

Lateral Outlook

Winning Law Firm Interviews

Interview Preparation Improves the Likelihood of Getting an Offer



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In an increasingly competitive legal market, what can you do to stand out from the competition? Properly prepare for your interviews.

Sound like common sense? You would be surprised how many people can't find the time to prepare. Yet well-prepared candidates almost double their likelihood of success. Here are some tips to help you get started.

Do

- ✓ Research the employer and the opportunity. Most of this information is available on firm websites. When you do research an attorney beyond a firm's website, you probably shouldn't emphasize it. It can be perceived as "stalkerish."
- ✓ Arrive on time. All attorneys have last minute client emergencies, but tardiness or rescheduling can raise questions about your multi-tasking skills. The firm may also see it as a lack of interest.
- ✓ Be enthusiastic, optimistic, and confident. Take care not to come across as overly eager.
- ✓ Anticipate questions, planning and practicing responses. Practice will give you a level of comfort that comes across as confidence in the interview. Take care not to sound over-rehearsed.
- ✓ Ask *thoughtful* questions. (Asking if the firm has an office in NY or how many attorneys are in the office won't impress interviewers.) This is a terrific way to learn more about what the employer wants and to share how your abilities match the hiring needs.

Now that you know some of the things you should do, what about the things you should avoid?

Here are some of the most common "don'ts" we hear from employers.

DON'T

- ✗ Don't be a "Negative Nelly" or "Negative Ned." This is the most common complaint about candidates. This includes not attacking other firms. You never know where the interviewer's spouse, siblings, parents or friends work.
- ✗ Don't disrespect recruiting coordinators, secretaries or other staff.
- ✗ Don't approach lateral interviews like OCI interviews. With lateral interviews the roles are reversed, so ask not what the firm can do for you but what you can do for the firm.
- ✗ Don't answer a question by telling the interviewer that someone already asked the question. If you are meeting with more than one person, you'll likely hear the same question from different people. When you answer the same question again (and again and again) act like it's the first time you've been asked.
- ✗ Don't go into too much detail about personal matters. Maintain a good balance between being personable and effectively expressing your professional interest and qualifications for the position.

These tips will give you a strong start to take your interviewing skills to the next level and to take the next step in your career. Good luck!

Interested in learning more about what questions to expect, what questions to ask, how to close the interview or how to handle other interview issues? We can help. Email us at info@elitelaterals.com or call Amy Savage at 202.280.2408.