



Interview to Win

A career move has more impact on your future than just about any matter you will ever work on. Interviews are an important part of that process – both for you and for your prospective colleagues. Successful interviews are the result of meticulous preparation. Here are some tips you may wish to consider...

Before the Interview

- Research the firm's background and gather information about each interviewer. There is a wealth of material available on the firm's website, on Internet search engines and from Lexis-Nexis. You can also uncover anecdotal information from friends and colleagues as well as valuable insight from your David Carrie LLC legal search consultant.
- Be prepared to discuss anything on your resume in detail.
- Dress appropriately. Generally, this means wear a suit. Although many firms today have casual dress policies, wearing a suit is a sign of respect that will be noticed and appreciated.
- Bring extra copies of your resume and transcript.
- Turn off your Blackberry and cell phone.
- Arrive five minutes early.

During the Interview

- Practice good eye contact. Use a firm handshake.
- Be confident, but not cocky or arrogant.
- Remain positive and enthusiastic.
- Be conversational, clear and natural.
- Smile and have fun.

The Interview: Sample Questions and Answer Strategies

Question: *Why are you conducting a job search?*

Answer strategy: Focus on substance. You might mention your desire to take on more responsibility. You might focus on a particular practice area. Your answer should be tailored to the firm. It should demonstrate your knowledge of, and interest in, its practice. You should also stress that you are doing very well at your current firm but that you are looking to take your career in a different direction. You should not mention lifestyle, compensation or negative feelings about your current employer as a reason to make your move.

Question: *What kinds of matters are you working on now?*

Answer strategy: This is an opportunity to show what you bring to the table. Highlight your skills by offering detailed anecdotes about your roles and responsibilities in your deals/matters. Emphasize your most challenging and relevant responsibilities and demonstrate your ability to take initiative and resolve issues methodically. Do not talk unnecessarily about things you do not like to do.

In discussing anecdotes, use "I" (not "we"), and be logical and organized in your response. For example, explain how "I" identified an issue, what actions "I" took to address the issue and how "I" resolved the issue. You want the interviewer to envision you working for him or her.



The Interview: Sample Questions and Answer Strategies Continued...

Question: What are your strengths and weaknesses?

Answer strategy: You should be able to back up your strengths with anecdotes. These may include situations in which you demonstrated your ability to work hard, identify important legal issues or be responsive to client needs. You can also demonstrate your strengths by referring to positive comments made in your annual reviews. Negatives should be harmless and should be learning experiences. It is important to be prepared with examples.

Question: Where do you see yourself in five years? In ten years?

Answer strategy: If you are interviewing at a firm, you should explain that you see yourself working at a firm (not at the US Attorney's Office, a non-profit, or in-house) where you will continue to grow and be challenged as an attorney, get more responsibility and mentor others.

Question (if applicable): Why weren't your grades higher?

Answer strategy: Confront the issue of grades honestly (but do not dwell on it) and move on to your positive achievements. Explain any extenuating circumstances. If your grades improved during law school, you should mention it.

Ask questions during the interview

Don't wait until the interviewer asks if you have any questions. The interview should be conversational – a dialogue. Your questions should show your interest. You will be able to use the answers to show how you can become an important part of the firm. Here are some examples:

- *What matters/deals have you worked on recently that you have enjoyed the most?*
- *What is on your desk right now?*
- *What do you see me starting with in my first 6-12 months at your firm?*

Asking these questions will cause the interviewer to think about and express their needs. Your response to their answers will give you the opportunity to show how you might help. Respond to matters that sound familiar by offering detailed anecdotes that showcase your understanding and cause the interviewer to visualize you working for them.

- *Do not ask questions that could be answered by the firm's website or are otherwise obvious (e.g., how many associates work in a specific department).*
- *Do not be afraid of duplicating certain questions among interviewers. Each interviewer may have a different perspective.*

Questions NOT to ask during the interview:

- *Do not ask about hours or compensation.*
- *Do not ask questions that indicate your lack of interest in a particular practice area. You want to be seen as a team player willing to work on whatever is assigned to you. Be interested in all firm practice areas and especially the interviewer's practice area.*
- *Do not ask questions about negative issues regarding the firm, such as negative press.*

For more tools, ideas and resources to help guide your legal career visit our website at:
<http://davidcarrie.com/downloadcentral>