

Positioning Yourself for New Opportunities

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NEVILLE
CAREER CONSULTING

HELPING ATTORNEYS NAVIGATE SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS



Goal: A Blessing in Disguise

- Not to make light of debt obligations, tuition bills and mortgages to pay, but perspective helps
- Many have never had to conduct a job search before
- Unhappy lawyers: people leave for all kinds of reasons
- Accelerated timetable
- Stay focused on what moving towards, not from
- Next job as stepping stone in direction want to go

Overview of a Job Search

1. Articulate what you're looking for and why (3 working iterations)
2. Use your research skills to verify your assumptions and identify resources
3. Network both to gather info and to get your name out there
4. Make your case: translate your skills and experience to show how they add value
5. Tailor your written materials
6. Follow up with people

In Your Interest to Cast a Broad Net

How broad? Identify your parameters...

- What is your budgetary bottom line?
- Are you willing to move? Where?
- How important is it to you to practice law?
- What didn't you like about your previous work?
- What else do you want to avoid?
- What skills do you have and enjoy using?

Enthusiasm Counts

- Limitations of “self-assessment tools”
- Genuine interest helps you make your case; not as persuasive to employers and contacts if talking yourself into a position just because it’s available
- If you could do anything, what would it be?
- Why? What about it appeals to you?
- What other types of work have similar characteristics?
- How do people get those jobs? What experience does an attractive candidate bring to the table?

Every Job Has Its Pros & Cons: Identify Your Priorities

- Time outside the office
- Money
- Benefits
- Intellectual stimulation
- Socializing w/colleagues
- Predictability
- Flexibility
- Prestige

Determine Tradeoffs You Can Accept

Once you have your criteria to assess options, determine where you have flexibility

Recognize that priorities change over time

Consider both the short and longer term ramifications of decisions

Understand the potential value of a position as a stepping stone

Be an Informed Consumer of Resources

- a. Legal recruiters: can be knowledgeable about legal market, but expertise is limited to traditional practice of law, employers that can afford to pay fee for their services, and available to candidates with very specific credentials.

- b. Executive recruiters: have jobs in which former lawyers often excel but employer won't pay fee for candidate without specific job-related experience, so don't speak with lawyers until shifted to management, operations, or marketing on own.

Resource Defined Terms

- Career Counselors
- Career Coaches
- Outplacement
- Certified Resume Writers
- Referrals to Therapists

The Need to Network: Most Jobs Are Never Posted

A friend of a friend's cousin can make the introduction that leads to your next job...

1. Determine who your contacts are
2. Do your homework in advance
3. Follow professional protocol
4. Put yourself in their position
5. Ask smart questions
6. Follow up appropriately

What Counts as “Networking”

Not just walking into a room full of strangers, explaining situation, and handing out resume.

Other options include...

- Online social sites, e.g. Linked In, Facebook
- But still important to interact in person
- Get in touch with friends, neighbors, alma maters, and family and tell what looking for
- Coffee, soccer sidelines, office visit, phone conversation, lunch, professional associations

Informational Interviews: How, When and Why

- Send an email
- Name referral source/what have in common
- Attach short resume (but only for background)
- Request time to speak
- Follow up
- Keep format open
- Prepare your questions and answers in advance
- Thank and keep in touch

Perceptions to Address

- Some lawyers tend to think they are smart enough to do any job without additional training
- May be true, but even if that's the case-lack of deference to those who followed traditional career paths is unappealing
- Be careful not to come across as the stereotypical arrogant lawyer focused on winning
- Demonstrate how you can help people reach consensus, or at least a compromise
- Focus on your ability to move work forward rather than to make a point
- Recognize the need to be concise, not too much detail

Transferable Skills to Emphasize

- Smart, hard workers who respond well to deadlines
- Trained to issue spot, identify conditions that could negatively impact operations
- Anticipate ramifications of various courses of action
- Know how to research--policies, facts, business issues
- Ask substantive questions that get to the point and solicit critical information in investigations, negotiations, etc.
- Understand how corporations and non-profits are structured, how laws are passed, regulations developed, judicial decisions made, and rules enforced--handy to have
- Analyze individual events' connection to big picture
- Develop arguments to support conclusions

Revise Your Written Materials

- Remember that your resume is a marketing document--short and sweet for networking
- Put yourself in the employer's shoes
- Make your case (concisely)
- Translate your skills so relevant and stand out within a pool of candidates
- Tailor your cover letter and resume to the requirements of each posting or area

Center a Tailored Summary at Top

Experienced attorney, [strategic planner, advocate, consultant, and project manager] with extensive business and legal expertise on issues of [commercial litigation, intellectual property, contractual and employment disputes, insurance defense, and regulatory compliance].

Regularly advise diverse business entities on [managing claims, developing policies, drafting effective documentation, and negotiating contracts]. Particularly successful at [client development and communicating complex business and legal issues] to senior corporate management and personnel.

*Make sure to back up your claims and be clear what you're referring to in resume text; **Narrow which areas to emphasize both in heading and **throughout** resume, following posting or terms and skills you i.d.

A Search Plan with Interim Goals

- Treat like a 9-5 job with breaks to exercise, socialize, and sleep regularly
- Stay organized: track contacts, referrals, interviews, and status all in one place
- Easily access past versions of resumes, letters, notes, and job applications
- Identify # of outreach emails per day/week, etc.
- Follow up (especially when say going to)

Interim Sources of Income

- The market for
 - Contract
 - Temporary, and
 - Consulting jobs
- Part-time
- Clerkships
- Volunteering
- Moving without a job

Questions from Participants

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