



GETTING THERE

Your Guide to Career Success



**WSBA
Lawyers
Assistance
Program**



WSBA

Washington State Bar Association

1325 Fourth Avenue, Suite 600, Seattle, WA
800-945-WSBA (9722) • 206-443-WSBA (9722)
www.wsba.org • questions@wsba.org

WSBA Lawyers Assistance Program
206-727-8268 • 800-845-9722, ext. 8268
www.wsba.org/lap



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LAWYERS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

This guide is a collection of practical advice from experts in multiple fields: attorneys, HR departments, staffing agencies, psychologists and life coaches among others. The most frequently utilized document is an unpublished work written by Jeff Minzel, formerly of Minzel and Associates, a legal staffing agency, on all elements of the job search. We truly appreciate his willingness to allow us to utilize his insider's knowledge. We also appreciate the self-assessments provided by Karen Summerville, a former attorney and currently a life coach working with lawyers. The references for other contributions are included alongside each document.

We consider this guide a work in progress that will evolve over time. If you have any questions or suggestions for this manual don't hesitate to contact Dan Crystal, Psy.D. at danc@wsba.org. You can also contact me about the LAP Job Seekers Weekly and Monthly Groups or to be added to our email database for Job Seeking updates.

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Weekly Job Seeking Group

The Weekly Job Seekers group is an offering from the Lawyers Assistance Program to help lawyers find employment during this economic crisis. Each group has 8 members and runs for 8 sessions. Groups are 90 minutes and members are charged \$40 up front, which amounts to \$5 per session.

The group provides a mixture of skills and support that includes educational tools, goal setting, and accountability. At the same time, group process is a high priority, and group members are given ample opportunity to share leads, talk about breakthroughs and disappointments, and ask questions of the group leader. In addition, we are usually able to offer introductions to attorneys who are part of our Lawyer-to-Lawyer program or are Peer Counselors. This is often one of the group's most productive offerings.

Job Seeking Skills

- Informational interviewing skills. This is a major domain of the job search and members are encouraged to practice with each other and identify a list of networking contacts.
- Practicing introductions or “Elevator Speeches” with other group members.
- Identifying relevant networking venues like Section Meetings, CLEs, pro bono, etc.
- Job interview skills.
- Cover letter and resume review.
- Methods for follow-up.

Identifying One's Ideal Job Area

- Conducting an identity search to figure out what skills one enjoys.
- Finding one's ideal practice area within the law.
- Identifying ideal work environments.
- Researching the employers that match one's skills and figuring out how to get in the door.
- Addressing concerns about those unsure about staying in the law, or exploring non-attorney jobs.

Addressing the Emotional Challenges of Unemployment

- Recognizing the symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- Normalizing the frustrating elements of a job search.
- Gaining support in knowing one is not alone in their job search.
- Identifying how one deals with rejection.

Group members are asked to purchase *Never Eat Alone* by Keith Ferrazi which offers an approach to networking that represents a new paradigm for the job search.

After the eight sessions an email database keeps track of participants and informs them of upcoming events. In addition, on some occasions group members have shown signs of more problematic depression or other mental health problems and shown interest in individual counseling with LAP providers. Many have attended LAP's annual Statewide conference and those who have found jobs have been good contacts for us to introduce future Job Seekers for Informational Interviews.

Job Group Syllabus

Weeks 1-3 Networking and Interviewing

Weeks 4-6 Cover Letter and Resume

Weeks 7-8 Self Assessment

Week 1

- Introductions.
- Confidentiality, email addresses
- The Three Legs of the Job Seeking Stool
- *Buy Business Cards!*

Handout/Assignment:

- Introduction & Resources Chapters
- Five Best/Five Worst
- Informational Interviewing
- **Make a list of 10 places you would like to work**

Week 2

- Best methods of job hunting
- Identifying 10 ideal job settings
- Informational interviewing basics

Handout/Assignment:

- Mission Statement
- Database file for contacts
- Pro Bono Info

Week 3

- The Elevator Speech
- One sentence introductions

Handout/Assignment:

- The Psychology of Interviewing
- Cover Letters and Resumes

Week 4

- Elevator Speech Redux
- Resumes and Cover Letters

Handout/Assignment:

- **Bring your resume.**

Week 5

- Resumes and Cover Letters
- Best Networking Settings: Section Meetings, Pro Bono, Speaking/Writing

Handout/Assignment:

- **Bring your resume.**

Week 6

- Resumes and Cover Letters

Handout/Assignment:

- Self-Assessment section

Week 7

- Identifying your ideal job
- Reviewing Self-Assessments

Handout/Assignment:

- Flower Exercise

Week 8

- Defining your ideal job
- Identifying the road ahead

Job Search Basics

Dan Crystal, Psy. D.

The job search is a multi-faceted journey that requires a savvy combination of concrete skills (how to do informational interviews, tune up your resume, and adapt your interviewing style); introspection about what career would be a good fit; and structure to keep oneself motivated and optimistic. This page offers tools in each of these areas. While these resources will hopefully be helpful to you, the structure and support provided by a job group, or attending job search events can be invaluable. Also, using a book like *What Color is Your Parachute*, by Richard Bolles can offer overarching guidance to your entire search. The Lawyers Assistance Program has a lending library, with most of the books listed on this page that we encourage you to check out.

Informational Interviewing/Networking

This domain of the job search is essential as roughly 70% of jobs will be found through this method. Keep in mind that only about 5% of jobs are found through the internet. Furthermore, the social skills and network of contacts that you develop through Informational Interviewing will support your career once you are hired. These contacts will turn into referral sources for your office and valued advisors for your career. A book that really sets the stage for building a network of connections is *Never Eat Alone*, by Keith Ferrazzi.

Informational Interviewing involves engaging a relative stranger, building rapport, and learning from their experience. Perhaps they have something to offer you. Remember, you are not meeting other lawyers/professionals to ask for a job. Rather, you are meeting with this person on an equal, one-on-one level. This is an opportunity to share interests, and to find out whether you can relate to them in a constructive way.

Paul Anderson, a job consultant/expert, spoke at WSBA on July 8 about the Psychology of Interviewing. He emphasizes the importance of creating a *value proposition* with each contact. This takes the emphasis off of “does this person care about me” and focuses upon “how can we be useful to each other.”

Build a database! We easily lose sight of the effort we have already made to find work. The trick to building a network of supporters, according to legal staffing consultant Jeff Minzel, is to *train them to find you a job*. This means following up with at least five un-intrusive contacts. This can include emails, phone calls, thank you notes, forwarding articles of interest, etc. By maintaining a database you will know when you last contacted that person and how to keep yourself on their radar.

Informational Interviewing is a skill set that was not taught in law school. Calling up a stranger, explaining how you heard about them, and hoping they'll have coffee with you is not an easy thing to do for everyone. There are ways to reduce the intimidation factor. Join the Section for your practice area and attend these meetings and CLEs. Figure out who you might benefit from knowing. Talk to CLE presenters and invite them to coffee.

These are some of the most outgoing members of the bar, usually willing to share what they know.

Business Cards/Cover Letter/Resume

If there's one thing you do today, be sure it is to get yourself business cards. You do not have to have a job to have a business card. This is the cheapest form of advertising you can have. The website *vistaprint.com* and *overnightprints.com* have *free* business cards that many lawyers have ordered. They look professional, although they have an advertisement on the back. Or go to Kinko's, or any other office supply store or printer. Include your name, Attorney at Law, maybe 1 or 2 practice areas, an email, a phone number, and the city in which you work. Street address is not necessary. "Esquire" is discouraged.

Cover letter and resume writing is a straight forward domain to master. The trick is to get in the habit of quickly editing both of these based upon the job you are looking for. The preferred length of a resume is one page and it should be easily readable in an 11 or 12 pt font. Your cover letter, likewise should be brief and to the point. Jeff Minzel has an article in this binder on this topic. He recommends writing a "super-resume" that is several pages. You then choose the experiences that best fit the job you are applying to.

Jeff Minzel offers a method to what is included in paragraphs 1, 2, & 3 of your cover letter:

- Paragraph One indicates how you heard about the job and demonstrates enthusiasm and knowledge about the position.
- Paragraph Two explains why you are well qualified for the position. Be sure to match your previous experiences to the position you are applying for. Use *objective* criteria about previous experiences/accomplishments as opposed to *subjective* criteria about what a great person and talented employee you think you are. This way you are proving your points based upon real experiences.
- Paragraph Three summarizes these points, reasserts your enthusiasm, and offers ways that they can contact you. This is of course not the only way to write a cover letter, but it can provide a useful structure for you to express yourself.

Finding the Ideal Career

The nature of lawyering can make an attorney vulnerable to stress and depression. That is why picking the right practice area is crucial. This requires introspection. Some questions worth asking are: am I a solo, small firm, or big firm person at heart? What are my financial objectives? Am I cause centered? Do I love or hate litigation? The Flower Exercise from *What Color is Your Parachute* is a good starting point to explore your individual qualities, values, and abilities. Another valuable resource is to begin looking at your career by creating a Mission Statement for yourself. WSBA member Terrence Leahy wrote a thoughtful, empowering summary of this process including brief exercises that can help consolidate your focus. It's in the articles section of this binder.

Many lawyers, while proud of the hard work they've invested in their degree, wonder what other kinds of work would be a good match. Deborah Arron, a former Perkins Coie

attorney, wrote 2 excellent books on this topic. *Running From the Law* is about the decision making and emotional challenges that are part of stepping away from a legal career. *What You Can Do with a Law Degree* is a more practical summary of how you can fit nicely into non-legal realms with your impressive law degree.

Two consultants LAP recommends for individual attention to your career search are Jeff Minzel and the Centerpoint Institute. Jeff can help you think about exactly where your skills will fit and tailor your profile as a lawyer. The *Centerpoint Institute* in Seattle offers classes that engage you in a *Passion Search* whereby you can find a career that matches your personality and interests. Also, Paul Anderson hosts several job seeking groups that have a completely unique perspective that several lawyers have benefitted from. His website is www.prolango.com

There are several online resources where you can take tests to help answer this question of what job areas will best fit your personality/interests. The Strong Interest Inventory is a career specific assessment and the Myers-Briggs Inventory is a personality specific assessment. These tests can provide helpful feedback when one is unsure of where to start. You can take these tests for a fee at www.discoveryyourpersonality.com. The trick with these tests is to find a constructive way of interpreting the results. These assessments provide interpretive summaries of results and can be very helpful, although no inventory is going to fully grasp your uniqueness.

Using Social Media

Social Media is playing an increasing role in our daily lives. While many people have mixed feelings about Facebook, Twitter, etc., these new trends are proving to be important in one's job search. The most valuable of these resources is LinkedIn, a professional networking website where you can learn more about other lawyers and potential employers. Some job seekers have even told us that they use LinkedIn as their database whereby they document who they have been in contact with.

Having one's own website is one of the most essential ways to separate oneself from the competition as a lawyer. It's an opportunity to share your interests and previous experiences. A website impresses future employers as it shows that you are a person who is not relying solely upon your one page resume to share your abilities. In addition, having a website is becoming an increasingly important marketing tool once employed. This includes taking cases as a solo, getting referrals for your firm, and keeping in touch with your network of contacts.

Blogging on your website can take you a step further in getting the word out as the Search Engine Optimization technology (SEO) that Google and other search sites use is especially sensitive to blogs. Keep in mind that writing articles is a surefire way to increase your visibility, whether or not you are posting to your website. It looks good on your resume, and forwarding it along to your contacts is a great way to remind people you are out there and have original ideas to share.

A word of caution. Please be careful about what you share on your Facebook or Myspace pages. There is increasing anecdotal evidence that HR departments and headhunters are checking these venues to screen their applicants. Nothing screams “unprofessional” like sharing private, embarrassing, information for anyone to see.

The Emotional Challenge of Unemployment

Unemployment can be very depressing! All lawyers have worked hard to get through law school and pass the bar. It can seem very unfair that after all of that hard work, that it can be so difficult to find use for your talents. In Seattle, the job market has been oversaturated with lawyers for over ten years.

The advice offered on this page about networking and “branding your identity” may feel daunting. Many attorneys develop a sense of hopelessness, concluding that they have what it takes to be a lawyer, but don’t have what it takes to land a job. On top of this, the financial challenge of unemployment can place pressure on one’s situation.

It is important to recognize avoidance behavior. This can translate as fear of telling people that you are unemployed, or denying the circumstances that led to your unemployment. The sooner you accept your situation, the sooner you can think about what steps to take to find another job. Have compassion for yourself at this juncture. This may be a difficult challenge in the course of your life, but being unemployed does not have to define you as a person.

It is easy to see oneself as an unemployed lawyer and nothing more. Sometimes it is helpful to look through your resume to remember all of the things you have done in your life. In addition, as you look to make new connections, keep focused on your ambitions. While having a job is a *need*, don’t lose sight of the job that you *want*. If you have never seen the documentary *The Secret* (www.theseecret.tv), we recommend it as a self-esteem lifter.

In sculpting an action plan to steer yourself through unemployment, individual psychotherapy can be invaluable. If you face debilitating depression, anxiety, or some other mental health issue this is the first important step in asking for help. Even if you don’t feel depressed, psychotherapy can be a good way to stay focused on your job search and can serve as healthy preventative self-care.

Keeping at It!

It’s virtually impossible to look for work all day every day. It’s emotionally draining to wake up and not know what to do with one’s time. One trick to winning in the job hunt is to be optimistic about positive outcomes from the contacts you make. The job you are looking for may be right around the corner. At the same time, it is also important to think long term. This is a phase of life that does not have an end date. Taking a part-time job can be an important way of keeping oneself active and reducing financial pressure.

While any legal job may sound attractive when you are unemployed, you are likely to return to square one if your new job is not a good fit for your abilities. Jeff Minzel

advises unemployed lawyers to get that non-legal part-time job until they find the *right job*. That way you are not stuck with a resume with serial one to two year jobs. It's better to have one gap before landing the right job that you would be happy to stay with.

The best way to feel like a lawyer, meet other lawyers, cover gaps in your resume and learn new practice areas while unemployed is to take on *pro bono* work. Try to find pro bono work that offers training and support so that you are learning and networking throughout the process. In our Weekly Job Seekers Group the attorneys who have signed up for pro bono work generally have more optimism and more leads. Some lawyers also have had good experiences doing contract law or document review work to make money and use their legal minds while looking for a full time job.

The Lawyers Assistance Program is committed to shepherding you through this challenging phase of your career. **Good Luck!**

Where and How Do You Find Work?

Jeff Minzel

There are a number of ways to locate potential positions, some of which are posted, while others aren't even available yet. Generally speaking, if you plan on just reading the classifieds or surfing the Internet you are not only missing out on possible jobs but you are missing out on connections that could prove valuable to you professionally for years to come.

Finding work takes an investment on your part. Typically, you will be investing time. In order to attend a conference or professional association, you may have to invest financially. Even though you may be out of work, it sometimes takes money to make money. Find a way to join events that are important to your professional growth.

We will explore ways and places to network, the best places to find job leads, how agencies and career centers can help you, and way to develop to personal contacts.

Gotta Use the Business Card

First things first, GET A BUSINESS CARD! You need to carry it around with you and hand it out whenever appropriate. It demonstrates that you are focused, available and making a concerted effort.

Hand your card out after you have met someone and before you part ways - But ALWAYS hand it out whenever it is appropriate. Try and mention somewhere in the conversation (or at least when you hand them your card) that you are looking for contract or permanent work. Don't try to hard sell yourself. Just mention that if they happen to know of anyone that needs contract work or a permanent position filled, you would be happy to submit your resume.

Always try to get their card as well. On the back, jot down the date, where you met, some interesting or personal points in your conversation and when you should follow up. When you get home, add these people to your contact list. If appropriate, consider sending them a cover letter and resume "for their files" in case they hear of anyone seeking someone with your experience and background. Try to send your resume within 1-2 days of meeting with them so your great impression is still fresh in their minds when they receive it.

Networking

Networking is about meeting new people and developing mutually beneficial relationships. No matter what, meeting people is by far the best way to get a job. It allows you to informally "interview" with a variety of people, some of which are likely to refer you to potential employers or hire you, themselves.

Conferences are good because there are breaks between classes or seminars. It is easy to start a conversation with someone that attended the same class or conference that you just

attended. People who attend conferences are generally by themselves or at least split from their group in order to cover all the classes being offered. Start a conversation about the topic that was just covered and segue into why you are there. You will eventually have the opportunity to mention that you are "very interested in pursuing opportunities in this field and would they happen to know of any firms or companies hiring at this time?"

Public meetings offer a nice environment to meet people who are active in the local community. And, as you probably could have guessed, active people know lots of people. These people are typically very good at keeping up great relationships with their contacts because they never know when they will need a supporter for their cause.

Professional organizations are wonderful because they provide you with contacts who have the inside scoop on a variety of employers. It is likely that you will meet others looking for work, people who have work or someone who can relate to the hardships of looking for work. In any case, these organizations will provide you with contacts and will probably offers classes or reference materials that will help you grow professionally.

Career centers provide great information about employers because it is their job. Because career counselors tend to like what they do, they stay in their positions for a long time. As a result, you gain access to someone who has solid information and longstanding contacts in the community. Career centers offer lists of employers by practice area and the names of alumni you can contact. Because they have numerous other bits of practical information, career counselors are a good resource to keep in your back pocket.

Look for opportunities to volunteer. Practice areas and industries always have non-profit groups (practice groups, etc) dedicated to learning more about the industry, improving the industry, and provide resources to practitioners. These organizations always need volunteers. This is a great way to get to know people in the area and gain credibility.

Look for opportunities to speak. If you have a particular expertise, contact organizations that prepare seminars and continuing education classes. The Bar Association is a great place to start. Ask to speak. This will provide you with great exposure, the opportunity to meet a number of people, and credibility. Practice groups often provide people with opportunities to make presentations during their monthly lunch meetings. This is preferred because the group is small and easier to interact with.

If you are more daring, a really effective tool is to network without the help of an organization or meeting place. Search Martindale Hubble or find a list of alumni and attorneys in a particular practice area. These people could prove to be very valuable in your efforts to find work because they are already working in a field you are interested in. Write to them and then follow up with a phone call. Ask if you can take them out for a cup of coffee to learn about their field and how to get into it. Take a copy of your resume. Ask them to take a look at it and offer any suggestions regarding your current chances of getting a job and how you might improve those chances. In all likelihood, before the meeting is over, they will offer a name or two that you should contact. Remember to send

a thank you card. Many people are offered a second or real interview after their informational interviews. This leads often to a new position.

People typically feel flattered that you thought highly enough of them to want to learn from them. So, don't feel like you are imposing or are not worthy of meeting with them.

Five Best Ways and Five Worst to Hunt for a Job

Rebecca Nerison, Ph.D.

Here are the 5 best and 5 worst methods of job hunting from *What Color is Your Parachute 2008* (pp.11-17):

Worst:

1. Using the Internet (4-10% success rate)
2. Mailing out resumes to employers at random (7%)
3. Answering ads in professional or trade journals appropriate to your field (7%)
4. Answering local newspaper ads (5-24%)
5. Going to private employment agencies or search firms (5-28%)

Best:

1. Asking for job leads from: family members, friends, people in the community, staff at career centers -especially undergrad and law school (33% success rate)
2. Knocking on the door of any employer or office that interests you, whether they are known to have a vacancy or not (47%)
3. By yourself, using the phone book (or Martindale-Hubbell) to identify subjects or fields of interest to you in the town or city where you want to work, and then calling up the' employers listed in that field to ask if they are hiring for the type of position you can do and do well (69%)
4. In a group with other job hunters -a kind of "job club" -doing #3 (84%)
5. Doing a life-changing job-hunt involving a) identifying skills you most enjoy doing, b) identifying job environments in which you best fit, and c) identifying names of firms that do what you want to do, the names of the people there with the power to hire you, how to best approach that person and demonstrate your skills, and how you would be part of the solution to their problems (rather than part of the problem).

Remember to use up to FOUR of the 16 job hunting techniques, but no more. And remember that job hunting is an art (not a science) that you'll use over and over again. And remember that luck is a factor. Engaging in the best methods of job hunting - Persistently and Patiently - will provide more opportunities for luck to occur.

A Word About the Experience Issue -For Those Who Lack It:

There are at least two antidotes to the problem of lack of legal experience. The first is - obviously -to get some! Get experience any way you can, such as volunteering at legal clinics. This may take some imagination, since I've learned in the last week that the King County Legal Clinics have more volunteers than they can use! Other ideas: volunteer at agencies or organizations of interest to you; work on a project for a lawyer for free; work for a lawyer on a contract basis; do legal work for family or friends. If you end up doing the latter, be sure to connect with a few experienced lawyers who can be available to answer your questions and guide your efforts. Actually, the experience issue is in itself an excellent informational interview question. AFTER you've had your interviewees talk about themselves, try asking how they would go about getting experience if they had none.

Persistence and Determination

Jeff Minzel

Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; there is nothing more commonplace than unsuccessful people with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education alone will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and Determination alone are omnipotent. -- Earl Nightingale.

No matter what you chose for your values, you need to add persistence and determination. In a job market where there are highly educated and experienced people, you are going to have to stay focused on finding the job you want in order to accomplish your goals.

There is nothing better than knowing you worked hard and it paid off. Whether that means you got over being shy long enough to schmooze at a conference or sent out eight very well written cover letters and resumes to the firms of your dreams, you will feel great when you are finished.

Feeling great will help you think more clearly. It raises your sights about yourself and what you can accomplish. So, get busy and accomplish some of the smaller tasks. Before you know it you will be taking on projects and landing jobs you never thought were possible.

Lean to trust your instincts when making decisions. Often, you may find yourself having to make decisions on the spot simply because you no longer have the time to research and ponder issues for days. You have a gut reaction to most things. Generally, trusting your instincts will pay off. After all, they are your instincts and instincts are nature's way of helping us survive.

Of course, all of this takes time and that is why persistence and determination play a key role.

When you are persistent, you meet people, discover new solutions, find great resources and are able to re-define and clarify the routes you are able to take based on experience. When you are not busy, nothing changes and none of this new information comes your way. If you stay persistent, you are likely to find out that accomplishing your goals is easier than you first thought and despite all your hard work, you will feel exhilarated when you finish.

Recommended Websites/Books/Publications

Recommended Websites

Websites are a great way to find out who is hiring and what job descriptions are looking like these days. The internet in general is an essential research tool to find out about the different firms in your practice area and who the relevant players are. At the same time, only about 5-10% of jobs are found online. The reason is that electronic media has made it easy for applicants to overwhelm HR departments with resumes, so if you are going to apply for jobs online keep in mind that the competition is pretty fierce. The trick is to find a way to get around the Gatekeeper—HR. Here are some good websites that do manage to separate the wheat from the chaff:

- <http://www.wsba.org/jobs/recent.htm> - This is an up-to-date spam-free listing of recently posted legal jobs.
- www.indeed.com - This postings on this website are generally for actual jobs. Includes a lot of federal or out-of-state opportunities as well.
- www.usajobs.gov - All federal jobs are required to be posted here. The descriptions are usually elaborate and the application process can be confusing. Good search tools for various positions and localities.
- www.idealists.org - A good tool for public interest jobs. Just type in “lawyer seattle” to get started.
- seattle.craigslist.org - Craigslist does have a lot of up to date postings of real jobs. Use it as a tool to figure out which small firms are hiring. And then find a way to scoot around HR.

Recommended Books in LAP Lending Library

- *Never Eat Alone*, by Keith Ferrazzi. This is an excellent guide to networking with authenticity.
- *What Color is Your Parachute*, by Richard Bolles. This handbook is most helpful if you’re researching a topic, as opposed to reading it straight through. Excellent advice on networking, resumes, and even negotiating pay.
- *Ask the Headhunter* by Nick Corcodilos. Teaches you how to “do the job in the interview.”
- *What Can You Do With a Law Degree?*, *Running From the Law*, and *Contract Lawyering* by Deborah Arron. These books provide great advice for those either leaving the legal profession or those seeking a non-traditional legal career.

Recommended Publication

The Puget Sound Business Journal is highly recommended as a method for staying on top of the Puget Sound Job Market. They provide up-to-date information on the current business climate and also have job resources on the website login that comes with your subscription. PSBJ is especially helpful for those looking to be corporate counsel or attorneys who are considering careers outside of the law. Once a year they publish the widely regarded Book of Lists that evaluates the relative income, size, and focus areas of local businesses (including the law). Weekly subscriptions cost about \$65/year. Go to www.pugetsoundbusinessjournal.com to subscribe.

Pro Bono Opportunities Guide

For an up-to-date list of current pro bono opportunities, go to www.advocateresourcecenter.org and click on **Pro Bono Opportunities: A Guide for Lawyers in Washington**. You can search by county. You can also look for jobs for low income clients. Here are some King County listings, although you can search by all Washington counties.

Center for Children & Youth Justice –Lawyers Fostering Independence

- Area of law: Consumer, Disability, Education, Employment, Family & Juvenile, Health,
- Homeless, Housing, Public Benefits, Debt/Credit/Bankruptcy Projects for: Law Students, Mentors, Lawyers
- Contact: Sarah Lysons, slysons@ccyj.org , 206-696-7503 x17

CENTS (Consumer Education and Training Services)

- Area of law: Consumer
- Contact: Tony Leahy, tonyl@kcba.org , 206-267-7017

Eastside Legal Assistance Program

- Area of law: Family & Juvenile, Life Planning, All Substantive Areas
- Contact: Jennie Bigley, jennie@elap.org , 425-747-7274

Family Law CASA of King County

- Area of law: Family & Juvenile Projects for: Paralegals, Law Students, Nonlitigation Projects, Mentors, Lawyers, Senior Lawyers
- Contact: Caroline Davis, cddavis@familylawcasa.org , 206-748-9700, #224

Housing Justice Project

- Area of law: Housing
- Contact: Barbara Harris, cls@kcba.org , 206-267-7028

King County Dependency CASA Program

- Area of law: Family & Juvenile, Dependency
- Contact: Janet Harris, janet.harris@kingcounty.gov

Kinship Care Solutions

- Area of law: Family & Juvenile
- Contact: Judy Lin, KCBA Managaing Attorney, cls@kcba.org , 206-267-7023

Legal Information and Referral Line Volunteer

- Area of law: Arts, Civil Rights, Community Development, Consumer, Criminal Appeals, Disability, Education, Employment, Family & Juvenile, Health, HIV/AIDS, Homeless, Housing, Immigration & Naturalization, Life Planning, Nonprofit Organizations, Prisoners, Public Benefits, Elder Law, All Substantive Areas
- Contact: June Krumpotick, Lead Paralegal, jkrumpotick@legalvoice.org , 206-682-9552 ext 105

Legal Services for the Homeless

- Area of law: Homeless
- Contact: Ana Selviage, Program Manager, cls@kcba.org , 206-267-7042

Neighborhood Legal Clinics

- Area of law: Civil Rights, Consumer, Disability, Education, Employment, Family & Juvenile, Health, HIV/AIDS, Homeless, Housing, Immigration & Naturalization, Life Planning, Nonprofit Organizations, Public Benefits, Elder Law
- Contact: Rebecca Fogarty, NLC Program Manager, cls@kcba.org , 206-267-7029

New Beginnings

- Area of law: Family & Juvenile
- Contact: Darlene Borland, Legal Advocate, dborland@newbegin.org , 206-926-021

Newcomers Resource Project

- Area of law: Employment
- Contact: Ann Wennerstrom, Program Manager, cls@kcba.org , 206-267-7027

Nonprofit Assistance Center's Nonprofit Legal Clinic

- Area of law: Community Development, Employment, Nonprofit Organizations
- Contact: Senait Mengstab or Judy Andrews, smengstab@nacseattle.org; judy@goandfish.com , 206-324-

Northwest Immigrant Rights Project

- Area of law: Immigration & Naturalization, Nonprofit Organizations, Prisoners, Assistance with recruiting pro bono attorneys and law students in different areas of the state
- Projects for: Paralegals, Law Students, Lawyers
- Contact: Jordan Wasserman, jordan@nwirp.org , 206-587-4009

Northwest Justice Project

- Area of law: Civil Rights, Consumer, Disability, Education, Employment, Family & Juvenile, Health, Housing, Life Planning, Public Benefits, Elder Law, Debt/Credit/Bankruptcy, Veterans
- Projects for: Paralegals, Law Students, Nonlitigation Projects, Mentors, Lawyers
- Contact: 206-464-1519

Open Door Legal Services

- Area of law: Homeless
- Contact: David Mace, dmace@ugm.org , (206) 682-4642

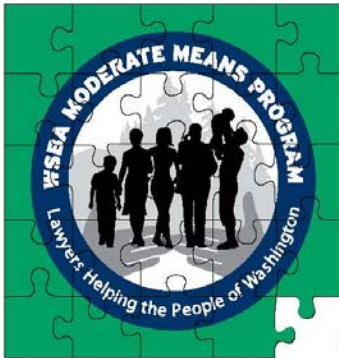
Pierce County Center for Dispute Resolution

- Area of law: Civil Rights, Community Development, Employment, Family & Juvenile, Nonprofit Organizations
- Projects for: Paralegals, Law Students, Nonlitigation Projects, Mentors, Lawyers, Senior Lawyers, Law school clinic, Mentors/consultants
- Contact: Jennfier Norlund, jennifern@pccdr.org , (253) 572-3657

Seattle Community Law Center

- Area of law: Disability, Education, HIV/AIDS, Homeless, Public Benefits, Elder Law, Social Security
- Contact: Alexandria Doolittle, Executive Director, info@seattlecommlaw.org , 206-686-7252 ext 253

WSBA Moderate Means Program



The only missing piece
is you.

The WSBA Moderate Means Program.

So many of our state's low- and moderate-income families are unable to obtain the legal help they need, simply because they cannot afford it. The need is great, especially in the areas of family, housing, and consumer law.

A survey conducted several years ago found that approximately 75 percent of Washingtonians of moderate means — those who are

within 200–400 percent of the federal poverty level — experience at least one legal problem each year. Many go without legal help.

To help address this serious problem, the WSBA created the statewide Moderate Means Program, a reduced-fee lawyer-referral service designed to help bring greater access to justice for people of moderate means. The WSBA is partnering with Washington's three law schools to implement this exciting program; law students will handle the client intake and referral to participating lawyers.

Why Should I Participate?

Help yourself while helping others!

- Provide public service and help close the access to justice gap.
- Obtain free referrals to help build your client base.
- Learn new skills and expand your practice areas through free or low-cost online trainings.
- Gain increased access to mentoring and peer support opportunities.

How Do I Sign Up?

In order to be eligible to participate, you must be an active member of the WSBA, and you must carry your own malpractice insurance. Contact WSBA Public Service Manager Catherine Brown with questions about the malpractice insurance requirement. All lawyers applying to participate will be subject to a discipline screening. Lawyer registration is done online through mywsba.org, where you will complete a short registration form. Simply go to www.mywsba.org and click on the Moderate Means Program logo.

What's Next?

Referrals will begin in late spring and early summer 2011. When a service opportunity arises, you will be contacted by a student at one of the three Washington law schools.

For more information, please visit the Frequently Asked Questions page. You can also contact WSBA Public Service Manager Catherine Brown at 206-733-5905 or catherineb@wsba.org.

Enhancing Our Culture of Service

Public service is a hallmark of the legal profession. Through projects like the Moderate Means Program, the WSBA is enhancing our culture of service, providing ways for lawyers to give back to the communities of which they are such an integral part.

A partnership between the WSBA and Washington's three law schools: Gonzaga University School of Law, Seattle University School of Law, and the University of Washington School of Law.



WSBA Law Office Management Program

Assisting solo and small-practitioners in the delivery of legal services of the highest quality.

Services Provided by LOMAP:

Computer Classes: The WSBA offers hands-on computer clinics for members wanting to learn more about what Microsoft Office programs — Outlook and Word, as well as Adobe Acrobat — can do for a lawyer. We also cover online legal research such as Casemaker and other resources. Are you a total beginner? No problem. The clinic teaches helpful tips you can use immediately. Computers are provided, or bring your laptop. Seating is limited to 15 members.

Free Consultations Available at WSBA Offices or Member's Office: First ½ hour free of charge – additional time: \$40.00 per hour for members up to two years from date of WSBA admittance; \$95.00 per hour for members over two years from date of WSBA admittance; \$150.00 per hour for service to firms of six or more lawyers. (**Travel at no charge**). Software demonstrations/support in LOMAP Computer Lab at \$20.00 per hour. Assistance by email or telephone free of charge.

Law Office in a Box: A manual, forms, and tool kit for starting your solo practice! The readings will require about 40 hours. The early days in your career with few clients are precious because you NEED this time to plan and to lay a proper foundation for a successful practice. Please heed this important advice! One Hour Consultation Time with Pete Roberts included! **\$79.00 (includes tax and shipping)**

Lending Library: The LOMAP Lending Library is a service to WSBA members. We offer the short-term loan of books on the business management aspects of your law office. **Free**

LOMAP Staff

Pete Roberts

<http://ww.lomap.org>

206-727-8237

Practice Management Advisor, provides you with 18 years of experience in management with law firms on the East and West coasts. He has benefited from working side by side with lawyers, as well as learning from over 500 consultations with Washington practitioners, to enable him to assist you with your practice.

Julie Salmon,

206-733-5914

LOMAP and Casemaker Coordinator, has been at the WSBA for seven years providing support and resources to members for starting up a practice and technology needs.

WSBA Practice Sections

WSBA Sections provide a forum for members to pursue their interests in various areas of the law. Among other things, Sections support the continuing legal education of lawyers, cooperate in the development of the WSBA's legislative program, organize and inform Section members of issues and events in their areas of interest, and foster collegiality among members. This is a great opportunity to network with attorneys in your practice area and offer service to WSBA. Membership generally costs \$25-\$35.

To learn more about any of these sections go to
<http://www.wsba.org/lawyers/groups/sections.htm>

- Administrative Law
- Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Animal Law
- Antitrust, Consumer Protection and Unfair Business Practices
- Business Law
- Civil Rights Law
- Construction Law
- Corporate Counsel
- Creditor Debtor Rights
- Criminal Law
- Elder Law
- Environmental and Land Use Law
- Family Law
- Health Law
- Indian Law
- Intellectual Property
- International Practice
- Juvenile Law
- Labor and Employment Law
- Legal Assistance to Military Personnel
- Litigation
- Real Property, Probate and Trust
- Senior Lawyers
- Sexual Orientation and Gender Identification Legal Issues (SOGILI)
- Solo and Small Practice
- Taxation
- World Peace Through Law

WSBA's Young Lawyer Division (YLD)

Purpose of the Division: The Washington Young Lawyers Division is the vehicle for new attorneys and law students to get involved with the Washington State Bar Association. New lawyer leaders partner throughout the bar to develop programs which assist their colleagues to transition into the practice of law, serve the public, and enhance leadership skills and opportunities. Attending WYLD programs or participating in a committee or planning group offers you the opportunity to network with practitioners around the state and build valuable skills.

Membership Criteria: Active members of the Washington State Bar Association are automatically members of the WYLD if they meet at least one of two criteria:

1. The member has been admitted to practice for less than five years (in any state), or
2. The member is under 36 years of age

There are no fees for membership to the WYLD. Current law students are welcome to participate in division activities.

WYLD Initiatives

- Continuing Legal Education Committee
- Editorial Advisory Committee and De Novo
- Liaison Program with WSBA Sections
- Member Outreach Committee
- Public Service/Pro Bono Committee
- Trial Advocacy Program
- Washington First Responder Will Clinic
- Yakima Pre-law Student Leadership Conference
- YMCA Mock Trial Program Partnership
- Youth and Law Forum Partnership

Structure and Support: The WYLD is a component of the WSBA Outreach and Education Department. A twenty-person WYLD Board of Trustees, elected by their peers, partners with WSBA staff and the Board of Governors to develop the vision and programs for the division. Dozens of new attorney volunteers lead the committees which implement WYLD programs.

For more information about the division, contact the WYLD Liaison, Brian Halcomb, at 206-727-8205 or brianh@wsba.org, or get to know the trustee from your district.

Minority Bar Associations of Washington

Asian Bar Association of Washington (ABAW)

Attorneys, judges, law professors, and law students involved in the Asian Pacific American community in Washington. Membership fees range from \$50-\$100. Contact: www.abaw.org

The Cardozo Society

For Jewish attorneys, sponsoring programs that integrate legal and Jewish concerns to improve the Jewish community. Open to all attorneys and others who share common goals or interests, free membership. Contact: cardozo@jewishinseattle.org

Filipino Lawyers of Washington (FLOW)

Lawyers in the Filipino community fostering the exchange of ideas and information among its members and other members of the legal profession, the judiciary and the community.

Membership fee is \$50 annually. Contact: www.filipinolawyers.org

GLBT Bar Association (QLaw)

Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) legal professionals, a voice for GLBT lawyers in the legal profession, the courts, and under the law. Annual membership is \$25 for under 5 years practice, \$50 for 6 years or more. Contact: membership@q-law.org

Korean American Bar Association (KABA)

Providing professional development, networking and mentorship to its members and serve the community as a resource. Dues are either \$65 for public sector attorneys and \$75 for private practice attorneys. Contact: www.kaba-washington.org

Latina/Latino Bar Association of Washington (LBAW)

Representing the concerns and goals of Latina/o attorneys and Latina/o people of the State of Washington, open to attorneys, professors, legal staff and students. Annual membership dues range from \$50 to \$150. Contact: www.lbaw.org

Loren Miller Bar Association (LMBA)

Advancing the social and economic well-being of its largely African-American membership; improving relations between the profession and community. Annual membership fees \$75-\$150, depending on type/size of practice. Contact: www.lmba.net

Middle Eastern Legal Association of Washington (MELAW)

Attorneys & law students of Middle Eastern descent, along with friends and supporters. Resources, networking & mentorship for members and the public. Annual membership costs \$35. Contact: www.melegal.org

Mother Attorneys Mentoring Association of Seattle (MAMAS)

For attorney mothers in the legal profession. Monthly networking events and brown bag lunches and maintains an active listserv. Supportive and child-friendly environment. Annual membership is \$10.00. Contact: www.mamaseattle.org

Northwest Indian Bar Association (NIBA)

Indian attorneys and judges in Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, British Columbia and the Yukon Territory. Annual membership costs either \$35 or \$50, depending on type of practice. Contact: www.nwiba.org

Pierce County Minority Bar Association (PCMBA)

To facilitate professional development and relationships among the various minority attorneys/legal professionals who reside or practice in Pierce County. Annual membership costs \$50.00. Contact: www.orgsites.com/wa/pcmba

South Asian Bar Association of Washington (SABAW)

South Asian legal professionals in the NW providing access to legal resources and support for issues relevant to the South Asian community. Annual membership costs \$40 for public/non-profit attorneys and \$50 for all others. Contact: www.sabaw.org

Vietnamese American Bar Association of Washington (VABAW)

For Vietnamese American attorneys, law students and friends, facilitating both professional and personal relationships among its members, the community and the judiciary. Annual membership costs \$50 - \$100. Contact: www.vabaw.com.

Washington Attorneys with Disabilities Association

Attorneys & law students with and without disabilities, working together to educate and enlighten those within and outside of the profession about the many barriers to the practice of law encountered by individuals with disabilities.

Contact: www.washingtondisabilityattorneys.com

Washington Women Lawyers (WWL)

With eight active state chapters, WWL seeks to further the full integration of women in the legal profession and to promote equal rights and opportunities for women. Annual membership based on county (King county is \$55.00). Contact: www.wwl.org.

Washington Legal/Practice Organizations

Washington State Association for Justice (formerly WSTLA)

WSAJ is a professional association of trial lawyers with an emphasis on consumer-focused legislation and civil justice issues. The Eagle Program, part of the WSAJ, funds legislative, public affairs and Amicus programs. There are Seattle, Olympia and Spokane offices. For more information, go online at www.washingtonjustice.org or call 206-464-1011. Membership costs vary depending on years practicing, ranging from \$120 (practicing less than 2 years) up to \$360 (general membership) or more (\$600 for 15+ years in practice).

Washington Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers

WACDL is an association made up of over 900 criminal defense lawyers and related criminal defense professionals practicing in Washington State. They offer CLE's, a newsletter, attorney-to-attorney assistance through committees, panels, a task force, discussion groups and mentor programs. There is also Amicus and legislative committee involvement. For more information or to join WACDL, go on-line at www.wacdl.org or call 206-623-1302. Membership costs range from \$105 (new lawyer) to \$215 (regular member), and up.

Access to Justice

The Washington State Access to Justice Network is a model public-private partnership dedicated to making the civil justice system open and available to all, including Washington State's nearly 1.2 million low-income residents. A wide range of organizations participate in the network, all offering opportunities to provide pro bono legal assistance in a wide variety of capacities. This network is overseen by The Access to Justice (ATJ) Board, which was established by the Washington State Supreme Court in 1994. The Board was created at the request of the Washington State Bar Association Board of Governors in response to a growing need to coordinate the access to justice efforts in Washington State to provide continuity and focus; ATJ Board members are appointed by the WSBA BOG and report to them, meeting approximately 7 times per year. For more information, contact Joan Fairbanks, WSBA Justice Programs Manager at 206-727-8282, or joanf@wsba.org.

King County Bar Association

The largest voluntary bar association in Washington, serving the needs of approximately 6000 members. The KCBA provides support to its diverse membership; promotes the profession; works with the judiciary; offers community and public service opportunities and input into matters of public policy. For more information or to join KCBA, contact www.kcba.org online or call 206-267-7100. Basic membership dues are \$210; income-based dues are also offered.

Sections:

- Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Appellate Law
- Aviation Law
- Bankruptcy Law
- Collaborative Law
- Corporate/In-House Counsel
- Environmental Law and Land Use
- Government Lawyers
- Guardianship & Elder Law
- Intellectual Property
- Labor & Employment Law
- International Law
- Real Property, Probate & Trust Law
- Solo/Small Firms

Solo/ Small Firms Section:

The Solo/Small Firms Law Section provides opportunities to discuss common problems and solutions, and receive benefits usually associated with large firms such as immediate access to fellow associates for referrals and advice through an active E-mail listserv, a Web site to provide marketing opportunities, and the use of high end equipment by sharing resources. Monthly meetings feature speakers on issues relevant to the solo or small firm including practice management, technology and marketing. For more information contact www.kcba.org.

Committees:

- Awards Committee
- Bar Bulletin Committee
- Business Assistance Panel
- Community Legal Services Committee
- Continuing Legal Education Committee
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Luncheon Committee
- Awards Committee
- Fair Campaign Practices Committee Future of the Law Institute
- Judicial Screening
- Judiciary Committee
- Lawyer Referral Services Committee
- Membership Committee
- Ethnic Diversity in the Legal Profession
- Fair Campaign Practices Committee Future of the Law Institute

YLD:

This very active division of the KCBA offers 3 committee opportunities to get involved in: Community Involvement, Social Events and Young Lawyer Services.

Contract Law Services

These settings have provided a steady, part-time income flow for one of our Job Seekers.

Law Dawgs/Quid Pro Quo

(206) 223-1313

Law Dawgs is more the legal assistant/paralegal temp side of things. Quid Pro Quo is the attorney placement arm of this recruitment firm. I specifically work with Will Chargalauf, but they are all awesome.

Woods and Associates

<http://www.woodsandassociates.com/>

(206) 623-2930

Some contract attorney (doc review) and senior paralegal level work has been found through this firm. Sam is a good contact, but any of the recruiters are fantastic including Sarah and Rochelle. This firm is unique in that you don't work with just one assigned recruiter, any of them can assist you at any time.

Legal Ease

<http://legalease.com/>

Our member relayed, "I have listed my resume with them, but haven't landed any positions with them, mostly because I've either been under contract or in transition. I did take advantage of Ms. Jones' resume evaluation and felt that it offered valuable insight. I think this agency is best if you completely want to avoid legal assistant/paralegal type work and get moving on landing an attorney position."

Robert Half Legal

<http://www.roberthalflegal.com/>

We have had limited experience with this firm. However we've heard they had a particular interest in persons with IP experience

Firms that hire their own contract attorneys, mostly for document review:

- Perkins Coie
- K & L Gates

LinkedIn Job Hunting Tips

Bellevue College

Whether you're just getting started using LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com) or you're making good progress using it to build your network, these job search tips from LinkedIn will help you make the most out of LinkedIn.

LinkedIn is the professional networking site that everyone, regardless of where you are on the career ladder, should be using to grow their career and to job search.

- Create a **strong** professional profile. Look at other LinkedIn profiles.
- Read the LinkedIn FAQs, [http://www.linkedin.com/static?key=customer service](http://www.linkedin.com/static?key=customer+service)
- Use **privacy controls** to limit what people see in your public profile.
- Invite desired professional contacts to link to you and remember **quality vs. quantity**.
- Make recommendations.
- Proofread, check for grammar and punctuation, and **proofread again!**
- Keep it professional
- Keep it updated-An outdated profile is as bad as an outdated resume, especially when everyone can see it.
- Know your connections

Update your resume and establish your online presence. LinkedIn allows you to post your extensive work experience and relevant awards or activities. You may be surprised to learn how many recruiting executives use online networks to locate potential candidates.

Reconnect with former colleagues and current coworkers. The more connections you acquire, the higher the chance of building new relationships and finding job leads specific to your network.

Research companies you'd like to work for. LinkedIn, unlike other social networking sites, gives you access to over 200,000 Company Profiles, ranging from Fortune 500 companies to philanthropic organizations.

Get recommendations. Your profile not only lets you post a virtual resume, but it also provides a space where recommendations from coworkers or former colleagues are displayed. Headhunters check out recommendations to gauge your level of experience and areas of expertise.

Find out more about industry trends and hot topics by using LinkedIn Answers. Answers allow users to ask industry experts questions and find inside ways to approach new markets. It's a great tool to solicit input and gain perspective from your connections or from the broader LinkedIn community.

Start Your Job Hunt at LinkedIn

1. Sign in to your account from the LinkedIn home page
2. Click on the "Jobs & Hiring" tab.
3. See recently posted jobs in the "Recent Jobs" field. Learn more about the position and whether you have any contacts within the hiring company by clicking on the job title link.
4. Search for a job by composing keywords or phrases in the "Keywords" field. Use terms that describe the position you seek, such as "Software Consultant" or "Writer/Editor."
5. Select the country you are looking for employment in from the drop-down menu.
6. Enter the zip code of the specific city or region you're looking in. Find zip codes for most locations by clicking on the "Zip Code Lookup" link.
7. Click the "Search" button. LinkedIn will pull jobs currently posted by companies within your network as well as jobs posted on the Internet.

Get in Touch with Contacts

1. Click on a job title link to see more about the job and whether you have contacts within the hiring company.
2. Use your contacts to find out more about the job and the hiring process. Your contacts within the hiring company can give you an inside edge on getting the job.
3. Apply for many jobs directly from LinkedIn by clicking the "Apply" button at the end of the listing.

Join any applicable LinkedIn groups.

Warning: When you join a group, as a default everyone within the group may contact you directly via LinkedIn. Fellow group members will not be able to see your email address unless you both have already made a direct connection. You may or may not consider being a member of a group as being favorable, since it is possible that you may receive a LinkedIn introduction from a fellow group member you don't know.

1. Check the LinkedIn groups' directory to see if there any other groups you can join. Note that not all LinkedIn groups are listed here, only those that have paid to be listed.
2. Check your alma mater's website and contact its alumni association to see if a LinkedIn Group is offered for alumni.
3. Contact your organizations to which you belong to see if they offer LinkedIn Groups.

Find contacts related to your most recent employer.

1. Click the "People" tab at the top of the page.
2. In the "Company" box, type in the company for which you currently work or most recently worked. If your company is a big company like Sony, you will probably want to be more specific than entering something like "Sony," instead entering something like "Sony Electronics." Leave all of the other fields blank or at their default setting.
3. At the search results, scroll through the names. Do you know anyone you trust in this list with whom you don't yet have a direct connection? If so, then click on the person's name to get to their profile page. Now click on the link "Add xxx to your network" (located on the top right side of the page) to request a direct LinkedIn connection.
4. Repeat the above process of finding and inviting people.

Add contacts for which you know their email addresses.

If you still have contacts to add after following the steps above, then another method to add contacts is to manually type in the name and email address for each and every person to whom you would like to send an invitation. If you have a lot of contacts, this can be time consuming.

To type in information manually:

1. Click on the "Home" tab.
2. Click the button "Expand Your Network" in the upper right corner of the page.
3. Type the names and email addresses of up to 6 people. You can send 6 people the same email to invite them to the network. Say for example, you worked with four people on a project. You can fill in the names and email addresses for those four people, and send a customized message that mentions the project. Note that the email your contacts receive will not indicate in the header (to and cc fields) that anyone else has received an invitation, so you'll need to word your email with that in mind (if you don't use the default body text).

Good luck with your LinkedIn experience!

Informational Interviewing

Oregon LAP

I. OBJECTIVE OF INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

- A. Establish adult-to-adult relationship (stature) versus programmed, subservient/subordinate posture.
- B. Establish positive rapport with the person you are interviewing.
- C. Build a foundation for meeting a second or third time if desired.
 - 1. Obtain specific information about the field/area of law/career path of the interviewee.
- D. Obtain specific information about the firm/company/nonprofit agency/opportunity versus presenting yourself as a job hunter.
 - 1. Is this the kind of firm or company that fits you (appropriate organizational structure, ethical stance, people you feel comfortable with....)?
 - 2. What does the firm/company need? Are you capable of filling the identified need, and do you want to?
- E. Obtain additional referrals from each person interviewed.

II. APPROACH IN OBTAINING AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW (DOES NOT APPLY TO A SITUATION WHERE YOU KNOW THERE IS A JOB OPENING): before beginning to schedule, informational interviews, research general practice area, job or career area, firms, companies.

- A. If you have been given the name of someone and obtained permission to use the referral source's name, call or email new referral directly and ask to meet with him/her.
".....recommended/suggested that I contact you."
 - 1. Explain to the person that you are hoping to meet with them for at least 30 minutes so that you can learn about the career path and the kind of work that they do."
 - 2. Explain to the 'person that you are currently considering a career transition and hope to learn from them.
- B. If cold call/contact:
 - 1. Send a Hand written brief note or E-mail.
 - a. Succinctly state the purpose of the letter/request -to meet personally.

- 1) If sending a note, indicate that you will call them the following week to schedule a time to meet and then follow through.
 - 2) If sending an email ask them if they would be willing to meet with you to discuss their career path and career/area of law. Emphasize that you would like to learn about them and their occupation and that you are NOT currently seeking a job from them. Give a brief explanation of who you are and that you are considering transitioning into their field. Do not send your resume or complete bio. Remember you want to keep the focus on them but allow them to understand that you
 - 3) If sending an email use a heading that will distinguish you from SPAM mail. Do not use exclamation points in the heading State concisely, "Learning about" or, "Informational Interview" or, some variation.
2. Follow-up telephone call or email.
- a. If you are following up with a telephone call:
 - 1) Avoid being screened out by intermediary by explaining the general purpose of your call so that the intermediary/assistant will not think you are a solicitor.
 - 2) Remember the person's assistant deserves your respect and can be very helpful .in helping you connect with the interviewee and setting up the informational interview.
 - 3) If you receive voicemail, leave a brief message with a general explanation and your phone number and let them know you will attempt to call them back.
 - b. When you have made telephone contact with the identified potential interviewee:
 - 1) Ask if he or she received your letter.
 - 2) Explain that you are only asking for advice/feedback.
 - 3) Try to schedule a time to meet a week or so down the road.
 - a) Suggest meeting for coffee for at least 30-45 minutes (if you suggest lunch be prepared to pay). The goal is to schedule a face to face meeting vs. conducting the interview by telephone.
 - c. When responding to an email of an identified potential interviewee:
 - 1) Try to schedule a time to meet a week or so down the road. Suggest meeting for coffee for at least 30-45 minutes (if you suggest lunch be prepared to pay).

III. INITIAL INTERVIEW ITSELF

- A. Eye Contact & Posture: make eye contact, but don't overdo it; lean forward vs. sitting back.

- B. Opening statement: A clear and concise statement of your purpose for meeting with other person that includes five parts:
 - 1. Establishes equal adult to adult stature.
 - 2. Reflects your systematic approach to exploring your career direction/specific area of practice.
 - 3. Names your career target/goal.
 - 4. Relates to the ego of the person you're interviewing.
 - 5. Provides an easy transition to the question phase of the interview.

- C. Question Phase of Interview:
 - 1. Don't wait to be asked questions; take initiative to ask questions.
 - 2. Don't allow an employer/interviewee to take control of the interview by asking about your background, or past employment history.
 - 3. Goal of questions asked is to elicit openness and responsiveness of the person interviewed; lower communication barriers.
 - 4. Learn to listen to body language and nonverbal communication.
 - 5. Avoid argumentation; try to orient the interview toward areas of agreement.
 - 6. Must approach an interview from position of professional-to-professional. .
 - a. You are there to gather information and advice.
 - b. You are there with the mindset that you won't take a job after one or two interviews no matter what is offered, so that the employer has no power over you.
 - 7. Types of Questions. The goal or intent is to ask questions which stimulate open communication.
 - a. Open-ended questions are most helpful.
 - 1) Examples of...
 - a. How do you feel about ... ?
What is your opinion regarding ... ? (Ego-oriented• question.)
 - b. How would you advise me regarding ... ?
 - c. How do you see, assess ... ? See examples – **Appendix A**
 - 2) Advantages of: ..
 - a. You do not force other person to adopt a position; As long as you are asking this type of question, the person you are interviewing will be talking.

- 3) Most of the questions you ask should be open-ended questions.
 - a. Informational Questions: Asking for specific information.
 8. A good test for the validity/quality of a question is to ask yourself whether you're asking the question to honestly identify the other person's viewpoint or are you asking the question to receive a response you hope to hear (leading question).
- D. Ask/Obtain Additional Names/Referrals:
1. Check time: "I know it's getting late and I don't want to take too much of your time. Before I make any decisions I need to talk to other people in the field/industry at your level/stature, who do you recommend I contact?"
 2. Take out a small notebook and pen. You may need to prompt a little more.
 3. In contacting these people can I use your name? **YOU MUST ASK THIS QUESTION.**
- E. Get commitment for a second meeting if you have a good rapport.
1. "This has been very helpful. In case I need any further advice, may I contact you?"
 2. Alternatively: If meeting was particularly good, you may say, "This has been particularly helpful; I would like to pursue it further. Would you have some additional time you could give me at some future point?" Or "I have several additional questions that would take too much time today, could we meet again in a week or so?"
- F. Take the initiative/responsibility for ending the interview/meeting.
1. For a first interview, don't take more time than requested and no more than 30-60 minutes.
 2. Ideally, person being interviewed will talk 80% of the time.
- G. Write a follow-up "Thank You" within 24-48 hours.
- H. When additional names/referrals provided by contact prove helpful or lead to a job opportunity, write or re-contact and let them know, and again, thank them.
- I. Regarding resumes and applications:
1. Don't send or provide a copy of your resume before the informational interview if asked.
 2. Don't bring a copy of your resume to the informational interview.
 3. A polite way to deal with a question regarding your resume is "I am not ready to submit an application or resume at this time."

IV. GETTING STARTED

A. Initial Interview Program

1. Start right away, the earlier the better.
2. Pick people you know well enough, but who are not in your target field –
Appendix B
3. Formulate questions: Almost any questions you can ask a friend, you can ask an employer.
 - a. Need to establish stature.
 - b. Seek information.
 - c. With friends you can ask if they are making enough money.
 - d. Follow same approach outlined in Section III.

B. Most people don't know how to go to their friends. They are afraid their friends will feel used. Emphasize that you are not asking them for a job or what they think you should do. You are only asking their feedback on your decision.

1. You're just asking them for names.
2. Interviewing is a learned skill; you must practice it.
3. Interviewing with friends is a real-life interview; may directly/indirectly translate into opportunities.
4. Resist temptation of asking friends what they think of your idea (passing judgment). If you ask, they may get the impression you are not serious and may try to talk you out of a viable idea. Don't go to friends with that in your mind. Interview your friend; retain control.

C. Implementing Interview Plan

1. List the names of potential contacts that you plan to call and schedule meetings with.
2. Establish a Scheduling System:
Examples:
 - Week 1 –letters/initial phone call
 - Week 2 -follow-up letters with phone calls; follow-up phone call with appointments
 - Week 3 -follow-up phone calls with appointments; follow-up appointments with thank-you note
3. Keep record/"Summary of Activities"
4. Suggested/recommended Intensity of Activity:
Minimums:
 - 2 interviews with friends/week
 - 2 interviews with new contacts/weekMaximums:

- 5 & 5, respectively (as per above)
5. Start with friends, then:
 - move to interviews with more distant acquaintances
 - move to firms/companies within field that you wouldn't want to work with
 - final step, approach firms/companies and positions you are really interested in
 6. Keeps a separate diary regarding feelings with respect to the day's activities.

Appendix A

SAMPLE INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- What do you find most interesting and rewarding about your work?
- If you could change something about your work, what would it be? How would you describe a typical work day?
- Describe your career path. How did you progress to your present position?
- What types of skills and/or experience are necessary to be effective in this field?
- When you are looking for an associate, what are some of the characteristics you seek?
- Describe the changes taking place in your field. What changes do you see taking place in the next five years?
- If you were entering this field/profession today, how would you do it?
- How does one hear about new openings in your field?
- What academic background is most valuable in this field?
- What are the greatest challenges or toughest problems you face in this work?
- If you could give me one bit of advice about entering this industry/profession/field, what would that be?
- Can you suggest someone else in this field that I might talk with? May I use your name when I contact them?

Appendix B

Who Are Your Contacts?

Family	
Prior Jobs	
Current Job	
Judges/Lawyers	
Law School Professors	
Law School Students	
Law School Placement Office	
College Acquaintances	
Sorority/Fraternity	
Alumni Association	
Church/Synagogue	
Hobbies	
Professional Associations	
Volunteer Affiliations	
Children	
Neighbors	
Customer or Clients	
Armed Forces	
Doctors	
Dentists	
Accountants	
Bankers	
Insurance Agents	
Sports Teams	
Athletic Club	
Counselors	

Informational Interview

John Clynych

An Informational Interview allows you network within the community and research areas of work in a supportive atmosphere.

- Overcome any negative images of self or networking
 - Be positive
 - Realize networking is vital

- Things to do before interview
 - Be positive
 - Figure out what you are seeking from interviewer before setting up interview
 - Rework resume
 - Have someone go over resume
 - Have business cards made
 - Do research on interviewer and firm
 - Think of questions to ask interviewer
 - Conduct mock interview
 - Call to confirm
 - Dress for interview

- Treat informational interview as job interview
 - Be positive
 - First impression
 - Be on time
 - Bring business card (Kinko) and give to interviewer
 - Bring resume but only give out if asked
 - If meeting for coffee, lunch, offer to pay
 - Do not backstab or complain
 - Do not paint experiences as negative
 - Be decisive about direction you want to go
 - Do not ask for job
 - Express interest in what interviewer has to say
 - Overcome any negative images of self or networking
 - Allow interviewer time to talk, and listen to what they have to say
 - Come prepared with questions for interviewer
 - Close interview
 - Get names of others to contact

- If interviewer has told you they will do something, repeat this at end of interview
 - If you are to provide something to interviewer in future, repeat this at end of interview
- After Informational Interview
 - Create log for each interview
 - Send thank you card
 - Follow-through Reconnect
- Other Ideas
 - If you are an attorney, you can be practicing solo rather than being unemployed
 - Join boards and organizations
 - Network through these
 - Determine if donation of \$ will allow you greater access
 - Volunteer where you would like to work
 - Stay active and organized
 - Get involved in activities that keep you in community and maintain positive attitude
 - Gym
 - Church

Career Lessons from My Recruiting Desk

Jason Manino

Part I: Getting the Meeting

This is the first in a series of articles that will draw deeply on my ten years of Talent Acquisition (recruiting) work for Fortune 500 companies throughout the entertainment and staffing industries. It is my intention for these articles to support you with real, hands-on information. I intend to draw on my experience in the trenches as a recruiter or my personal success as a job hunter. This first article outlines a couple of assertive techniques that will ask you to generate courage and confidence to take action that will help you successfully distinguish yourself from the hundreds of other applicants currently in the talent pool. However, I caution you to only execute these techniques if you are indeed very qualified for the job! Although my experience is at very large companies I assert that these techniques will work well when approaching smaller companies.

1. Stop sending your resume/profile and start having conversations

In the current employment climate I encourage you to take a more active role in your search and stop sending your resume to every Tom, Dick, Harry, and job posting you see on the internet. You may not realize it, but as soon as you submit your resume to a company you also put your career in their hands. Therefore, when you see a posting at a company that interests you, ask yourself if you have a way in other than your resume. Perhaps there is someone in your network that works for the company who you can ask to e-mail or hand your resume to the hiring manager. If you don't know anyone then do the research to find out who to talk to (with sites like linkedin.com this isn't as hard as you might think). Send them a brief (perhaps two paragraph) intro telling them why you are the solution they need and let them know that you will be calling to follow up in a couple of days. Recruiters don't want to hear this, but (if and only if you are indeed well qualified for the opportunity) one of your best ways in is through direct contact with a hiring manager. On many occasions I have met with hiring managers to discuss new openings and have been given direct leads to candidates who had made contact with them.

2. Use the telephone

I know this seems archaic in our age of technology. However, rather than leave your career up to cyberspace I encourage you to do some groundwork, figure out who to contact, and muster up the courage to make the phone call (if and only if you are indeed well qualified for the position). When you do get the hiring manager on the phone you should be prepared with a solid twenty second pitch as to why you are the solution to their problem. Then make an agreement to submit your resume directly to them along with submitting it online. Let them know that you will call to follow up in a couple of days and how much you appreciate their time. Alternatively, if you have submitted your resume online and you know you are a great candidate for the position call within

one week to follow up on the status of the position. Tell them why you are someone they would want to meet and that you would like to interview for the position. Many job postings say not to call. However, if you take a strategic approach to this, understand the line between making a phone call and being a stalker, and you are indeed a solid candidate for the job than you are doing the recruiter or hiring manager a favor. In my busy recruiting days it was a service to me when a qualified candidate whose resume I had not yet seen would call to follow up. If time allowed I would open their resume immediately. If they were a great candidate, I would get very excited and start asking questions right away or schedule a better time for an interview.

3. Do your research early

If you are contacted by a company you should be prepared by having conducted some initial research. It should answer the following questions: a) What does the company do/offer? b) What is their market position and who are their competitors c) company structure d) company financials e) your understanding of the job based on the description. Most, if not all of this information is readily available on the internet. You may not be asked questions that illustrate this knowledge if they are simply calling to schedule a meeting. Nonetheless, you will be prepared.

4. Be the solution

It is not a secret that many organizations are currently struggling. Hence, more than anything, even more than your actual skill set; companies are looking to hire you as a solution to their problems. What's the problem? Figuring out how to save or generate more money. One way to clearly differentiate yourself from other candidates is to illustrate that you are the solution to this problem. You want to have clear examples of how you helped address a company's bottom line on your resume and be ready to talk about them as soon as your first conversation. This may seem challenging if you are not directly in sales, finance or accounting. Here are some examples:

- *Marketing*: How can you quantify leads that got generated through marketing campaigns you executed? How can you quantify money you saved or helped generate based on your marketing analysis.
- *Product Development* What kind of revenue was generated by new product launches?
- *Project Management* How can you quantify in a dollar amount time you saved on a project?
- *Administrative* Perhaps you supported a boss who was a key player in the sales department and can illustrate how you provided the expertise to help a system run more efficiently, which saved your boss more time to go out and close additional sales.

These techniques can be daunting for some. However, the courage you need to take assertive action in alignment with your desire to get back work is right within you! It is your vision coupled with action that will help bring your career back into reality!

Do you have a strategy you want to share or a question about "getting the meeting?" Please comment below. You never know, the story you share may just be what the person reading it needs to hear. "tweet" this article or post it to Facebook so others can benefit from this information!

The next segment in *Lessons from My Recruiting Desk* will show you how to stop interviewing and provide in depth details for crafting your "winning job presentation!".

Part II: Interviewing Today

What are your greatest strengths? I am always a little surprised when I still hear people say that interview questions like this one are still the most popular. One dimensional questions like this are not the most popular among sophisticated, well trained Hiring Managers and Recruiting professionals.

In old fashioned interviews you will indeed be asked questions like, "What are your strengths?" However, more and more companies have begun to employ behavioral interviewing. Behavioral interviewing is a relatively recent interviewing technique. It was developed by industrial psychologists in the 1970's. It is based on the premise that past behavior is an accurate predictor of future behavior in a job environment. Statistics show that behavioral interviewing is five times more accurate than the traditional interview style for choosing the right candidates. As a result more and more companies looking to save money by making the "right" hires are integrating this technique into their recruiting practices.

Behavioral interviewing is a technique that digs much more deeply into a candidates experience by inviting candidates to share from real work or life behavior. In a traditional job-interview, you can usually get away with telling the interviewer what he or she wants to hear, even if you are stretching the truth. However, it's much more difficult to give responses that are untrue in a behavioral interview. In a behavioral interview the interviewer can drill down to get the specifics. For instance, they may ask follow up questions that include, "What were you thinking at that point?" or "What made you decide to choose that specific action as opposed to another choice?" If the truth is being stretched there is a good chance your response won't hold up among this deeper questioning. Candidates who thoroughly tell the interviewer about particular situations that relate to each question will be far more effective and successful than those who remain general.

Your responses to behavioral interview questions will take the S-T-A-R approach.

1. S or T - Describe the situation or task
2. A - Describe the action you took in the context of the situation or task
3. R- What was the result of your action.

A typical behavioral interviewing question might be: "Tell me about a time when you overcame a crisis, solved a problem, dealt with failure, had to manage someone's performance, etc."

Tips to prepare for behavioral interviewing:

1. Company research

So that you have a deep understanding of what skills you need to showcase during the interview be sure to do your company research and take the time to ensure your understanding of the position you are being considered for.

2. Accomplishments

Whether you are actively interviewing or happily employed always keep an ongoing journal of all of your great accomplishments. Also, include details regarding your accomplishments in alignment with the behavioral interview "S-T-A-R" structure. By doing this you are prepared at a moment's notice to present information about yourself in this format.

3. Stories

Prepare for interviews as if you are crafting a twenty to thirty minute presentation about yourself including a series of short thirty second to one minute stories. This gives you an opportunity to present yourself as the expert and the solution to a company's problems. Story topics might include illustrations about how you functioned as an effective team player, how you handled difficult situations on projects or with employees, how you overcame a challenging sales presentation. It is quite likely that an interviewer will want to explore your behavior under stress by asking about how you overcame seemingly negative situations. Therefore, be sure that your stories include difficulties and challenges you overcame.

4. Solutions

In my last "*Lessons From My Recruiting Desk*" I encouraged you to present yourself as a solution to problems. Behavioral interviewing also gives you an opportunity to showcase yourself as a solution by choosing to illustrate professionally challenging situations that you managed with aplomb.

With this preparation you are well on your way to interviewing confidently and gracefully. However, I have also seen candidates so well prepared that they flood their interviewers with too much information too soon. Think of an interview like a dance. When you dance you take one step at a time allowing your partner to step in sync. Take one step at a time in an interview by allowing your interviewer to ask their questions. Answer with targeted information that sufficiently addresses the specific question. On the flip side some of my most frustrating memories as a recruiter are from when I had to make significant effort to pull information from candidates who were ill-prepared and not providing sufficient information. My suggestion? Find a balance and run with it and you will give a memorable, impressive interview!

In an ever-changing world Jason's coaching empowers you to start living life on your terms, creating a career and life based on personal integrity and authenticity! Learn more at www.jmannino.com and request a free copy of Jason's career coaching e-book: *Swinging Through the Unemployment Jungle* by e-mailing info@jmannino.com

The Psychology of Interviewing

Dan Crystal, Psy.D

This article summarizes a presentation by Paul Anderson at WSBA. For more information about Paul's approach to the job search go to <http://www.prolango.com>.

Creating Rapport

Listen to People: This is especially relevant for Informational Interviews. People want to feel understood. They want to feel like they have something special to offer. Interrupting them with your own opinions, or personal contributions, is a way of competing for airspace. Get out of your own way when creating rapport!

Match Their Behavioral Presentation: There's nothing more uncomfortable than a disconnect between someone standing tall, while the other is relaxed. One person speaking loudly and the other softly. One all dressed up, the other casual. It's awkward. This is an important skill. You want people to feel comfortable. Otherwise they won't want to work with you. Remember—this is not about you! It's about you filling *their* need. So whatever personality signatures you are especially proud of can wait a second. This is your chance to *read* the situation.

Connection is approximately:

- 6% words—what you have to say. This is usually overemphasized.
- 38% tone of speech, tempo, volume and style of expression. You want to match this.
- 55% behavioral—this includes how you dress. How you carry yourself. Are you more serious or smiley? If they look relaxed, then be relaxed too. Are you giving them an equal amount of eye contact?

Networking

Meeting other lawyers is critical for your career. For solos about 65% of referrals come from lawyers who are either swamped or don't have your practice area. For those in firms networking not only can get you a job, but it can elevate your career once you are hired. Social skills go a huge way in terms of bringing competent people into the practice, and in terms of getting those important clients. But a lot of networking involves two people talking about themselves and wondering if they'll have something in common. In some respects one's objectives can seem muddled: Do I want a job or a friend? Be clear about your objectives. Also be aware that your perspective on your experience will inevitably be influenced by the company you keep. Most of us have a charitable instinct, but if someone is not helpful in terms of satisfying your objectives, know it.

Networking should be a means to an end. The trick to networking, is you have to create a value *proposition*. That is you have to find a way to be helpful to that person. This goes for jobs, as much as contacts. How are you going to satisfy their need? Can you do work that's helpful for them. Do you have interests that they connect with? Do you know someone they should meet? This focus upon their need should be the first priority from that very first email exchange. It means your eye is on the ball, and you are not over-absorbed by the formalities around keeping in touch. This is why passing out resumes at a job fair is pretty pointless. There's no value proposition. You talk about yourself and they say "who cares" and drop your resume in the garbage (since a resume is just words, which only count for 6% of connection).

Elevator Pitches

These are mostly so that you know what you want. This value should not be minimized. Being able to articulate what you are really looking for, why it's exciting to you, and how you might be able to connect with someone else on this topic can really offer you focus. It's not about grabbing some executive by the collar and ranting about your skills. Rather, this might be the moment in the informational interview when you are asked about yourself. It should be individualized for different situations. Each point introduced should be able to serve as a jumping off point to expand the conversation.

When Interviewing for a Job

The person that asks the questions has control of the interview. Practice these questions before you go in. You want to let them express themselves, then gradually take control. Nick Corcodilos calls this doing the job in the interview. If they have a series of prepared questions this can be harder, but not impossible. When answering their questions, remember the 20 second/2 minute rule. Responses that are less than 20 seconds have been found to arouse suspicion. Responses over 2 minutes and you're likely to overwhelm/digress. The trick here is to have enough to say *and* be able to stop on a dime with your statements.

A great method of taking control is to ask questions that simultaneously demonstrate your expertise. These are called *expertise questions*. I'm not a lawyer, but in psychology I might say:

- Do you prefer to use behavioral activation or cognitive diffusion in working with clients who have panic disorders?
- What are the primary domains of treatment planning that you emphasize when facilitating brief interventions?

Stuff like that. It should not be highfalutin. It should be meaningful. There's obviously a lot technical language in law. Don't bore them, just show you're intelligent and get these concepts in a direct and articulate way. Connect these expert questions to your purpose (of being helpful to them).

Power questions are more to the point of how you're going to solve their problems.

- What have been the major obstacles you've faced in completing xyz transactions?
- What are some important changes your practice has been seeing so far this year, and what are some of the adaptations that have been necessary?

You're trying to show that you are in sync with their needs. Ultimately, by the end of the interview you're going to try to create a brief, elegant summary whereby you can articulate their needs and carve out a role for yourself. See how most of this is not explicitly based on your previous experience, etc.

Address Their Objections

These are the most common objections to the message you are likely sending:

- I don't believe you.
Demonstrate your credibility. Justify your points in terms of your previous experiences. Objective criteria over subjective criteria.
- I don't have the money.
Demonstrate to them the cost of not addressing their need. Show them how your skills will be profitable for them.
- I don't have the time.
Likewise, find how you can do the work that will allow them to work on other things.
- It may work for others but it doesn't work for me.
Demonstrate the flexibility of your approach.

Interviewing

Jeff Minzel

Interviewing is by far the most stressful part of any job hunt. However, you can rest assured that if you have made it to the interview, the majority of the work is done. The employer likes what they know of you so far. Now they just want to meet you and make sure that there is a good personality fit and clear up any questions they have.

It might be helpful to remember that you are also interviewing them. You want to make sure that it is a good fit for you as well. You've done your research, so use this time to get answers to questions you might have.

Appearance

Your first impression is extremely important. Susan Bixler in “The New Professional Image” (Adams Media 1997) discusses impressions that are created in the first 30 seconds. These include:

- *Education Level*
- *Career Competence and Success*
- *Personality*
- *Level of Sophistication*
- *Trustworthiness*
- *Sense of Humor*
- *Social Heritage*

Unfortunately, salary ranges are based on the first impression you make. Your salary can rise 8 to 20 percent by upgrading your business appearance. The following guidelines can help you decide whether you need to upgrade your appearance before the interview.

1. Your wardrobe colors should be solid conservative.
2. Shine your shoes and make sure the heels aren't run down or scuffed.
3. Bring a professional looking briefcase. Make sure that it is clean, in good shape, shined and made of quality leather.
4. Make sure that your hair is washed, groomed and recently cut. Do not wear excessive clips in your hair (one item of a conservative nature is best).
5. Don't use perfumed products and don't wear perfume to the interview.
6. Cover your tattoos (for now anyway).
7. Men shouldn't wear earrings and women shouldn't wear dangling earrings. Small earrings in good taste are appropriate.
8. Glasses should be updated.
9. Makeup should be neutral and professional.

10. Make sure that your clothes fit, especially if you are overweight. Tight clothes on overweight people accentuate their excess weight. Being overweight is okay as long as you choose clothes that fit and that do not accentuate the excess weight. Generally, excess weight sends a negative message to an interviewer and will work against the interviewer's first impression.
11. Wear low heeled closed toe pumps with heels no higher than 2 inches. Never wear white shoes, boots, sling back pumps or open toed shoes.
12. Do not eat before an interview. We have interviewed numerous people who have crumbs on their clothes.
13. Do not bring a latte or any food or beverage item with you to an interview.
14. Carry only what you need in your handbag (in case it dumps out). Your bag should be coordinated with your shoes. Keep it polished, light, small and preferably made of leather. If you carry a briefcase, don't bring a purse.
15. For men, wear professional polished shoes. When in doubt, you should probably wear the tie. Make sure that your shirt is pressed. Make sure that your clothes are updated.
16. A professional conservative suit with a jacket and skirt or tailored dress if preferred for women and a jacket and tailored slacks for men. Women may wear slacks but make sure you provide an elegant upscale impression. Think Nordstrom or Brooks Brothers. Do not wear large or busy prints. If you wear a black suit find a brighter shirt. Wear black shoes with black outfits.
17. Colors do affect moods and impressions. The general guidelines surrounding color are that people distrust those wearing green. Red and yellow are good for energy. If you wear red, make sure it is the right red and looks fantastic on you. Blue, Brown, Black and Beige are fine. Wear beige only in the spring and summer.

What Are Employers Looking For?

Employers want to see job stability, a solid academic background, clarity in a resume, and attire that is neat and appropriate. Make sure that you are not wrinkled, that your shoes are shined, that your socks match, and that your heels are perfect. Sloppy resumes, attire, or work history give the impression that you are lazy. Employers are impressed by attention to detail.

Employers want candidates who are enthusiastic about the position. Know as much about the firm as you can before you go in so that you can appear interested. Don't slouch or slump because it makes you appear uninterested. Be prepared to ask questions. Interviewers will evaluate your questions to determine how much you know about the position, how serious you are about their firm and how qualified you are for the position. Show that you are interested and that this company is somehow special to you.

Preparing for the Interview

Once the interview is scheduled, do some additional homework to refresh your memory. Use your research, the Internet, Martindale-Hubble, the newspaper and anything else that you can find. The Public Library has a business section that collects news clippings about most local businesses, including firms. Know as much about the firm as you possibly can before the interview.

At some point in time, the employer will ask you what you know about the firm. The worst thing you can say is "nothing." If you don't know anything about the firm, it will be difficult for you to convince the interviewer that you have always dreamed about working for them. You need to convince them that you like their firm - a lot. You do this by showing them you know what they do and how they do it. You can also show through the content of your questions that you are qualified for the position.

Employers will ask you hundreds of different questions but what they really want to know is (1) can this person do the job and (2) will we get along. People who interview well are perceived as better employees because of their ability to interact well with others and think pressure. So...

REHEARSE, REHEARSE, REHEARSE...

You need to practice (1) answering and asking questions and (2) polite conversation. Questions the employer asks you will be geared toward your education, personal characteristics, ability to take the initiative, past employment and general skills. Employers are trying to find out if you can fill the position, your financial expectations, future plans, availability, and computer skills. If you are comfortable with the following questions and variations thereof, you should be in good shape.

Interview Questions Employers Might Ask You...

1. Tell me which practice areas you excel in.
2. What was your favorite subject and why?
3. Are you changing your original goals?
4. What was your weakest subject area and why?
5. Have you had a role model for this profession?
6. What are your long-term plans?
7. Tell me about yourself.
8. What stresses you out while on the job?
9. How would past employers describe you?
10. What are your greatest attributes that you hope to bring to this firm?
11. Describe a situation where you were able to demonstrate your leadership abilities.
12. Why should we hire you?

13. How would you prioritize dealing with a frustrated partner, finding a misplaced file, and an annoying but lucrative client that needs to talk to you immediately? Why?
14. Can you work without supervision?
15. What makes an employee successful in the legal field?
16. What would you do if you were given a case you didn't know how to handle?
17. Why were you laid off? Were others laid-off as well?
18. Why are you leaving your present job and looking for work?
19. What do you know about us?
20. Will you be giving your current employer notice?
21. Describe a typical day at your last job?
22. Can you explain the time gaps on your resume and why you left each job.
23. Did you bring a sample of your work product?
24. To what extent have you been exposed to this area of practice?
25. Tell me about your organizational skills.
26. Have you drafted pleadings?
27. How do you think the result of the XYZ case will affect our potential to successfully litigate ABC claims?
28. What practice area most interests you and why?
29. What is your current salary? Your past salaries?
30. What salary are you seeking?
31. What type of bonus or commission structure do you have in mind?
32. Can you work weekends?
33. What would you like to be earning in five years?
34. Have you joined any professional organizations?
35. Do you need an office?
36. Have you ever had an assignment like this before?
37. Can you travel?
38. Can you relocate?
39. Are you available for training in our corporate offices located in Ohio?
40. Is there any reason you cannot perform your duties?
41. What computer software programs are you familiar with and how extensively do you know each program?
42. Describe your greatest strengths and weaknesses.

Illegal Questions

There are a number of questions that employers are not legally allowed to ask you. If they do, you need to make a decision. Was it an innocent mistake or will you be discriminated against if you answer? Or, if you don't answer, will the employer become upset and not give you the job. In any case, you need to decide whether or not you want to work for someone that is asking questions that are illegal to begin with. If any question comes up that pertains to or makes you divulge information that pertains to the following issues, it is an illegal question. You are under no obligation to answer it.

- Age
- Race
- Nationality
- Origins
- Religion
- Marital Status
- Family Life
- Physical Appearance
- Disabilities
- Sexual Preferences

Outside of these categories, the sky is the limit and there are enough other questions an employer can ask you in order to ascertain your skills and personality without ever broaching an illegal question.

Questions You Can Ask the Employer

Here are questions that you can ask the employer during the interview.

1. What is the structure of the firm or in-house legal department?
2. Where do I go if I have questions?
3. How do I receive assignments?
4. Do junior associates attend trial?
5. Can you describe a typical assignment?
6. How many attorneys and paralegals will I work with?
7. Why is this position open?
8. What programs am I expected to know and how are those programs used?
9. Is salary based on years of experience or performance levels?
10. When would I receive a performance review?
11. About how much overtime can I expect?
12. Ask specific questions about the firm's clients. Know who the firm's major clients are before you ask the question.
13. Ask about the firm's plans for growth.

14. Ask about the firm's plans for growth for the practice group that you are interviewing to join.
15. Ask about the strength of the principal players in the practice group that you are interviewing to join.
16. Ask about the competitors of the practice group that you are interviewing to join. Make sure that you know who they are before you ask.
17. Ask about major success the firm and the applicable practice group has had over the last year.
18. Ask about upcoming successes the firm and the applicable practice group anticipate in the next year.
19. Ask about the culture of the firm and the applicable practice group. What are the personalities of the individual players?
20. Determine if the practice group collaborates on work or works independently of one another.
21. Ask how the firm views its clients. Are they clients of the firm or clients of the individual partner?
22. Ask about what they socially expect of employees. Does the firm have a number of social interactions or do people tend not to socialize with one another.
23. Ask about key personalities in the firm and how they affect the structure and day-to-day life of the firm.
24. Ask about performance evaluations. How are they structured? Are they objective or subjective? How many people can I expect to review my work? How often do they occur? Are there safeguards that ensure fairness?
25. How is compensation determined at the associate and partner level? What are the top three things that have the greatest impact on compensation reviews? Who reviews compensation? How often is compensation reviewed?
26. How much non-billable firm-oriented work will be expected of me?
27. What will be expected of me in the area of client development? How does the firm evaluate an attorney's work in the area of client development?
28. Does the firm train? If so, how comprehensive are these programs.
29. Does the firm have a work-product database?
30. Do practice groups have email intranets for practice related questions? Is this encouraged or viewed as a bother?
31. What type of research tools does the firm provide?
32. Does the firm embrace technology? If so, how?
33. What type of secretarial and paralegal support does the firm provide?
34. Other than yearly or bi-yearly reviews, what other performance-related information will the firm provide to me? For example, does the firm issues monthly reports on billable hours and earned fee credit?

35. Is my performance related information shared with the firm as a whole, shared only with partners, or kept completely confidential?
36. How is work assigned?
37. Will the firm provide me with a mentor? Is this relationship confidential?
38. How much client contact can I expect?
39. Are the individuals that I will be working with good at teaching or do they expect me to work independently from the start?
40. Basically, ask anything that is important to you. Use your common sense and do not focus on money.

Ask Questions About Their Organizational Structure

Firm and corporate structures are an easy thing to target when asking questions. The following couple of paragraphs give you an overview of how they are organized. Use this information in combination with the research that you have done to ask questions about who you will report to for work, concerns, reviews, promotions and general policy questions.

Larger firms are fairly balanced. Legal staff is on one side and non-legal staff is on the other. Administrators, human resource managers, controllers, librarians, and secretaries are a part of the non-legal staff. Attorneys and paralegals are part of the legal staff. At the top, there is a managing committee. Under this, there is a managing partner who oversees the department heads. These departments are full of attorneys who are supported by paralegals.

In mid-size firms, there is a managing partner who oversees both the partners and the office manager. The partners oversee all the attorneys. Paralegals support the attorneys. The office manager supervises the non-legal staff. Mid-Sized firms are very similar to the small firm in terms of organization. However, there may be more non-legal departments in a mid-size firm than in a small firm. People in small firms wear a number of hats.

Corporate legal departments are structured differently than the firms. At the top is a general counsel who oversees the associate general counsel or staff counsel. The general counsel attorney also oversees the legal administrator. This administrator oversees the work of the managers, the paralegals and the secretaries.

Every firm is different. Asking questions about their particular organizational structure is an easy thing to clarify during an interview.

Additional Tips on Answering and Asking Questions

How you say things is just as important as what say.

- Tell stories about how hard working you are instead of just saying you are a hard-worker.
- Speak graciously and positively about everyone because they want to know that you are going speak nicely about them to others.
- Even if someone is hard to get along with and you both know it, point out something positive.
- Don't apologize for who you are or what your abilities are.

Overcoming objections to yourself or your abilities is difficult. Do something to turn objections about you, your skills, or your experiences into something that will benefit the company.

Whatever you do - don't sound tentative. Words like "maybe," "hopefully" and "might" make you sound unsure. If you say "like" a lot, stop it because it makes you sound wishy washy and unprofessional. Practice everything - your responses, your questions and even your small talk.

Don't Ever Lie. If you are caught in an inaccuracy, then thank the person for pointing it out and say "what I meant to make clear was that..."

Job Hopping

If you have held your current job or a number of jobs for less than 2 years, you are going to have some explaining to do. You might be seen as a "job-hopper," someone who leaves any position at the drop of a hat. You may be viewed as unreliable in the long run. If you think this definition might apply to you, then you need to first, find a legitimate explanation for why you left each job, and second, stay at you next job for at least 2-3 years. The reason employers tend to avoid people that fall into this category is because they assume that you will leave them for the same reasons that you left other employers. Employers want to avoid job hoppers because it is expensive and time consuming to train employees and incorporate them into the work environment.

Prepare honest and understandable reasons for leaving each position. If you use the same reason for each position, then the employer may think that you will leave them for the same reason. If you use a different reason for leaving each position, then employers are more understanding that it was a particular set of unavoidable circumstances that forced you to leave a position.

Explanations for job-hopping include the following:

1. I followed the opportunities for advancement"
2. "I followed the money" – Make sure that wasn't your only motivation.
3. "I followed the rainmakers" - This means you learned how to attract clients, a valuable tool.

4. "I followed my spouse" - This is fine but make sure it is apparent that your career counts too.

Employers want to know whether or not you are going to stay with them after you are hired. Stress that it is not in your nature to job-hop and now you are certain about what you want to do.

Gaps, holes and voids often referred to as hiatuses, recesses, or sabbaticals are another "red flag" for potential employers. When an employer asks "were you working from June 1991 to September 1991?" technically you can just say yes or no. You would do better to explain what you were doing and how it has developed your professional skills. Make sure that these new skills are relevant.

Low Grades

Low grades do not mean that you are a poor performer. In fact, it is often said that low grades mean you will be a good lawyer because you are a more hands on and practical person rather than a pie-in-the-sky, book-smart person. However, not all firms see it that way- especially the large prestigious firms. Typically, law school grades generally don't matter much after your first job or if you have a relevant advanced degree. However, if "poor grades" come up, demonstrate how you were able to juggle numerous tasks and were still successful in obtaining your goals. For example, you might explain how you were busy working 40 hours a week, keeping up with your busy family schedule, and were still able to study and graduate.

Out of State

If you are from another state, study the local rules and bring this up during the interview. Also mention that you would study their form files and ask pertinent questions when necessary.

In the Waiting Room

Arrive 10 minutes early. Any earlier will be bothersome for them; any later, you will seem unreliable. Sit in your car if you have to but do not be late.

In the lobby, greet the receptionist pleasantly. She is really a spy who has the ability to talk to everyone. Don't sit in the cushiest chair because these are hard to get out of. Do not bring a book with you to read, especially a cheesy romance novel. Use this time to look around. Figure out if you would be comfortable as an employee here. Do not accept a beverage. You are there to work, not relax.

You may be asked to fill out an application or other forms. Fill out their paperwork within 10 minutes. This is just a formality and not meant to offend you. Since we are such a litigious society, firms often try to find out as much as possible about a candidate in a formal and

consistent way. Have a black or blue pen, a list of employers and their contact information, and the dates of your employment with you.

The Interview

The moment you meet the interviewer, the actual interview begins. Don't discount the time it takes you to walk with them to the conference room because they are checking you out. The following are "do's and don'ts" that will be helpful to follow:

- Once you are finally introduced, shake hands firmly (but not hard) and SMILE.
- Chit chat only if it is encouraged.
- Sit down where you are shown. If you're not sure, then ask.
- Don't take your jacket off unless it's 90 degrees and the air conditioning is off.
- Do not comment on family photos or personal objects.
- Never mention how hard it was to find the place or how horrible traffic was. Remember that you found the place without a problem, you love this kind of weather in particular and that you are always hydrated.
- Don't tell them how much you "love" their earrings, socks, etc. Typical, chit chat will revolve around the weather, the traffic, and beverages.
- Selling yourself means explaining your abilities and how they fit the employer's needs. Filling this position is about them and what they need now and will need in the future.
- Exude confidence even if you are not feeling it. Employers are not going to hire someone who doesn't trust him or herself. Emphasize your skills that fit the position and de-emphasize the ones that detract from it.
- Be yourself. Do not try to be someone that you think they want you to be. People can immediately pick up on this. Be genuine.
- Be truthful in your answers and do not hesitate to share personal and somewhat vulnerable information. When you do this, you let people in. The interviewer is more likely to identify with you and be your advocate if you let him or her in to who you really are. Do not forget that the interviewer is also a human being, a person with as many weaknesses as strengths, and someone who also gets nervous on interviews. Use common sense.
- **DO NOT SLOUCH IN YOUR CHAIR.** Sit up straight or lean somewhat forward. Never lean back. Posture is everything. As we discuss below, more than 70 percent of all communication is nonverbal.
- Do not speak fast. Speak with a normal cadence. When in doubt, err on the side of speaking slow.
- Watch your body language. Crossed arms and crossed legs show defensiveness and create a perception of being threatened and closed.
- Let them lead the interview. Do not take control.

- If they interrupt you, let them. Answer the new question and pick up on the clue that this gives you about where they want to go. You are there to answer their questions. Follow their clues on what is relevant to them.
- You can comment on personal items in their office but only if you share a true common interest in that area. Only comment if you are really interested and really have something to say. Never do this to create idle chit chat.
- Always keep in mind the following rule: most people love to hear themselves speak. If you meet someone, that person will usually come away from the interaction with a positive impression of you if they speak for the majority of the time. During an interview, you are there to communicate information about yourself. Even so, make sure to give the interviewer as much of an opportunity to speak as possible. When they are speaking, keep in mind that their impression of you rises with each additional minute that they spend speaking. This is why it is so important to ask them questions about their firm, practice group, etc. Refer to the materials above for a list of questions to ask an interviewer.
- Do not be EXCESSIVELY eager or positive. The interviewer will not believe you and wonder how you really are. Present a “positive” and “optimistic” version of who you are.
- Eliminate all negative language. Don’t speak negatively about a prior employer or work experience. Be positive. Show that you are fair to other people when they are not in your presence.
- Be aware of your facial expressions. Without realizing it, the natural stress of an interview may cause you to look stern or serious. Make sure that your eyes are wide open – this creates an impression of openness and positivity. Be careful that you do not furrow your brow. Make sure that you always slightly smile.
- Remember that 70 percent or more of all communication is nonverbal. Pay careful attention to all the nonverbal clues that the interviewer sends to you. Be flexible and go with them. If he or she takes a very casual attitude, then you should relax and not sit on the edge of your seat. If the person is formal, follow this lead. If the person is more casual in his or her language, do not be formal with your responses. GO WITH THE FLOW.

The first part of the interview is generally pretty light. They will ask you questions about your education, why you are looking for work, your staying power, your past and present responsibilities and what you know about this firm. Relax and Smile the whole way.

For most of the second part of the interview, you are going to listen. The employer will talk about the firm, the job, and how your responsibilities will fit in. Don’t take notes. Make eye contact and nod once in a while. Don’t interrupt. Following this, they will ask you more technical questions. Be honest and make sure that your answers fit into the job description they just laid out.

The third part of the interview is about the money. They will want to know how much money you are currently making and how much you want to make in the future. However, the actual negotiation process typically won't get under way until your second interview.

The fourth part of the interview is about your questions. You want them to know that you have been listening and are the perfect person for the job. Don't ask obvious questions, such as how large the firm is, what type of law do they practice, is this their only office, etc. Never ask a question that you could have learned by doing adequate research before the interview. Make sure your questions are thought out, detailed, and in depth. Ask difficult questions based on the information that you have heard during the interview or found while you were researching their firm. Make sure that you really want to know the answer to the question. If the question is not relevant and aimed to impress, an interviewer will see through this.

If the employer asks you if you have anything else to add, summarize the three main reasons why you feel the job is right for you.

Leaving the Interview

Once the interview is over, you are going to say goodbye. This is the perfect time to figure out what the next step in the interview process is. Ask when the firm will be making a decision, if there are more interviews to conduct, and whether or not you should submit a writing sample. Discussing references, availability, and your interest in the job are appropriate topics that make for easy conversation as you are preparing to leave.

You can test the waters and see if they are willing to hire you by say – “I am very interested in this position and know I can make a contribution to the firm. Can you tell me what the next step is?” Or, you can be more direct. “Can you tell me, is there any reason you wouldn't hire me?” Be careful with the more direct approach. It may offend more people than it will win over. No matter what, simply thank the employer for the interview before you leave.

Say good-bye to the receptionist. Thank her. Don't forget your coat and don't ask to have your parking validated unless they offer. Keep smiling until you are out of the building because you don't know whom you might be standing next to in the elevator.

Go straight home and send a thank you card.

Different Kinds of Interviews

The second interview is more serious than the initial interview. They expect you to be at your professional best.

- If you have a second suit, wear it. If you don't, don't worry about it. Just look great because you will be meeting with the big-wigs.
- When scheduling the second interview, ask how long it is expected to last and how many people you will see.
- Be sure to bring extra resumes with you.
- Always tell the same boring story with enthusiasm. Don't expect that the third person has heard what you told the second person. He or she hasn't. They are evaluating your personality.
- Negotiations often start at this stage but you are rarely asked to accept on the spot.
- If an offer is made, ask when they would like to hear back from you about it.

There are several types of interviews. Stress interviews are tough but not impossible to handle. You can leave if a person is abusive. However, if you choose to stay, keep your sense of humor. They are trying to see how you will do under stress. Acknowledge any objections they make to your responses but don't argue or agree with them - just move on to the next topic.

The behavioral interview is when the employer is trying to eliminate canned responses from the conversation. They might open with "do you have any questions?" What they really want to know is if you have initiative. Ask questions that pertain to the position itself and those that highlight your skills. Bring up publications about the firm and ask a relevant question. If you are really out of tune with the firm and don't have any questions, try and get the interviewer to start talking about plans for expansion, utilization of their employees or technology, but do not ask about salary.

The day-long Interview is great news. Although it is long, it means they like you and want you to meet with just about everyone that you will be working with. Part of the interview process is to see how well you hold up.

1. You are going to repeat a lot of answers, so be prepared to act as if it is the first time you have heard the question.
2. Bring extra resumes with you.
3. Be ready for frivolous interviews with people who understand what you are going through.
4. Always remember everyone's name and refer to them by name and not "the guy in the last interview." Feel free to ask for a business card.
5. Don't hesitate to ask for a bathroom to freshen up – you don't want to look like you just went through a tornado before you meet the managing partner.

6. If you discuss what you discussed at an earlier interview, make sure to mention the name of the person you spoke with.

Meal-time interviews are to see how you handle yourself socially. These are popular for third and fourth interviews.

1. Stick to harmless conversation. Don't get personal, political or religious.
2. Avoid alcohol even if your interviewer drinks. However, if you do order a drink, just order one. You want to be clear headed and able to respond appropriately.
3. Let the interviewer take the lead in conversation. This is not the right time to hard sell yourself. If anything, bring up outside interests that reflect your character and personality.
4. If you are asked an awkward question, turn the question back to the interviewer before answering. This very well may be a test of your ability to be diplomatic.

The Essentials For Setting Yourself Apart

In addition to cover letters and thank you cards, there are a number of other items that you should either have with you or ready to send out at the drop of a hat. These things make you look professional, appreciative, and considerate.

Thank You Cards

When a thank you card arrives, people feel that their meeting with you was successful, and they will think about you in the future when similar things come up. When a thank you card arrives that is poorly written, people will think that the meeting was not only a waste of time but that you only wrote the card because you had to and not because you cared. If you do not write a thank you card, you will not stand out in their mind a week later.

Following is a small list of things that, after which, you should be sending out a thank you cards.

- After a job interview
- After an informational interview
- After a good or helpful telephone conversation.
- After someone has referred you to a potential employer
- After a screening interview with an agency

In addition, there are a couple of things that you should pay careful attention to.

- Make sure to spell their name correctly
- Make sure to mention how their information or action has helped you.
- Make sure to get the note out within 24 hours, if possible, but at least within 48 hours. If you do not do this, they may not remember your encounter a week later.

Then there are a couple of practical things that embody a good thank you card.

- Always handwrite a thank you card.
- Use a thank-you card - not letter bond paper.
- Note the date on the card so the receiver will realize how prompt and reliable you are.
- Be appreciative. This is not the time to hard sell your case.

Open the note with a brief thank you for...

"...fitting me into your very busy schedule. I appreciate your willingness to meet with me regarding the real-estate paralegal position with your firm. "

In general, a short thank you card might look like the following:

Dear Ms. Allen,

11..01.01

I enjoyed meeting you for lunch yesterday. I appreciate the time that you took to share information with me about local personal-injury firms. I am looking forward to submitting my resume to several that you mentioned and will keep you posted as to the results.

*Respectfully Yours,
Deanna Lewis*

If you are officially rejected, still send a thank you card. Tell them you...

“appreciate them taking the time to consider your resume and meeting with you. I will follow up with your firm in a couple of months to see if there are any new opportunities.”

Writing Samples

Employers ask for writing samples so they can check a number of things including your...

- Ability to analyze
- Attention to detail (i.e., spelling, grammar and formatting)
- Ability to be coherent
- Ability to write clearly and in a manner that is easily understood

Use the following guidelines when submitting a writing sample.

- Choose something written within the last year or two.
- Choose a piece that is topically pertinent (if possible).
- Choose a sample that is less than 15 pages.
- Black out client names or re-name them XYZ and ABC. Even if you are not disclosing a confidence, it shows that you are sensitive to these issues and the privacy of others.

Things that you shouldn't do when submitting a writing sample are listed below.

- Don't submit a resume with a cumbersome binder.
- Don't submit something you didn't write and if your name isn't on it, explain why
- Don't include more than one writing sample unless you are asked. If you do, an employer will think you can't follow directions.
- Don't submit a writing sample unless one is requested.

Remember that any writing sample you submit will be understood as the type and quality of work product that you would produce for them. The better the sample, the more impressed the firm will be with your ability to contribute to their team.

Evaluating a Job & Offer

At some point you will need to decide if this job is really for you. Don't shortchange yourself. Think about your initial reaction to the firm's offer and why you felt that way –good or bad. Think again about what is important to you and what you can live without. You will be spending a lot of time at work and you will want to enjoy your time there. Try to decide whether you would take the job before they actually offer you the position. If you decide you don't want the job, then call and let them know immediately so they can make other arrangements.

If they do make you an offer, do not to go beyond a week before getting back to the firm with your decision. One to two days is more appropriate.

If the firm writes you an offer letter, you need to understand that this isn't a contract. It is merely a formal way of describing the terms so there is no confusion about what they are offering. You can still negotiate if you feel like something is missing, doesn't meet your needs or is misrepresented.

To help you evaluate your job offer, answer the following questions. If appropriate, you may call your contact person to discuss the items listed in their offer letter or the following questions.

1. You will need to understand how the firm arrived at its decision. Where do your skills fit into the firm? How do your skills compare to the person you were replacing? This is a good question to ask as soon as an offer or compensation package has been offered. Or, you might make a general inquiry about the previous employee during the first couple of interviews.
2. How does the final total compensation stack up? Are you being offered the market rate? When is your salary review? Do benefits and perks make up for the lack in salary? Is there a bonus to consider? These questions can also be asked when the offer is made and researched online at job sites.
3. What do you have to do to maintain your salary or get a raise? Are billable hours a concern for you? What is the average number of billable hours? Although the specifics about money should never be addressed during the first interview, these are good questions to get out of the way at that time if you can address them generally without starting the negotiation process. You do not want to send the message that you are only interested in what the firm will do for you. Answers to these questions will prevent everyone from wasting a lot of time if you don't like the way the firm operates.

Are you expected to negotiate? Make sure you understand what is going on in the market before negotiating. Once you have researched your market value, then decide how hard, if at all, you are going to negotiate. Because it costs a lot of money and time to recruit and train good employees, employers are often very willing to negotiate a mutually beneficial compensation package. Make

sure your needs are met. Otherwise you will want to leave the position shortly after starting it, costing both you and the employer time and money. This will also hurt your resume.

Negotiating

Here are a few basic guidelines to help you negotiate with a potential employer.

- If you are negotiating on a phone, do it in private from a hard line with your resume, calculator and calendar ready.
- Know all the employers concerns or reasons they would offer you less money and make sure you know how to counter these objections.
- Figure out if this person has the authority to change the salary or if they have to meet with someone else.
- Have your counteroffers ready. Use salary survey information to back up your requests. Consider exchanging a high base salary for other costly items, like benefits, parking, longer vacations, bonuses, stronger title, four-day work week, stock options etc.
- Be gracious and appreciative. Be understanding of their concerns and pressure and diplomatic about alternative options, counteroffers, and clarifications.
- Do not ask yes or no questions because this will hinder your discussion. Ask open ended questions like “can you tell me how you arrived at this salary?”
- Make sure to ask how soon you should get back to them. If you concede, make your concessions slowly, thoughtfully, graciously, conservatively, and fairly.

Most employers want this process to go quickly and smoothly. They also want to look good and be taken seriously. The way you negotiate is often more important to them than what the final terms are. Speak lightly. For instance, “I would consider...” rather than “this is my bottom line” is more diplomatic and understanding of the firm's interests.

Before You Accept A Job Offer

Often, you will be very tempted to just say "YES!" when once a job is offered. However, you need be very sure that you are definitely happy with their offer and satisfied that your needs and wants will be met. The worst impression you can make is to stay at a job for less than two years and leave for more money. Answering the following questions may help you decide if saying yes is what you really should do.

1. What was my original intent?
2. What is acceptable about this offer?
3. How does it differ from my original intent?
4. What must I have?
5. What can I compromise on?

Leaving Your Current Position

Leaving your current position can be a very simple or very difficult decision to make. In either case, you should leave your current position graciously. Below are a number of guidelines that everyone should use when leaving a position, especially if you're asking for a reference or letter of recommendation.

1. Know when it is time to move on.
2. Never leave angry.
3. Look at what you learned in the last position.
4. Counteroffers from your old firm won't make everything better.
5. Make up with any adversaries.
6. Drop a card, call, or go to lunch with old colleagues.
7. Write out your old job description and the how-to's. This will make it easier for them after you leave and they will greatly appreciate this.
8. Leave everything in its place and well organized. Placing items in obvious locations is very helpful for those left behind.
9. Take only your personal items.
10. Help find a good replacement.
11. Re-connect with contacts you haven't spoken with in a while.
12. Give proper notice (at least two weeks).
13. Know what's in your personal file.
14. Be positive and professional – even in the exit interview. Don't use this time to rant and rave. You want to leave them with a positive and appreciative impression.

Why Haven't You Received An Interview Or Job Offer?

There are a number of reasons why you may not be getting interviews and job offers. There are times when the job market is slow and has nothing to do with you. Before assuming that your lack of work is due to a slow market, review the following list to ensure that you have done everything possible to get a job

- Is your resume overstating your skills? This may be the case if you always get an interview but never a job offer. Once employers meet you, they realize you are not as qualified as your resume makes you appear.
- Is your resume understating or unclearly communicating your skills and experiences? This may be the case if you are never offered an interview. You will want to revamp your resume, making sure your abilities are clearly defined and that your resume looks great.
- In addition, make sure you are qualified for the positions you are applying for, that your background can support the firm's long-term objectives and that your cover letter and resume demonstrate an interest in either the legal field or a particular substantive area of the law.
- Is your appearance out of date or are you acting inappropriately? Do you get the interview, have the skills but never get the job? Perhaps you are presenting yourself poorly. Employers want someone who is in touch with what is going on in the world and who is able to deal with people appropriately and effectively. Remember, they must feel comfortable with you representing them to their clients. Make sure that your look is current but traditional. Make sure that you are polite, enthusiastic and appropriate with your conversation and manners. Error on the side of formality and the soft sell approach if you are uncertain. Always convey excitement.

Have someone else assess your wardrobe and interview skills. Ask them to be tough in their critique because it will help tremendously to know what you need to change. Be honest with yourself. Often, we overlook things like eyeglass frames that look straight but are out of the disco era. Even though these type of things cost money, don't be cheap. These things have a dramatic impact on an employer's impression of you. A good impression can lead to a lot of money. A bad impression can lead to no money and a lot of wasted time. We may act too enthusiastic or overly confident in order to compensate for our lack of skills. These little things are red flags to potential employers that you are out of date or out of touch with reality.

- Do the interviews seem to go great but you are never called back? This is often the case when people are so focused on themselves, their skills, their presentation and their ideas that they never stop to understand what it is the employer is looking for.

Read the advertisement slowly, research the firm and listen during the interview. Figure out what you are offering the firm but focus on the firm's needs. When you talk about what you are bringing to the table be excited but don't go overboard. Employers are likely to be annoyed if you are inappropriately enthusiastic or simply misunderstand their objectives because you are trying so hard to sell yourself.

The opposite may also be true. If you focus entirely on the firm because you are shy or feel under qualified, the employer will not feel competent in your abilities to support the firm or speak up when there is a problem. Research the firm's objectives and present your strengths with confidence.

- Have you failed to develop appropriate contacts, i.e., networking? During my first summer after law school, I worked for free as an intern for the GTE Legal Department. At the end of the summer, I applied to law firms for summer internships the following summer. The attorneys that I worked for at GTE sent out independent reference letters to twenty of the law firms that I applied to. I sent a total of forty letters. Of the twenty firms that received reference letters, I received nineteen interviews. Of the remaining firms that did not receive reference letters, I received three interviews.

Getting to know people at organizations where you would like to work is critical. When employers hire new employees, only fifty percent of their consideration is aimed at the new employee's substantive skills. The remaining fifty percent is focused on personality and the ability of the new employee to fit into the culture of the workplace. References from personal contacts that know the workplace or industry are critical.

Even if you do not know anyone in your specific area of interest, you can develop it. My family was involved in the medical community. We had no contacts with the legal community. Nonetheless, I was able to develop numerous legal contacts. It was easy. Begin by attending groups that relate to your area of interest. Pursue an internship. Ask everyone you know if they know of someone involved in your area of interest. You will be amazed. People are willing to help you, because you give them a great compliment when you say, in essence, that you would like to pursue the path that they chose. Be creative; it's easy.

- Are your communication skills working against you? Some people shut down during an interview. They can't think. They are unaware of the mistakes that they are making. This is easy to overcome. All you need to do is practice your interviewing skills. Find two people that are knowledgeable about interviewing. Have one person interview you and the other person observe. Have them take notes on the things they observe. After the

interview, analyze the notes. Make a list of the things that you need to change. Then do it again. Choose two things to work on at a time. After the interview, analyze whether you improved on your two things and look to see if your observers identified any new issues. Continue this process until you feel confident that you have worked through your issues. It is easier than you think. It just takes a commitment of time and patient friends (or a good career counseling service).

- Are you pursuing an industry or market that has high unemployment? Research your industry. The internet, newspaper services, and libraries are great places to learn more about your area of interest. Like anything, practice areas expand and contract. Is your area of interest experiencing a contraction? Know what is happening. You may be swimming upstream.

What if you are swimming upstream? Analyze why you are attracted to that area of interest. What about it interests you. Take time to figure this out. Really soul search. You will likely find that what interests you is fairly general in nature and readily transferable to other areas. Then look around and see if there are other areas or related areas that would offer you these same benefits?

- Are your substantive skills inadequate? Simply put, you may simply not have enough experience. There are a number of things to do if this is the case. Find a nonpaying internship in the area that you are interested. Not only will you improve your substantive skills, but you will develop contacts in your area of interest. One of these contacts is likely to give you a chance or may know of someone who will give you a chance after they send them a great reference on you. This is the easiest way to get a breakthrough. In addition, you can attend seminars. Keep track of the seminars that you take. Pursue additional schooling if applicable.
- Are you from out of town? People do not trust that people from outside of their area will stay. Do everything that you can to demonstrate that you have made a commitment to the area. Did you move here because your spouse has a new job in the area? Do you have personal contacts in the area? Employers really want to know that you know people that can provide you with “roots” to their area.

In your cover letter, make sure to anticipate this objection and provide an explanation to overcome it. A potential employer is not going to pick up the phone and ask you for an explanation. They will simply turn to the next resume.

If you are polite, appropriately dressed and applying for a job that your resume demonstrates you are qualified for, then a lack of interviews or job offers may simply be due to a slow market.

Cover Letters and Resumes Tips

Dan Crystal, Psy.D.

I. Research

- Read job descriptions very carefully and address every point you can through examples in your previous experience demonstrating you're a good fit. You are re-packaging yourself as a lawyer for every different job lead.
- If it's not a posted position but one you've learned about through networking, learn as much about the job as possible. Meet people who work there that can describe the job. The various responsibilities, the work environment, etc.
- Learn about the firm on the internet and other resources, trying to find facets of that company in which you match, or have interest. Showing that you have done your research sets you apart.

II. Tailor Your Resume and Cover Letter to the Job Description.

- Use objective as opposed to subjective criteria in explaining your value to a firm. You don't need to explain that you are hard working, diligent, a leader, thoughtful, team player, a good communicator, etc.
- Rather, let your resume demonstrate that:
 - *Managed a team* addressing x,y,z. (proves that you are a good communicator, leader).
 - Brought in \$x on accounts related to x,y,z (proves that you are hard working).
- Have a *Super Resume* of several pages of *every* job you've worked, organization or group you've served with, skills you've achieved, etc. This is a self-esteem buoy as you remember everything you *have* done. It's also the resource from which you will tailor your *one-page* resume.

III. Writing the Cover Letter

- A. Paragraph One-2-3 sentences.
- Explains why you're writing them. Be direct. John Doe, a partner at XYZ recommended that I contact you. Put the connection right up front. You have to assume they're skimming, so be direct.
 - Explain your experience in one or two relevant areas and believe you would be a good fit for their needs. This word "fit" is not demanding. Rather it's respecting the interplay between your skills and their needs.
 - Also, you can show some enthusiasm by demonstrating that you've researched their office and hold it in high esteem.

B. Paragraph Two-Why the Employer Should Interview You

- This paragraph should spotlight *experiences* that should set you apart from other applicants. Some of this may come down to phrasing. Address the job's description and explain why you have experience that fills that need. Cover Letters are not for talking about yourself. This is inappropriate—you want to always be making the connection between yourself *and the job*. And only share things about yourself *relevant* to the job. Your personality will come through in time.
- Simply state their need and how you fill it. You can tweak without lying (**Don't Lie!**). Just look at where you match, and omit the areas in which you don't match. This is not lying. No need to bring up negatives, or justify differences (if the differences between you and the job description are major, this job might not be a good match)

C. Paragraph Three- Now What?

- Politely state your availability to meet or discuss further. Indicate that you're easily reached at the number listed. Thank them for their time. Signing "Respectfully Yours," "In Consideration", or "With Appreciation" can set you apart from "Sincerely."

IV. Following Up

- Give them about days. Keep in touch cautiously (no more than every ten days), but don't give up. Being respectful may foster a connection with human resources so that they can hopefully mention *other jobs* that may be coming up.
- When sending emails, be professional. Include the date, perhaps your address, as in a letter. Format your paragraphs. Email is sometimes a convenience for the recipient, but your approach should set you apart. No jargon, typos, etc. If you receive a reply with interest, be responsive! This will also set you apart. They want someone who is *available*.
- As with networking, you're trying to make several "touches" with that connection. With networking you are training others to look for jobs for you. The same holds true with job applications. You want to remind them you're out there. That's why you send Thank You notes. That's why if you don't get the job, you still keep in touch.

Other Resume Tips

- These should be short, concise, and bullet pointed for skimming (assume 100 people are applying for this job), but detailed and precise enough for if they do choose to interview you.
- Always include: education, previous experience, non-legal experience, previous honors, & organizations in which you are a member.
- Explaining why you left a job is not often done, but a good idea since this is the question on every HR person's mind. Ex: *sought to transition into real estate law with my next firm, or pursued a higher paying position at....*
- If you have gaps in your resume this is problematic. Better to explain the gap as an experience than just pretending to drop off the map for a while. For instance: took two years off from law for maternity leave, pursued writing a book for 1 year, etc.
- Interests/Hobbies *are* appropriate. They set you apart and give you things to talk about during the interview. It should be a brief last line. Don't be over the top. Just show that you are interesting.
- Try to write in full sentences as it sounds more professional. Use an active tense. Be grammatically consistent. Especially in terms of where you put dates or format paragraphs or use periods.

Cover Letters and Resumes

Jeff Minzel

Cover Letters

Your cover letter is a very important part of the application process. The cover letter explains why the employer should bother reading your resume. What are they looking for in you cover letter? Employers want to know that you are interested in them specifically because either someone or something has moved you to want to work for them. They need to know that you can write, edit, are objective about your skills, and that you are not boring or obnoxious...no one likes to work with boring or obnoxious people.

First Things First- Research

Before you write your cover letter, you must research prospective employers. Think of each cover letter as a separate argument or case that you are making. You are going to argue how you will be useful to their firm but you can't do this if you don't even know what they do.

Where do you find information on firms and companies? There are several sources of information. The best source of information is through a personal contact. You may find a contact through friends, family or networking. You are looking for a contact that knows what a firm does and someone who works there. Staffing agencies, career services directors, alumni, upperclassmen, interns and clerks, or any local attorney are great sources of information minutes.

If you don't have a personal contact, then check out Martindale Hubble, Westlaw, Lexis or the firm's website. Although these sources will not give you the personal touch that a mutual acquaintance does, it does show that you have done your homework and are interested in that particular firm. Always review the firm's website. You will have no excuse if you don't at least know the information contained on the website.

No matter what, make sure that you research a firm or company before applying to it. If you don't take the time to research, it will show. You will come across as disinterested, impersonal, and as though you are only looking out for yourself and not what you can contribute to a particular firm.

More Than One Kind of Cover Letter

There are three very different types of cover letters. The best cover letter is personalized and directed to someone you have already met through your networking efforts. Personalized cover letters take the most time if you don't already have a contact and very little time once you do. Personalized contact cover letters produce the best results.

The second best kind of cover letter is directed to a particular firm or company that you have researched and are interested in because it satisfies your career goals. Targeted cover letters tend to take the most amount of time because you can only adequately search 5 or 6 similar firms at a time. You should compose a distinctive letter for each of the firms before starting your research again. Otherwise, your interest in a particular firm and subsequently the enthusiasm you demonstrate in the letter might wane. A lack of enthusiasm will result in poor impression. Write your letter while you are still excited about a particular firm. Your enthusiasm for the employer will show.

The last and worst kind of cover letter that you should never ever use is a mass mailer. These cover letters are not personalized, nor made distinctive in any way except for the name and address. These cover letters take the least amount of time to produce and get the worst results. The results are poor because they only demonstrate that you can sort, organize and mass mail. You have not demonstrated your interest, discipline and enthusiasm for the firm. You really need to develop a personal contact or research a particular kind of firm.

What Do I Write About?

Writing a cover letter is not as tricky as it seems. There are a couple of things that should go into your cover letter and a couple of things that should not. These things are outlined for you below.

THINGS THAT SHOULD GO INTO YOUR COVER LETTER

- Why the employer should bother reading any further
- Why the employer should interview you
- What is going to happen next

THINGS THAT SHOULD NOT GO INTO YOUR COVER LETTER

- A repeat of your resume
- Typos
- Grammatical Errors
- Generic Titles
- General and vague descriptions of you or them
- Arguments without proof
- Vague or questionable connections
- An attitude that conveys arrogance, boredom or weakness
- Lies
- Over the top ploys
- Paragraphs that talk only about you
- Everything that isn't on your resume
- Inappropriate topics

You can see that there are many more things that shouldn't go into your cover letter than things that should. We have already whittled down the possibilities of what to write about to something pretty manageable. The following points break down what actually goes into a cover letter.

Things That Should Go Into Your Cover Letter

Why the Employer Should Bother Reading Further The First Paragraph of Your Cover Letter

The first paragraph should be 2 -3 lines total. It should describe (1) why you are writing to that particular firm (i.e. referral, great article that caught your attention); (2) who you are; and (3) what you want from the firm.

The best way to start this first paragraph is by saying "so-and-so recommended that I contact you." This is the best way because you have the approval of someone else that the employer respects. Make sure that your contact knows that you are using his or her name. The employer knows that it is good for her own professional relationships to interview anyone that is referred to her. This is why this one line will probably get you an interview even if a position isn't currently available. Check out the following examples of a first paragraph that use a mutual acquaintance.

Sue Redding, Career Counselor at SuYou Law School, recommended that I contact you since I have a background in electrical engineering and a strong desire to practice patent law. I would very much appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss my background and how it might fit with your firm's plans for this coming year.

Or,

Mike McDonald, Partner with McDonald Farmer and Eio PLLC, recommended that I contact you. As a temporary intern for Mr. McDonald, I worked on some personal injury matters. Since he was excited about the work I did and familiar with your firm, he indicated that you might be interested in meeting with me. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss my background and how it might fit with the upcoming needs of your firm.

The next best way to start the first paragraph is by showing off what you learned through the research you did. For example:

Todd Heidmiller, a former clerk at your firm, described your firm as a leading catalyst in development of a biotechnology legal community here in Seattle. Through further research, I found that you were the first local firm to work with several of the largest

biotechnology companies in the nation. As a second year law student at Seattle University School of law, I would be very interested in the opportunity to work with your firm as a summer associate, as your needs require.

Or, you might try

I was impressed by your firm's long history of environmental "Super Lawyers" listed in September issue of The Best Law & Politics. They described your attorneys as dynamic, creative and on the cutting edge of environmental and land use regulations. I have a land use and property background in which you may be particularly interested. I would very much like to have the opportunity to work for your firm as an associate.

If you don't have anything but an advertisement, then be totally excited about it. Convey how much it would mean to you to work in such a position for their firm.

I was thrilled to see your advertisement for a senior associate. My work history demonstratively shows my interest in corporate law. I would be very pleased to work with Bigman Oncampus PLLC.

Why the Employer Should Interview You? The Second Paragraph in Your Cover Letter

There a couple of pieces of information you need to gather before writing the second paragraph of your cover letter.

1. What does the firm or corporation need? You should know this or have some idea of what they would be looking for based on the research you did.
2. What have you done to demonstrate that you have what they need?

Much of the work here involves trying to avoid the "should not go in a cover letter" type of information. Remember some of those "should nots" include:

- A repeat of your resume -- Unlike your resume, which is the bare essence of what you've done and when, this paragraph is going to demonstrate *why what you have learned will be beneficial to this employer.*
- General and vague descriptions of you or them -- This means that you need to include hard evidence or proof that you actually did research their firm and have actually participated in activities that are useful to the firm's direction.
- Arguments without proof - This is very similar to vague descriptions. However, you need to remember that blanket statements without any proof are worse than vague statements with general proof.
- Vague or questionable connections -- It is important that you connect things about the firm with you personally. For instance, if it is a small firm in the middle of nowhere and you mention that you have always dreamed of working on large commercial litigation

cases, you may not get the job simply because they know you will never be happy handling everything from wills to personally injury in their small general practice.

- An attitude that conveys arrogance, boredom or weakness -- Watch out for this one. We see this all of the time. You need to recognize that you are valuable and your skills are beneficial. However, without being apologetic, you need to know that they have worked without you and could probably continue working without you. There is a fine line between arrogance and confidence. The best way to handle this is by using an enthusiastic tone, rather than a condescending one.
- Lies -- This is simple. NEVER LIE. If you are caught you will be worse off than if you hadn't lied at all.
- Paragraphs that talk only about you -- This is just a reality check. Most people like to talk about themselves but, contrary to popular belief, it just isn't appropriate to talk about yourself when job hunting. You need to focus on where they are heading and how you can help them get there. Again, they were around before you and will continue after you've gone...so, focus on them.
- Everything that isn't on your resume -- It is hard not to include everything on your resume because everything you have done is so great. However, you have only one paragraph to outline how wonderful you are. Use this paragraph as something to intrigue them. They will be more inclined to meet with you just to get the whole story.
- Inappropriate topics -- Duh...Don't discuss your religion, sex, age, disabilities or anything else that they can't legally ask you about or that you can't defend as a professional contribution.

Despite this "should not include" guideline, writing the second paragraph is easier than it seems. Just remember to start out with (1) what they need and finish with (2) what you've done to demonstrate that you have what they need. For example:

(1.) I understand that your firm seeks students who have a longstanding and demonstrable interest in the legal field, are team players and are self-motivated. (2.) Prior to law school, I worked for a small firm on their discovery documents and as a summer clerk for the Lincoln County Law Library. During law school, I volunteered as a document clerk with a team from Inner City Legal Aid that helps bring free legal advice to those in need. I have gained extensive experience with various kinds of cases and people and continue in my desire to work with challenging legal matters.

Or,

(1.) I understand that you are seeking a senior level intellectual property litigation associate who has three or more years of experience and can bring a client base worth more than \$300,000 annually. (2.) For the past 8 years, I have worked with Durbin

Burbin Sterbin PLLC, a small firm that works on intellectual property litigation matters. I have successfully obtained more than 1.5 million dollars in judgments and settlements. In addition, I have increased our client base by 20 percent. Should I move firms, I am confident that the majority of my clients will come with me. These clients are worth approximately \$420,000 in billable hours annually. I would bring my skills as an attorney and, in all likelihood, the majority of my clients to your firm.

Of course, you wouldn't add the numbers 1 and 2 to your paragraphs but you can see how simple the second paragraph really is just through these two examples.

The only time this might be a little more difficult is if you have no legal experience whatsoever. If this is the case, then focus on your skills and personality as they relate to the firm's needs. You can always talk about your skills and personal characteristics, regardless of whether you performed in a legal or non-legal environment. You may want to address the fact that you have no legal experience but will make up for that with loyalty, dedication and hard work. This is perfectly acceptable. However, if at all possible, mention some transferable skills even if they are from a non-legal job or activity. This will demonstrate that you are hardworking, reliable and understand what they are looking for.

What is going to happen next? The Third Paragraph of Your Cover Letter

This is the easiest paragraph of your cover letter. All you need to do is figure out what *you are going to do* and what you want them to do. For example:

If my background meets your needs for an attorney, please contact me at the phone number listed above. I look forward to hearing from you.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss how my experience might meet your needs. I will be available to interview in Seattle as of September 15th. Thank you for your consideration.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you at your convenience. I will contact you when I arrive in Seattle, if I have not heard from you before then and, if appropriate, arrange a time that will be convenient.

Contact Information

How and where people should contact you is an important decision to make. You want to come across as professional, available and clear. Use the following guidelines to figure out what information needs to be eliminated or added to your cover letter, resume, references and business cards.

- Phones - No matter what, make sure you have voicemail or an answering machine. Make sure that you have a professional sounding voicemail.
- If you list your Cell Phone, then never pick up if there is any chance that the reception won't be perfect. It would be better for the employer to leave a message and you call them back from a land line rather than getting fuzzy or having the phone cut out half way through.
- If you can't decide whether to use your home or work contact information, go with the one where you can be reached most easily and the one with the fewest distractions. If you choose to list your work information, then make sure it is okay for potential employers to be calling and leaving messages for you there.
- Your email address should be plain and with as much of your name in it as possible. Things like "spunkygirl@festivals.com" or "thehulkster@superfit.com", although interesting, are inappropriate. You can sign up with Yahoo.com or Hotmail.com for a free email address.

Closing Your Cover Letter

You might want to think of more interesting ways to close your cover letter than just using "sincerely" or "sincerely yours." This is a standard closing that is pretty boring and meaningless since you gave it no thought whatsoever - and the employer knows this.

Things like "respectfully" or "respectfully yours", "With Appreciation" or "With Much Appreciation," and "In Consideration" are a nice thoughtful way to end your letter.

Spiffing Up Your Cover Letter

Now that you have the information required for your cover letter, you should try not to appear dumb. So here are the rest of the "should not go into your cover letter" guidelines.

- **Typos** - Despite the fact that you have written, read and spell checked your cover letter, make sure you re-read it. Read it backwards if possible. When you read your work backwards, then you have to look at the individual words instead of the overall item. There is nothing that makes you look less attentive, ignorant and just plain apathetic than typos. And there is nothing that gets your cover letter, resume and writing sample placed into the recycle file faster than typos.

- **Grammatical & Punctuation Errors** - Make sure you use your software grammar check, read through your work line by line and, if at all possible, have someone else read your work. Although very small grammatical errors are easier to forgive than typos, they are still serious errors you want to avoid.
- **Generic Titles** - Don't submit anything to "To whom it may concern," or "Hiring Partner," or "Human Resource Coordinator." If you don't have a name, then find one, even if you have to call the firm. Firms assign various titles based on duties and firm size. Not every firm has a hiring partner or human resources coordinator. You'll just never know for sure unless you have a name.

*Along with generic titles, forget using "Dear Sirs." This is not only offensive in a market where women make up over half of most firms' staff, but it makes you seem out of touch with today's workforce.

- **An Attitude that Conveys Arrogance, Boredom or Weakness** - Again, avoid this at all costs. Firms can do without someone who is condescending or boring. They want to work with someone who is excited and motivated.
- **Over-the-Top Ploys** - This should be a no-brainer. For whatever reason, applicants often try to grab the attention of the employer and forget common sense. The legal field is a traditional field. Be conservative. Do not send resumes on colored paper unless it is beige. Do not send envelopes full of confetti or other annoying things that scatter onto carpets or desks. Don't harass potential employers with numerous phone calls, emails and/or letters every week. Hiring the right candidate is a long process. You do not want to be remembered as annoying. Keep things conservative, attractive and clean.

A Note About Emails

In this day and age where resumes and replies are emailed back and forth, don't forget formality. Potential employers want to be treated with respect. There is a modicum of formality in applying for a position. Do not disregard this just because you can reach the other person in 2.3 seconds.

Write your emails just as you would any other letter.

- Use the date, title, address and content that you would if you were typing a letter that was to be printed and mailed with bond paper.
- Format your emails as if it is a real letter.
- Never send an email in place of an actual thank you card. It is just too easy and makes you appear lazy.
- Don't email any potential employer more times than you would contact them without email.

If they offer to take resumes by email and mail, then choose whichever is most convenient for you. However, chances are that if they offered to take your resume via email, this is the easiest method for them to receive it.

Thursday, November 15, 2001

Harry Patterson
Administrator
Fortune & Weigh, P.S.
900 Fourth Avenue, Suite 1700
Seattle, WA 98164

Re: Labor-Law Legal-Secretary Position

Dear Harry:

Marsha Brady, Professor at Steamline Community College, recommended that I contact you since I was an assistant for the Duboy County Board of Labor and Employment. She mentioned that you are seeking a legal secretary to support a partner practicing labor law. I would very much appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss my background and how it might fit the needs of your current opening.

I understand that your firm relies heavily on experienced legal secretaries who have a stable work history and good references. I have worked with three legal employers over the last 15 years, not one of which was for less than four years. I left each position on good terms and all three employers are willing to provide excellent references.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss how my experience might meet your needs. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully Yours,

Sue Ellen Superwoman

Attachment

Thursday, November 15, 2001

Rockwell Balboa
Hiring Partner
Boxer, Heviwate & Balboa, PLLC
900 Fourth Avenue, Suite 1700
Seattle, WA 98164

Re: Insurance-Defense Senior Associate

Dear Rocky:

I was impressed with the article about Boxer, Heviwate & Balboa, PLLC found in the National Law and Politics Journal. It described how your firm has been extremely successful in defending false insurance claims made by prize-fighter opponents. As a lightweight fighter and seven-year attorney, I would very much appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss my background and how it might fit the needs of your current opening.

I understand that your firm relies heavily on attorneys with strong litigation backgrounds and the ability to bring in new clients. I have first chaired over a dozen trials and won 9 of those. As a solo practitioner, I have developed networks that have allowed me to build a very stable and lucrative practice.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss how my experience might meet your needs. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully Yours,

Bob Inweave

Attachment

Resumes

If you haven't networked your way in the door of a potential employer, then a great resume is even more important. A resume is a marketing tool – a way to sell what you are capable of doing in the future based on the things you have accomplished in the past.

Be ready to change your resume

A resume should be updated every 6 to 12 months to reflect your new skills and experiences. It isn't set in stone. You should think of your resume as a work in progress.

Change your resume to reflect your skills as they relate to a particular position you are applying for. An easy way to do this is to keep a master copy of your resume that is pages long and reflects every single thing that you have accomplished (including dates). You can cut and paste from this resume into a more tailored version for particular positions. Of course, there is more to it than that, but in a nutshell, a master resume is a handy thing to have around.

Never lie – Always tell the truth.

Recruiters and employers verify a lot of information about you before meeting you. If you lie about a fact or try to hide something, like a degree or date, it generally becomes apparent. Never lie. It makes a worse impression than if you didn't have the experience or degree to begin with.

What do I put on my Resume?

There are a number of things that must go on your resume, some things that might be helpful if they are on your resume, and other things that should never go on your resume.

Things that must go on your resume

- Education – All undergraduate and graduate courses, associated honors, awards or endeavors should be listed. The more recently you graduated, the more activities you can put in this section. However, as time goes on, employers are going to care more about what you've done on the job rather than what you were doing in anticipation of a job.
- Legal Jobs – Include position, employer and dates along with substantive areas of the law and anything that made you stand out.
- Non-Legal Jobs – Include position, employer and dates along with a short description of your job and anything else you contributed towards the success of the business that made you stand out.
- Community Involvement or Volunteer Activities – Include where you worked, the dates and a short description of the contributions you made.

- Dates – The month and year of any start and stop dates must be listed. The one exception is education. You may simply list the year you graduated. If there are gaps in your work and educational history then make sure you have a both a reason why and an explanation of how the time away helped you professionally (i.e. skills you learned). Address this in the format of your resume. The reader should be able to figure out what you were doing during this gap.

Things that might be helpful to have on your resume

- Hobbies Section– Hobbies are tricky. They are only good to list if you happen to have insider knowledge about the person you are meeting with and happen to have similar interests. Any other time, a hobbies section might conflict with a potential employer’s interests or demonstrate that you are not able to dedicate 100% to the firm.
-
- Summary of Experience Section - This is a great section to have because you can bullet point a lot of experience in a short amount of space. It allows you to minimize the amount of space dedicated to describing positions, especially if you are repeating experiences with each job. This is not a good idea if you have very little experience. It will only make you look less experienced. Make sure the descriptive words you are using are generalized. More specific details can be listed under each job and during your interview.
- Membership Section – This is great section to show that you have been admitted to the bar or participate in a professional organization.

Things that should never go on a resume

- High school and graduation date. This makes you look dumb.
- Personal information such as illnesses, marital status, family status, and religion. As an applicant, you can volunteer this information. However, you never know what the personal opinions of the employer are and divulging unrelated personal information may end up working against you. The only caveat to this might be if the personal information somehow translates perfectly into the position you are applying for.
- Pictures of yourself. This is a no-brainer. It’s bad taste. Personal appearance has nothing to do with a legal job.
- References – Don’t include a list of your references on your resume because it looks like you are trying to fill up space. The line “references available upon request” is also a

waste of space. An additional sheet listing your references is a waste of paper at this point. Any employer assumes applicants will provide references upon request.

Do I Use More Nouns or Verbs to Describe My Skills?

The general rule of thumb is to use more nouns when a database is involved and use more verbs when contacting people directly. If you apply to a recruiting, Internet, or government agency that scans or enters your resume into a database, use more nouns. Agencies search substantive nouns or areas of experience. If you are submitting your resume directly to a person who you know will be reading it, then use more verbs to demonstrate you are capable of taking action.

What Order Do I Present My Skills?

The order in which you lay out your resume depends on how much experience you have in each category. List the more experienced categories first. If you have very little professional experience and more educational experience, then education comes first. If you have been in the legal field for quite some time, then employers are going to care more about your practical experience than your education.

There are two caveats. If you are applying for a legal position and have decided to break up your legal and non-legal work histories, then always present your legal work history first. Also, membership and community involvement categories are typically listed last. “Summary of experience” sections should always be followed by your work history.

Always present your experience in reverse chronological order – most recent experience first.

How Long Should My Resume Be?

One page is ideal. Your resume should never be more than two pages and only two pages if you have had approximately 10 years or more in the job market. No matter how many years you have been working, try to keep your resume down to just one page.

Your Resume Should Be Easy to Read and Attractive

Most recruiters and employers will not take more than 30 seconds to review any one resume. If a resume takes longer than that, then the odds are that the recruiter is not going to spend the extra time figuring out who you are, what you’ve done and how they can use you. Small print, typos and squished up text all fall into the “hard to read” category. Make your font clear and the margins wide. Use lots of white space. Try an outline format. Format the dates, positions, and job descriptions consistently.

- Your resume should have a 1 inch margin on each side of the page.
- There should be no typos or grammatically incorrect sentences. SPELLCHECK, GRAMMAR CHECK AND PROOFREAD EVERYTHING!
- Don’t ever use italics or hard to read fonts. Times New Roman is a standard font.

- Don't ever use a font that is too small to read. 12 point font is standard.
- Make sure that everything is consistently formatted.
- On one hand, don't be too general; on the other, do not spend pages describing how you prepared coffee for the office. Include specific, valuable and tangible contributions. Use common sense. Place yourself in the shoes of the interviewer. What does that person want to know?
- Fill in your chronological gaps. Some resumes include a line to explain why a candidate left a position or what she was doing in between jobs. If you must do this, be careful that none of your explanations fall into the personal and controversial category. Never leave unexplained time gaps on your resume. These gaps always work against you!
- Don't be dumb. Being interesting does not mean being cute, alternative, funny, or trying really stupid attention grabbers. These sorts of things generally get a chuckle and then hit recycle pile; or in the alternative, a copy of your resume is made and added to the funny file never to be seen again -unless it is by new human resource recruits who have just started their "who not to hire" training. We have such a file and would be happy to show it to you. The legal profession is conservative and traditional. Your resume should present you as a person that will fit into a conservative and traditional environment.

Don't Worry. If you have done all of these things, then your chances of having a good resume are high. You can always update your resume to fit the position and your experience.

Master Resume

A master resume is a general resume that you do not submit to anyone. It is a compilation of all of your education, work experiences, memberships, skills and anything else you might add to a resume. Once you have a master resume, information is easy to cut and paste into a more general resume. The general resume is a basic resume that can be submitted to employers or tailored to highlight specific job criteria. You will find the information to tailor your general resume on your Master Resume. The more tailored resumes are good to submit for particular positions. In short, you should have 1 master resume, 1 general resume and numerous tailored resumes.

Model Resumes

Following are several sample resumes. You will find examples of people that have little or no legal experience and attorneys that have been practicing for over 30 years. To demonstrate that it is possible, each resume is only one page in length.

You can be fairly creative with your resume so long as you include the necessary information and the finished product is attractive and easy to ready.

Feel free to play with spacing, bullet points, bold fonts and font size. Just remember that the legal field is fairly traditional, and the more conservative and clear your resume is the better.

Joseph Blow

1325 4th Ave, Ste 600 Seattle, WA 98101 · 206-555-9843 · joeblow@gmail.com · [linkedin.com/in/joeblow](https://www.linkedin.com/in/joeblow)

EDUCATION

University of Montana

Missoula, MT
2003

Juris Doctorate

- Assistant Editor University of Montana Law Review.
- Won Moot Court of Montana competition.
- Handled Family Law cases for Volunteer Legal Services of Montana.

University of Texas

Austin, TX
1995

Bachelor of Arts

- Major in International Studies, Minor in Pottery.
- *Magna cum laude*.

LEGAL EXPERIENCE

Excelsior and McMinneman

Seattle, WA
2010-2011

Associate Attorney

- Handled over 50 dissolutions and dependencies hearings.
- Represented x, y, z in p, d, q hearings.
- Mediated a 3 million dollar settlement agreement with x, y, z pharmaceuticals.
- Researched and documented case law in the area of xxxxxx.
- These bullet points should probably be longer as it is the most recent job.

Family Medical Leave

2008-2010

Law Offices of Joseph Blow

Seattle, WA
2004-2007

Solo Practice Attorney

- Bankruptcy and Family Law firm in downtown Seattle.
- Filed 58 Chapter 7 and 43 Chapter 9 bankruptcies.
- Represented 46 dissolutions including 11 trials.
- Nominated best new practice according to Superlawyer magazine.

OTHER EXPERIENCE

Macy's Department Stores

Seattle, WA
1995-1999

Sales Manger Pacific Northwest

- Handled logistics, sales, and routing for menswear in Pacific Northwest stores.
- Chaired the six state northwest sales manager's annual meeting.
- Organized our Black Friday sales task force, earning the best regional results sales award.

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES, PUBLICATIONS, AND PRESENTATIONS

- **Northwest Justice Project—Home Foreclosure Program, 2009-2011.** Represented 7 clients facing foreclosure. Handled all hearings in matters pertaining to xxxxx.
- **King County Bar Association—Neighborhood Legal Clinics, 2005-2011.** Monthly consultations with Seattle residents on matters of family law, bankruptcy, and general legal concerns.
- **American Red Cross—**Volunteer at annual Christmas food drive. 2010
- Balancing procedural requirements and ethical obligations in the handling of dependencies in Washington State. *Family Law Washington Quarterly Review*, 2010.
- The Importance of Law in the Universe. *WSBA Family Law Mid-Year Section CLE*, 2009.

MEMBERSHIPS

- Washington State Bar Association--2003
- King County Bar Association Family Law and Solo Practice Sections 2009-2011
- Washington State Bar Association Solo Section--2007

Skills: Fluent in Spanish. Legal Software: Time Matters and Fast Case.

Interests: Hiking the cascades, Mexican cooking, foreign films.

GINA WITHERSPOON

50048 12TH Ave. Kirkland, WA 98033 / (425) 222-2222 / E-mail: gina@hotmail.com

EDUCATION

Gondawga University School of Law Spokane, WA

Juris Doctor, May 1999

- Saul Lefkowitz Moot Court Competition, Spring 1999
- Cali Excellence For The Future Award (Amjur) – Business Associations, 1997
- Gonzaga Intellectual Property Association – 1998 to 1999
-

Whazu Washington University Pullman, WA

B.S. Marketing, June 1995

- American Marketing Association, 1993 – 1995
- W.W.U. Crew Team, 1993

EMPLOYMENT

Thabez Ferm Intown LLP Seattle, WA

Legal Corporate Assistant/Paralegal 4/00 to present
 Associate level drafting transactional documents including various agreements, contracts, consents, resolutions, stock option plans and securities documents.
 Responsible for the formation, maintenance and licensing of various business entities and advising corporations regarding multiple rounds of financing.

City Mortgage & Securities Co, Inc Spokane, WA

Legal Intern 2/99 to 5/99
 Researched and prepared memoranda on a variety of transactional issues involving lending laws, creditor’s rights, bankruptcy and general contract law

Hoyti Toite Pherm LLP Spokane, WA

Legal Intern 1/98 to 2/99
 Drafted contracts, leases, deeds and settlement brochures. Researched and prepared memoranda on a variety of transactional and real estate issues

Lincoln County Public Defender’s Office Spokane, WA

Legal Intern 11/97 to 6/97
 Interviewed clients, investigated cases and prepared memoranda on criminal issues.

MEMBERSHIPS

- Member of the Washington State Bar Association Admitted in 1999
- Member of the Washington Young Lawyers Division 1999 to present

Education

University of Midwest Law School

JD received 2001

- Dean's List Honor Recipient, Spring Semester 2000 and Spring Semester 2001
- Preparing for February, 2002 Washington Bar Exam

University of Saint Justice

BA received 1997

- Major in Sociology-Criminal Justice and Minor in American History
- Started college career as a high school senior through the Minnesota Post-Secondary Education Option Program

Employment Demonstrating Initiative, Reliability, and Organizational Skills

Lead Instructor and Trainer, Get It Right Educational Centers 02/98 to present

- **Prepared curriculum for students taking the LSAT, GME and SAT**

Instructor For English Composition, University of St. Justice 08/00 to 06/01

- **Designed and implemented curriculum for classes of 15-25 students**

File Clerk, Hart and Cart LLC 09/97 to 08/00

- **Assembled municipal litigation files for court appearances**
- **Maintained computer hardware, software, and databases**

Sales Associate, Supply Max 08/93 to 12/96

- **Managed 12-15 employees in the maintenance of the sales floor, including merchandising and customer service**

Volunteer Experience

- Holy School, Saint Paul, Minnesota 5/00 and 5/01
- Thomas Tutoring and Mentor Program, Saint Paul Minnesota 3/98

Roger Bucks

4897 Upper Crest Drive, Bellevue, WA / 425-222-2222 / richroger@2money4u.com

Summary of Experience

Analysis	Document Production	Proofreading
Data Entry	Editing	Research
Database Maintenance	Fact checking	Writing

Work and Professional Experience

Editor. General Law, Incorporated. January 1994 – Present. (Independent Contractor)

- Proofread, copy edit, and code legal issues. This information is included in the Washington State local rules of court, significant decisions of hearings boards, published opinions of the Washington State Court of Appeals and the Washington State Supreme Court databases.

Support Staff. Minzel & Associates. July - October 2001. (Temporary Position)

- Updated the company's database of clients and candidates and performed general office tasks.

Paralegal. Northwest Sue-You Law Center. January - March 2000. (Internship)

- Responded to calls to Law Center's Legal Information and Referral Service regarding legal issues.
- Performed document maintenance for Law Center's Legal Information and Referral Service.
- Wrote memorandum regarding attorney abandonment of cases and outlined steps to take in that event

Support Staff. Computer Gurus Inc. July - August 1993. (Temporary Position)

- Created hyperlink cross-references in the 1994 edition of the Encarta Multimedia Encyclopedia.

Editor. Read-All Publishing Company. July, 1989 – April, 1992.

- Proofread, copy edited, and typeset municipal and county codes.

Education

- Paralegal Plus Certificate. The Only Community College. 2000.
- Bachelor of Arts. The Other Washington University. 1991. English / Technical Communications

222 Union Street,
Ste. 222
Seattle, WA 98101

Phone 206-222-2222
Fax 206-222-2222
E-mail no@best.com

Noel Idall

Summary

Commercial Law Business Bankruptcies

Corporate Litigation Dispute Resolution

Professional experience

- **General Counsel and Corporate Secretary** with Dunitall Management Corporation 6/02 – Present
- **Partner** with Idall Maeksus Dough PLLC 4/91 – Present
- **Associate** with Lernin Toby Rich PLLC 2/86 – 4/91
- **Associate** with Aynt Maiken Swat PLLC 7/81 – 2/86

Education

- University of Paimuch, Seattle, WA Juris Doctor 1970
- University of Foryervaca, Seattle, WA Bachelor Business Administration, Accounting 1967

Publications and CLE Program

- Washington State Department of Trade, Business and Job Retention, *Chapter 11 as a Business Tool.* 1997
- Contributing Editor to and lecturer in several Continuing Legal Education programs on Bankruptcy, General Business and Landlord-Tenant rights. 1975 – 1999

Additional professional activities

- Member of the Washington State Bar Association's Mandatory Continuing Education Committee 2000 to Present
- Member of the Washington State Bar Associations Continuing Legal Education Committee 1998 – 2001
- University of Washington Law School's First Year Student Mentor Programs 2001 and prior years

Community activities

- Member of the Citizen's Budget Advisory Committee 2001
- Member and Chair of The Planning Commission 1989 – 1999
- Member and Chair of the Board of Adjustment 1980 – 1985

References

Good references are from people in a position to speak objectively about your professional skills and qualities. Provide three to four references unless an employer indicates they want more or less. The following is a list of "Do's and Don'ts." This should make it easier to determine who to use as a reference, when to submit your list and how references should be presented.

1. Submit references for your last three or four positions. References must be current. For good reason, employers are suspicious of resumes that are old and do not relate to your current work experience. You must perform well at all of your positions. An employer wants a good reference from all of your positions.
2. Use people that were in a position of authority over you or were clients of yours.
3. Don't submit references until they are requested.
4. Bring references with you to an interview.
5. Check to make sure that your reference's contact information is current. Submit the following information:
 - the reference's name
 - their current and direct telephone number
 - their position
 - the firm or company that you both worked with

If you submit more information than this, make it brief and relevant. The potential employer wants to hear from your past employer, not you, about your abilities.

6. Do not include references on your resume.
7. Do not include a line that says "references available upon request" with your resume. The potential employer assumes that you will provide references upon request.
8. Print your references on bond paper that matches your resume and cover letter.
9. Do not submit personal references unless they are requested.
10. Include your name and contact information at the top of the reference sheet.
11. Submit actual letters of reference whenever possible. Make sure that these are on official letterhead and signed. Copies of reference letters are perfectly acceptable.

References are an important part of the screening process. You must be selective about who you choose to have speak on your behalf. If you are unsure about the kind of reference you might receive, have a friend call and check your references to see what is being said about you.

Identifying Settings That Match My Values

Jeff Minzel

Below is a list of questions that you should give some thought to. These questions will help you decide which places you would enjoy working at and what areas of the law might interest you.

What are you willing to give up in order to get what you want?

This question has to do with work versus family or free time or money or anything else you value or have become accustomed to. What balance would you like to strike between your career and personal life? Answering this question might enable you to answer the following questions more easily.

What interests catch your attention?

If you come up with these answers and don't know which areas of the law they would apply to, then go through your text books, talk with a career counselor, call agencies or attend some Bar Association meetings. Each facet our life is affected by the law. You should be able to find an area of the law that suits your interests. Below are a couple of ideas for figuring out what interests you.

1. Go through the Sunday paper. Which articles do you read?
2. What kinds of magazines do you read?
3. What kinds of books draw your attention?
4. What do you like to talk about in serious conversations?
5. What kinds of television programs do you watch?
6. Do you like to focus on a lot of issues or just one at a time?
7. What are my skills?
8. What are my values?
 - a. Achievement
 - b. Action
 - c. Beauty
 - d. Autonomy

- e. Creativity
- f. Peace of Mind
- g. Ability to be genuine
- h. Humor
- i. Intellectual Stimulation
- j. Fair Treatment
- k. Truth
- l. Love, family and affections
- m. Loyalty
- n. Morality
- o. Nature
- p. Fun
- q. Power and Influence
- r. Recognition
- s. Religion
- t. Security
- u. Serving a Cause
- v. Skills
- w. Results
- x. Variety
- y. Wisdom
- z. Productivity

9. What kind of contact with people do I like to have?

10. What kind of office environment would make me happy?

11. What type of work do you feel would be satisfying, i.e., are you project oriented, are you team oriented, do you need to see completion to your projects, can you work on ongoing matters that do not have definite end dates?

12. How important is status – do you need a high-profile position or are you okay with a low-key position?

13. How important is money – how much do you need to make, how much would you like to make, and what are you willing to give up (i.e., personal time) for money?

14. How much variety do you require in your daily work tasks?

15. How challenging should your work be to you – do you find your primary mental stimulation through work or outside of work?
16. Do you desire a high or low level of responsibility with your work?
17. How much interaction would you like with coworkers or clients?
18. Do you have geographic limitations on where you will or can work?
19. How do you feel about managing other people – are you okay with this, do you desire this, and do you not want to have anything to do with this?
20. Why did you pursue a legal career – what excites you about the law?

I Really Don't Know What I Want

Sometimes we find ourselves at a point in our life where we really have no idea who we are, what we like or what we are capable of. Even if we did know, we might wonder if we were right.

This is a tough spot to be in but not an impossible one to get out of. The best thing to do is pick someone from worksheet 1 and do what they want you to do. Alternatively, you could seek the advice of a trusted confidant and do what they tell you to do.

The point is....get busy. When you are active you will realize that you either like or dislike what you are doing and that is a starting point. If you like it, then continue and add to it. If you don't like what you are doing, then pick the opposite thing or something entirely different and do that.

Think of all those times Einstein or Benjamin Franklin failed. Yet, both felt that each failure was actually an accomplishment because they were able to eliminate an option. If you don't know what to do, do anything! Begin to eliminate options until you find what it is you want to do.

Identifying Your Strengths

Karen Summerville

Identify Your Strengths

I went to law school because I thought I would be good at _____.

I always did well in classes about _____.

My friends are amazed by my ability to _____.

I receive compliments frequently on _____.

My professors often told me I was good at _____.

My colleagues often rely on me to _____.

The first thing I turn to when I pick up a magazine or newspaper is _____.

_____.

I feel most relaxed when I _____.

I am anxious when I am expected to _____.

The subjects I have little interest in and have the most trouble learning include _____.

_____.

I feel I am at my best when _____.

When I go into a bookstore, the section I go to first is _____.

If I had \$200 to spend at the bookstore, I would buy _____

so that I could learn about _____.

Review Your Accomplishments

Describe three of your most significant professional accomplishments. An accomplishment is something you

- Did well
- Enjoyed while doing it
- Were proud of when completed

1.

2.

3.

Add additional pages to include 10-25 of your accomplishments.

What are the common elements in these accomplishments?

What descriptive words or phrases have you used?

Does the pattern of your accomplishments suggest a practice area or career direction that would be a good fit for you?

Design Your Ideal Work Week

If you could design your ideal work week, how much time would you spend

- Researching and writing?
- In the courtroom?
- In conference with an individual client?
- On the telephone?
- Drafting agreements?
- Negotiating?
- In hearings?
- In our office?
- Traveling for work?
-
-
-
-
-

Design a “Portfolio Career”

If you could design a career that incorporated the practice of law with other activities that provided a source of income, what would it include?

- Teaching?
- Mediation/arbitration?
- Contract legal work?
- Consulting?
- Judging pro tem?
- Pursuing a hobby (writing, music, art)?
- Running a business?
-
-
-
-
-

Uncover Your Talents and Skills

achieving	acting	adapting	addressing	administering
advising	analyzing	anticipating	arbitrating	arranging
ascertaining	assembling	assessing	attaining	auditing
budgeting	building	calculating	charting	checking
classifying	coaching	collecting	communicating	completing
composing	computing	conceptualizing	conducting	conserving
convincing	coping	counseling	creating	deciding
developing	devising	diagnosing	directing	discovering
disproving	drafting	dramatizing	editing	eliminating
empathizing	enforcing	establishing	estimating	evaluating
examining	expanding	experimenting	explaining	expressing
extracting	filing	financing	fixing	formulating
founding	generating	getting	giving	guiding
handling	heading	helping	hypothesizing	identifying
illustrating	imagining	implementing	improving	improvising
influencing	informing	initiating	innovating	inspecting
interpreting	interviewing	intuiting	inventing	inventorying
investigating	judging	leading	learning	lecturing
listening	maintaining	making	managing	manipulating
mediating	meeting	memorizing	mentoring	monitoring
motivating	navigating	negotiating	observing	obtaining
offering	operating	organizing	originating	overseeing
perceiving	performing	persuading	planning	playing
predicting	preparing	prescribing	presenting	problem solving
processing	protecting	providing	publicizing	questioning
reading	realizing	reasoning	receiving	recommending
reconciling	recording	recruiting	referring	rehabilitating

relating	remembering	rendering	repairing	reporting
representing	researching	resolving	responding	restoring
reviewing	risking	scheduling	selecting	selling
sensing	serving	setting up	shaping	sharing
showing	solving	sorting	speaking	studying
summarizing	supervising	supplying	symbolizing	synergizing
synthesizing	systematizing	talking	teaching	team-building
telling	tending	testing	training	transcribing
translating	traveling	treating	trouble-shooting	unifying
uniting	upgrading	utilizing	verbalizing	winning
writing	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Talent: Natural endowment or innate ability of a superior quality.

Skill: Proficiency of facility acquired or developed through education or experience.

Step one: Place an X beside each word that describes one of your natural talents.

Step two: Underline each word that describes a skill you have acquired.

Step three: Circle the words that you have Xed and underlined. Enter them below.

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Step four: Highlight five words from the above list that best describe what you would like to do as part of your life's work.

Step five: List them in descending order of preference.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Moving Into or Out Of The Legal Field

Jeff Minzel

There are a number of people who have worked in the legal field and, for one reason or another, would like to move into a non-legal job. Likewise, there are a great number of people who would like to get into the legal field but don't know how. The biggest dilemma is figuring out how your skills will transfer into your new career.

Because almost every non-legal aspect of our society is somehow regulated through the law, there are typically legal jobs related to the area that you have experience with. Look at the substantive area of work and not the job title. Obviously, some positions may require that you either get certified or go back to school.

If you are moving into the legal field, then you would traditionally look for work as an attorney, paralegal, legal secretary or file clerk. However, firms and corporate legal departments also need administrators, bookkeepers, accountants, facility caretakers, and anyone else that makes a business run smoothly. Below are a short list of some transferable substantive areas and their complimentary jobs in the non-legal world.

Legal Practice Area

Property / Real Estate

Personal Injury

Corporate / Business

Non-Legal

Agent
Representative
Assessor

Insurance / Claims Adjustor
Investigator
Expert Witness
Doctor
Mechanic
Products Tester
Safety Controller
Fireman

Business Development
General Counsel
Business Owner
Executive Officer for a Company

Legal Practice Area**Non-Legal**

Tax

Certified Public Accountant
Professor
Consultant

Criminal

High-Risk Youth Organizational
Program Development
Police
Drug Enforcement Agency
Criminal Investigation
Federal Bureau of Investigations
Detective
CounselorEstate Planning, Wills
& ProbateHealth Care Industry
Business Planning
Medicare / Medicaid
Insurance (Health and Life)
Legislation

Intellectual Property

Artist / Inventor
Business Development
Beautician
FashionEmployment, Labor &
UnionsHuman Resources
Mediator
Arbitrator
Health Insurance Company
Recruiter
Manager / Office Administrator
Counselor

General Civil Litigation

Mediator
Arbitrator
Judge
Consultant
Professor

Legal Practice Area**Non-Legal**

Family

Psychologist
 Psychiatrist
 Foster Parent
 Department of Social and Health
 Services
 Non-profit Organizations

Immigration

Agency / Government Liaison
 Translator
 ESL teacher in the US and abroad
 Tutor

Commercial / UCC

Sales
 Business Development
 Consultant
 Marketing

Below is an additional list of possible non-legal job titles.

Health Policy Analyst
 Election Board
 Lobbyist
 Contract Administrator
 Public Works Department
 Consultant
 Sports Management
 Liaison
 School Administrator
 Adoption Counselor
 Bailiff
 Congressional Staff

Employee Benefits
 Consumer Advocate
 Dean
 Press Secretary
 Tax Foreclosures
 Pre-Trial Services
 Recruiting
 Real Estate Developer
 Journalist
 Nature Conservancy
 Child Support
 Immigration Rights

Obviously, this list is not exhaustive. If you find your eye wandering to a particular area or specialty and decide you would like to switch careers, then you need to rework your resume, cover letter and job search.

When writing your cover letter, address the obvious concern that employers will have. Employers want to know why you think that your skills are transferable and if they will be able to rely on you. Focus on your skills, experience and personality - not the job title. You want the

employer to think you are perfect for the job before they realize you didn't reach this position by moving up the traditional ranks in a particular field.

When you write your resume, emphasize the substantive areas and activities you have worked with that are similar to the position you want. Downplay your titles and places of employment.

When searching for positions, research where to research before you start applying for work. Each industry, legal or not, has its own marketing niche - journals, papers, websites and organizations where available positions are posted and connections can be made. Make sure you find out which publications and organizations are considered valuable and of good quality before you start applying for jobs. Find out who the key players are in the field and follow their lead because this could save you a lot of time, disappointment, and frustration when entering a new market. Smaller companies and competitors are generally not far behind with their classifieds.

Since each industry is different, we would recommend that you locate a book or other resource that will guide you through the job search do's and don'ts for that particular field. In the legal field, for example a firm may simply toss a resume with more pigment than beige. On the contrary, advertising executives might cringe to see times new roman font on beige paper. As always, do your homework so you know what kind of impression you need to make.

Good Luck!

How to Survive and Thrive in the Legal Environment

Jeff Minzel

Things are going to be a blur your first month on the job. If you can speed up the learning curve with these suggestions, you will be making money for the firm sooner and, as a result, you will be considered a more valuable employee. You need to have a sense of humor and take a lot of notes. Ask enough questions to do the job properly and take notes.

Find a mentor in the firm if possible. They will be a great resource for ethical questions, library research methods, and general legal conundrums.

Treat everyone fairly and graciously, whether they are a copy clerk or managing partner. Your reputation is everything in a firm, and the legal field is smaller than you think. Help people out when you can, and they will do the same for you down the road. Respect firm procedures and rules. These make it easier for everyone to get the job done.

“How to Survive and Thrive in a Law Firm” – Do’s and Don’ts

1. Perception is everything. Let me correct that, your reputation is everything. Law is subjective. One lawyer will have one opinion about a piece of work, where another lawyer will have a very different opinion. Thus, before a lawyer looks at your work product, you want them to create the perception in their mind that you are competent, hard working, thorough, reliable, etc. You want them to review your work through a favorable mindset. Thus, your reputation becomes less about your work and more about how lawyers perceive you. Do things that create a favorable impression in the lawyers’ minds.
 - Exceed your billable-hour budget. This, more than any other point, will communicate competence. The more you exceed your budget, the more successful and competent other lawyers will view you. Everyone will give you the benefit of the doubt.
 - Make sure that people see you working hard.
 - Be considerate of all people.
 - Attend all of your department meetings.
 - Volunteer to make presentations at department meetings.
 - Volunteer for firm-management projects.
 - Give speeches at local CLE events.
 - Socialize with attorneys in your firm.
 - Make sure that you do client development.

- Always turn your work in early or on time.
 - Always keep your lawyers informed of the status of their projects.
 - WRITE WELL – nothing will undermine your credibility more quickly than poor writing.
 - Never argue with a superior.
 - Never be defensive about your work product. Always be open to criticism, whether fair or not.
 - Never give excuses. Anticipate this and do everything that you need to do to get the project done on time. Remember, you now own this work.
 - Never blame others. It is your responsibility. Partners want results, not excuses.
 - Dress appropriately.
 - Be humble.
 - Be subordinate.
 - Do not be prideful.
 - In general, go above and beyond in every way that you can.
2. Take notes on everything – don't walk around without your notepad for the first three months.
 3. Keep samples of your work.
 4. Ask before reinventing the wheel.
 5. Do homework on your own time to figure things out.
 6. Get involved with firm committees and projects.
 7. Learn your place. Be subordinate. Communicate a “can do” attitude. Lawyers will be more willing to give you work. Your success is measured by your billable hours. You can only bill hours if lawyers give you work.
 8. Introduce yourself to lawyers that you would like to work for. Tell them you are interested in their area of the law and would love to work on a project. Do not be shy. You are doing them a favor. Many partners do not have, nor do they develop, good relationships with junior attorneys. When they get overwhelmed, they have to do the work themselves. You solve this problem for them when you introduce yourself. After a couple of projects, you will be their first choice and will start to receive a steady stream of work. By this point, they will trust you and not want to invest the time in developing relationships with other associates. You now have your first client. Partners in the firm, not clients of the firm, are your real clients. Give them the best service that you can.

9. Continually update partners on the status of their projects. Do not make them come to you. Always remember the following: SERVICE, SERVICE, SERVICE!!!
10. Be proactive. No one is going to do it for you, especially in a larger firm. Because everyone is so busy, they are only thinking of themselves. No one is really thinking about you. You have to do it for yourself. The great thing is that it is easy once you get started. Think of yourself as an independent contractor, i.e., someone who is self employed and that has to hustle for business. Do not think of yourself as an employee, whose employer will bring you a steady stream of work.
11. If you want to work with a certain department, attend their departmental meetings. This is a great way to show initiative. Lawyers always honor this type of initiative. Lawyers remember when they were getting started. Remember, a trusted associate to turn to is a valuable asset to a partner. You have great value in their eyes. Remember this – but don't get cocky.
12. Whenever you turn in a project, always (1) ask if there is anything further that they need you to follow up on and (2) ask for new projects. Always show an eagerness for work.
13. Take ownership of your work. Do whatever it takes to bring an acceptable solution back to the partner. If the partner is giving you work, he or she is trusting that you will take ownership of the work and solve the problem. You waste the partner's time if you do not adequately complete the project. This is now your project that you must solve. Solving the problem does not mean that you come up with the solution that the client wants. It means that you correctly report what the state of the law is and present an acceptable range of options that flow from the applicable laws.
14. Ask the partner for a budget of time before you start the project. Do not worry if you come to the end of the time and have not found the answer. Before spending more time, go tell the partner where you are at and ask for direction. They will know what to do. They will also appreciate this.
15. Be thorough. Take extra time if need be. Write down all of your time. You will be surprised. Partners can usually bill for this time. If they cannot, they will write it off. Partners will explain to you that it is always better to write off time than it is to not bill for time that they could have billed for but did not because you didn't write down that time.
16. Be efficient. Make sure that you understand how to use the latest technology in legal research and that you then use it.

17. Review your legal writing skills. Do not assume that you are a good writer. Ninety percent of lawyers will say that they are good to above average writers. In truth, less than thirty percent of lawyers are good writers. The following is taken from a law review article. Master these 25 points. If you do, you will be in the top ten percent of all writers.
18. Write everything, including contracts, in common language. Do not use legalese.
19. Do not be afraid to ask questions. If you feel you are off track, go and talk to the partner about this. They will appreciate this. If they do not hear from you, they will assume that you are on the right track and will expect that you can solve the problem. The worst thing that can happen is to turn in work that they cannot use.
20. When drafting contracts, always find a model contract as a starting point. First, you are much more likely to create a good contract if you start by modifying a contract that is considered good. Second, you will be more efficient. Third, it will always suggest issues that you did not consider. Most firms have a work-product database.
21. When researching legal issues, look for memoranda that have already been written on the issue. These would be found in a firm's work-product database.
22. When drafting pleadings, always look for prior examples. You will get the same benefits that I described when discussing how to draft contracts. Again, turn to the firm's work-product database. If the firm does not have a work-product database, go to a senior associate or junior partner in the department.
23. Be extremely considerate of support staff and paralegals. You will be judged on how you treat subordinates. These individuals will often know more about their area of the law than you will. They are a great resource. If you alienate them, you will not be able to turn to them and will be less successful.
24. Carry a time sheet with you everywhere you go. Write your time down on an hourly basis. Never try to recreate your time at the end of the day, week, or even month. You will short change yourself and have a harder time being successful. Remember your success is driven by how many hours you bill.
25. Use your calendar. Schedule project due dates. If you do litigation, it is considered malpractice if you miss filing deadlines. Continually review your calendar. Do not procrastinate. Start projects early. Often, a project that appears easy will have a twist that will require much more time than you anticipated. Leave extra time for this. It will

happen to you on a regular basis. Not only will you do a better job for your partner and the client, but you will save yourself unnecessary stress.

26. Prioritize your work. Do not get caught in the game of putting out fires. If you do, you will increase your stress, lose control of your work, and ultimately miss a deadline on a more important project. You will also avoid taking client calls and answering your phone because you will be in a perpetual state of being behind on your work. You also will have no idea of when you can take on more work and when you can't. You may say no to work that you need or may take on work that you can't possibly handle.
27. Manage your stress. Be careful of burnout. Make sure to exercise, sleep, and eat right. Lawyers and legal staff experience a much higher level of stress from their work than do most workers in other professions. Do not procrastinate on projects. Always be eager for more work but do not take on more than you can reasonably handle. Once you take it on, you have to own it – no matter what.
28. If you work in a specific area of the law, keep a topical set of files for issues that come up in your area. I worked in the area of ERISA. By the time I left Davis Wright Tremaine, my topical file cabinet contained files on over 200 issues that arise under ERISA. These files included memos that I wrote or that others in my department wrote, articles, things I came across while researching other issues, CLE materials, a great contract, etc.
29. Set aside time to interact with coworkers. Socializing is an important part of your job. Remember, the partners and your coworkers are your real clients. Think of this as marketing.
30. Have an attractive, organized work area. People do not trust people that have disorganized work areas. They don't trust that such people will do a thorough job.
31. Do not gossip or date coworkers. Remember, your coworkers and partners are your clients. You cannot afford to alienate anyone.
32. Participate in firm management. These projects are typically nonbillable. They are important and need to be done. These types of projects will help you on your reviews. You will also get to know lawyers in the firm that you typically do not work with. You can improve your overall reputation and internal referral base by doing this.
33. Learn the individual styles of the lawyers that you work with. Remember, a good work product is a subjective thing. Talk with coworkers and other attorneys who have worked with this lawyer in the past. Figure out what he or she expects. This is mandatory if you

are working with a “screamer.” Every firm has at least one “screamer.” Most firms have many.

34. Develop work relationships with many attorneys. Diversify yourself. Do not let one attorney monopolize your time. Your referral sources will become set over time, i.e., that attorney only works for Anne and Ralph. Make sure that you have an adequate internal referral base. If you fail to diversify your referral base, your position will be much less secure.
35. Attend other departmental meetings. Other departments will often refer to your department. For example, the employment department and tax department frequently referred business to the ERISA department. By attending their meetings, I stayed up to date on issues that affected them, and by making presentations to their departmental meetings about ERISA issues that they will encounter, I educated them and showed them new ways to locate and refer business to me.
36. Participate in city-wide practice groups. This will improve your overall reputation and serve as a source of referrals when one firm receives a project that they cannot take due to a conflict of interest.
37. Develop good relationships with junior attorneys. As you progress in your practice, you will be expected to delegate work to junior attorneys. You need good relationships in order to successfully delegate work.

If you don't know which project should be a priority then ask. Instead of getting in trouble for making a bad call, let the senior attorneys fight about who should get what done first.

Billing is a huge source of stress for everyone in a firm. Billing is the way a firm logs time and creates revenue. Say you are paid \$40/hr. The firm will bill the client \$100 for every hour you bill. This is \$60 gross profit to them, much of which goes into overhead. But still, you can see how every hour you bill is extremely important to the firm on a weekly, monthly or yearly basis. When your salary goes up, so does your billable rate. Some firm's have a minimum number of billable hours for paralegals and legal assistants, others do not. Generally, all attorneys have a minimum number of hours they must bill each year. You can be sure that your value as an employee will be determined according to the number of hours you bill.

The firms that do require billable hours generally ask for 1800 a year minimum. This averages out to 35 hours per week of billable hours or 7.3 a day if you take all of your holidays and three weeks of vacation. This does not take into account the time that it takes to learn “how to” do the

project, forgetting to account for your time, chatting with coworkers, inefficient work habits, arriving late, and/or leaving early.

If you do not meet the billable hour requirements, you will appear as a negative variance in the firm's budget. This is how firms make money. If you are meeting or exceeding your budget, the firm will assume everything is fine and reviews will be smooth. If you do not meet the budget, the firm will assume something is wrong, even if you are doing a perfect job. You cannot survive in a firm if you do not meet your annual hourly budget. A great way to get ahead is to beat the budget.

Once you have a handle on your job, start thinking about the future. Approach different departments and let them know that you would like to learn their areas of the law, trade work with other staff, tell your supervisor that you would like additional responsibility, and volunteer for pro bono cases in areas that you are unfamiliar with.

When Procrastination Rears Its Ugly Head

Dan Crystal, Psy.D.

Procrastination and lawyering seem to go hand in hand. Legal work is intricate, precise, and hard to communicate to most people. This can leave you feeling alone with your burden. There are so many elements of lawyering such as being organized, using time efficiently, being a productive writer, and being financially savvy that may not be related to why you became a lawyer in the first place. You are likely to think “I didn’t think it would be this way.” You may feel abused by your long hours in the office thinking about other things you would like to do. If you don’t attack these foreign skill sets head-on it can generate an avoidant relationship with your work where you procrastinate important responsibilities.

Procrastination can be draining, leading to inefficiency and wondering why work is taking so long. At its most pernicious you may experience an inability to concentrate or organize your thoughts. I definitely had my share of nights like this writing my dissertation. This can lead to panic about everything one has to do. But keep in mind, procrastination is the mind’s striving for health. It is a coping strategy when work becomes intolerable. In this article I’ll offer ways of tapping your self-confidence, as well as practical suggestions like using your schedule and workspace more effectively.

So Why Do I Procrastinate?

Procrastination is an avoidance behavior, so it’s not surprising that the reasons one procrastinates are often not conscious. I have worked in therapy with lawyers hooked on hulu.com, facebook, and news sites, rather than writing the brief right before them. I also have clients with piles of old, unresolved cases who live in dread of confronting these papers. Since the reasons for procrastination will differ depending on the lawyer, the first step is to stop oneself and say “why do I procrastinate.” Since the impulse to stop working can be sudden, the answers will not always be clear. In this case it is important to ask yourself, in that split second before leaving your computer to satisfy your chocolate crave, “what were you thinking?” Take a second to answer these questions. This is the starting point.

I can’t do this?

The automatic thought that led you to flee your work often has something to do with self-confidence. The words may be something along the line of “I can’t do this.” The trick is to be able to hear this thought, acknowledge it, and come up with a practical solution. Affirming self-statements make a difference here. Use a mantra that reminds you of your abilities. If you’ve thought about your mission statement as a lawyer, this is when to use it. The trick is to gently encourage yourself. Steve Pavlina, a motivational author, discusses replacing the words “I have to do this” with “I want to do this” (if only to have it done). That way you don’t feel bullied by

your work, and can feel autonomous. Your office should be dotted with visual reminders of your previous successes and abilities. I remind my clients to keep your trophies close. These are places to turn in moments of inevitable doubt.

Perfectionist? Use Your Schedule.

Many procrastinators are perfectionists who expect to hatch ideas from their minds all at once and perfectly formed. That is a lot of pressure to place on oneself. This is especially true of early career lawyers who place the law on a pedestal and see themselves as an ant crawling up the side. Over time you will learn to evaluate your effort less by your precision crafted legalese, and more by the outcome of your work. According to Pavlina, a way for perfectionists to take the pressure off is to replace the words “finish it” with “begin it”. Work with a matter in small, bite-sized chunks.

You might expect successful lawyers to create challenging goals for themselves, but the opposite has been shown to be true. Peak performers generally set easier goals than most people. That way they can experience a continuous sense of efficacy. Small, realizable goals followed by a reward. The trick with procrastination is to use the time away from one’s work to be rejuvenated and not avoidant of responsibilities. Successful people generally use their schedule not just for all of their onerous responsibilities, but for things to look forward. These plans can help make your hard work feel worthwhile. A good meal, tickets, a massage, you name it.

Bringing Sanctity to Your Workspace.

Procrastination is in fact an act of prioritization. You are prioritizing your cognitive freedom, whether it involves navel gazing or playing sudokus, over your work. This sometimes happens when you are burdened by so many responsibilities that a step in any given direction leads you to feel like they are neglecting several other matters. Cleaning rituals before periods of productivity can serve as a healthy pep rally, and can help sharpen your focus. Your desk can be seen as a metaphor for your mind. If your office space is cluttered with several disorganized matters, it is likely to be mirrored with several ideas competing for airspace in your mind (and vice versa). Clean up can be a gentle, somewhat mindless ritual of moving papers around. This can help refine your focus to a single point: the matter you need to work on now. Having a system whereby you are sure that matters will be attended to can prevent the deepest form of anxiety: not knowing what you may be forgetting.

You may avoid starting a matter because the effort required to find the papers, reboot your slow computer, and return several non-urgent calls is distracting. The trick is to keep your office well oiled, with several staging areas, so that you know that each area of work has room to breathe and is living in the right corner of your small town. And then be sure to shut off the phone, and flip the Do Not Disturb sign. There are many areas in life that multi-tasking is a wonderful skill, but writing briefs is not one of them.

Procrastination Busters

Dan Crystal, Psy.D.

A computer has two competing purposes: a mind organizer and a mind eraser. The tool we use to refine our thoughts in precision crafted legalese is married to the ultimate implement of distraction-the internet. There are few things as mindless in life as surfing the internet. It's a semi-passive act. While we do the clicking, the choices are fairly narrow with highlighted keywords, pictures, or video serving as our options. It's a dissociative experience where most people report "losing track of time" along the way. I've worked in treatment with lawyers who have frittered away hours following the stock market, reading up on gossip, watching TV on hulu.com, or chatting on Facebook as opposed to doing their work. No one's talking about how much fun it is.

There are no perfect solutions to this inconvenient pairing. Getting your work done requires being able to write briefs on Microsoft Word or to use Outlook to check your schedule and email. At the same time, the internet has become how we learn about things, buy plane tickets, pay our bills, make plans with friends, get directions, etc.

Here are a few tips:

- Use an egg timer! This way you are being held accountable for the time spent on online distractions.
- Make a list of the things you need to research online and only go to those sites.
- Wait until you get home before you forage in the world of internet mindlessness.
- Print out web pages you want to read, rather than spend more time than necessary behind a computer.

It's natural for all of us to need breaks from hard work. The trick with procrastination is to feel rejuvenated by the time we spend away from our work, as opposed to feeling avoidant of our responsibilities. Try to recognize if taking a walk around the block, meeting a friend for lunch, or taking a few minutes out to meditate in a local park will serve you better than the latest updates on the Huffington Post or playing Solitaire. Remember: **You Do Have a Choice!**

Other good advice about procrastination can be found on this blog:

<http://www.stevepavlina.com/articles/overcoming-procrastination.htm>

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1325 Fourth Avenue, Suite 600, Seattle, WA
800-945-WSBA (9722) • 206-443-WSBA (9722)
www.wsba.org • questions@wsba.org

WSBA Lawyers Assistance Program
206-727-8268 • 800-845-9722, ext. 8268
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