

Interview Advice

The job interview is a crucial part of the job search process -- it is the stage where decisions are made. For many job seekers it can be a stressful time; but it doesn't have to be. It is important to remember an interview is nothing more than a very focused "conversation." The following suggestions should increase your chances for a successful "conversation."

Prior to the interview:

1. Research the organization.
2. Find out all you can through personal contacts, written materials, the Internet, etc.
3. Conduct a self-assessment so you are prepared to articulate your interest in the position and the contributions you can make utilizing your skills and abilities.
4. Organize the pertinent materials you will want to take to the interview - extra copies of your resume, writing sample, transcript, list of references, etc.
5. Assemble your interview attire. Always dress neatly and conservatively, keeping the interviewer in mind. First impressions do count.
6. Reassure yourself. Confidence in your abilities demonstrates to an interviewer that you are the one they want to hire!

During the interview:

- Relax - be yourself.
- Be honest about your skills and abilities - this is important for both you and the potential employer.
- Show enthusiasm - let them know you are interested in what they do and have to offer.
- Listen carefully - take time to reflect before answering questions. Don't be afraid to say you don't know; but don't do this too often.
- Ask targeted questions; show you did your homework.
- Stress your best qualities and what you could bring to the position in a positive manner.
- Don't leave without them knowing you are interested in the position. Finally, ask what the next step in the process is and when you could expect to hear from them.

After the interview:

- Send a thank you note reaffirming your interest in the position and provide any additional information you were unable to share in the interview.
- If you do not hear from them after a set time, phone or write to find out where they are in the process.
- If you are offered the position, great! But before you accept, evaluate the terms.
- If you are rejected, don't be discouraged. Take this opportunity to evaluate your job search plan and make any needed revisions.

Sample Questions From Interviewers:

You should expect to be asked some of the following questions. This will help you to be more prepared and effective when making your responses.

1. Why did you decide to attend law school?
2. In what school activities have you participated? Why? Which did you enjoy most?
3. How do you spend your spare time?
4. What jobs have you held? How were they obtained, and why did you leave?
5. What courses have you liked best in law school? Least? Why?
6. What do you know about our firm?
7. Do you feel your legal education has been good?
8. What qualifications do you have that will make you successful in this field?
9. How interested are you in sports?
10. If you were starting law school all over, would you still attend?
11. What is your rank in school? Is your GPA a good indicator of your abilities?
12. Was your involvement in school activities worth the time you devoted to them? Why?
13. What characteristics do you think a person needs to be a successful attorney?
14. Why do you think you would like practicing law?
15. Do you prefer working with others or by yourself?
16. Who are your best friends? Why?
17. Can you take instructions without feeling upset?

18. Tell me a story.
19. How did previous employers treat you?
20. What have you learned from other jobs you have held?
21. Can we get recommendations from your previous employers?
22. What interests you about our firm? Why would you want to represent our clients?

23. What was your record in military services?
24. Have you ever had to withdraw from a class?
25. What is your proudest moment?
26. How long do you expect to work?
27. Have you ever had any difficulty getting along with fellow students or faculty?
28. What is the source of your spending money?
29. Do you have any debts?
30. Do you like routine work?
31. What is your major weakness?
32. Define cooperation.
33. Are you willing to fight to get ahead?
34. What area of law interests you? Why?
35. What job with the firm would you choose if you were given the choice?
36. What types of books do you read?
37. What types of people seem to rub you the wrong way?
38. What are your special abilities?
39. What do you think the disadvantages of practicing law are?
40. What have you done that shows initiative and a willingness to work?
41. Tell me about yourself.
42. How many hours a day do you think a person should work?
43. What are your goals?
44. Do you have any questions?
45. Why should we hire you over our other applicants?

Sample Student Inquires

It is now your turn to ask the questions and you don't want to miss this valuable opportunity by saying, "They have all been answered." You want to ask questions to help you determine if this is a good "fit" for you. It is also your chance to prove to the interviewer that you are the right candidate.

Questions Not To Ask The Interviewer

- Don't ask about salary in the initial interview with any firm or legal employer. There will be time enough to ask about that later when they make you an offer.
- How hard do associates have to work? If you want to find out the answer without asking, there are other ways. Try to schedule any second interview with a firm or agency during the late afternoon. The chances are you'll still be there at 6:30, and you can see for yourself how busy the place is. Another way to find out is to ask a young associate (during the second interview) or perhaps an especially pleasant first interviewer, "How would you describe the life of a young associate at your firm?" Hopefully, they will bring up the subject voluntarily.
- Do young associates have to attend a lot of mandatory social activities? An important question, but don't ask it. Again, hope it comes up in a second interview.

Sample Questions You Should Ask The Interviewer

1. What skills are most and least important for an individual to possess as an associate?
2. How does the firm delegate authority, responsibilities, and assignments?
3. What specific job duties and responsibilities would I have as a law clerk?
4. What criteria would be used to evaluate my performance, and how often would I be appraised?
5. What could I expect to face in the first month, three months, and six months on the job?
6. If I'm filling a job opening, why did my predecessor leave?
7. Do you have a job description available?
8. What would you like the person in this position to achieve in the next six months?
9. What attracted you to this firm?
10. What do you find most challenging as a lawyer?
11. Did you start in your current practice area? If not, why did you switch?
12. What do you wish you had asked when you interviewed with the firm?
13. How is your job different from what you expected?
14. What attracts your clients to this firm? How are you able to retain them?
15. How long were you at the firm before you had significant client

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contact? 16. If you could change anything about your job, would you? If so, what would it be? 17. How have your clients' needs changed over the last five years? 18. Where do you see the firm heading in the next five years? 19. Describe your typical day. 20. When will you be making a decision, and what is the process?