy that kicked off shortly after her appointment last January.

After the initial shock of the pandemic and as the firm continued to see healthy demand for its services, Littler turned its attention to recruitment and retention. To do so, it hired its first chief talent officer, Melissa Cee, the former chief human resources officer of The Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association.

Webber said that changes addressed the fact that, for the first time, “people were leaving the law, the practice, with no plans,” and others were taking early retirement.

One result of the new strategy was the launch of a national recruiting team, made up of firm attorneys, which works with the management team and the recruitment team across different regions.

“A change that we made was not only tapping [external recruiter] resources but tapping into the relationships of our own people,” Webber said. “I thought no one could do a better job of communicating our unique culture than our own people.”

Cee added the firm changed its approach to recruitment and retention (the latter of which she said requires “re-recruitment” of talent) by listening to its people, figuring out what people were shopping for, and developing creative positions to meet people at the right “moment and time” in their lives.

That included launching new staffing models, senior attorney and special counsel positions and other reduced-hours programs, which particularly resonated with younger attorneys, Webber said.

The firm also upped its associate compensation by \$5,000 to \$45,000 across various geographic markets in late 2021, which was retroactive to the start of 2021. It’s also developed new bonus programs, and was the first Am Law 100 firm to launch a summer special bonus last week.

Cee noted that while money matters, “equally important is caring, well-being and engagement,” which she said aligns with the changes that Littler has made.