

Preparing for Your Interview as a Lawyer Should

An interview is your chance to show your budding skills as a lawyer. Like arguing a motion in court, this is your opportunity to show the interviewer (the “judge”) the strength of your research skills, your persuasive abilities, your writing skills, your ability to clearly articulate yourself, your ability to think on your feet, and very importantly, your interpersonal skills. This is a helpful analogy for preparing for an interview, which is the same way you would prepare for a real case.

1. **FACTS – Every good lawyer knows the facts**

a. *Research the firm*

- i. In addition to the firm’s website, search LexisNexis/Westlaw for news stories involving firm (most law students don’t do this, and it can demonstrate strong research skills)
- ii. Review the NALP form, Vault guide, and other resources
- iii. Talk to alumni

b. *Research your interviewers*

- i. Bios on website
- ii. If you are interviewing for a litigation position with an interviewer who is a litigator, consider researching cases on LexisNexis/Westlaw where the interviewer was the attorney of record. (Most law students will not take this extra step, which will make you stand out.)

c. *Research yourself*

- i. What are several of my strengths?
- ii. What are my weaknesses?
- iii. Why am I interested in this firm?
- iv. Why am I interested in this practice area?
- v. What do I want to learn from this interview?
- vi. What do I want them to know about me?

2. **ARGUMENT IN SUPPORT OF YOUR CANDIDACY – Good lawyers present persuasive arguments**

a. *Demonstrate examples of your intelligence/ability to be a good lawyer*

- i. Academic performance in law school, journal, moot court, etc.
- ii. Accomplishments, stories of your successes, etc.
- iii. Other evidence of your intelligence and/or good writing/advocacy skills
 1. Writing sample (critical)
 2. Other noteworthy job positions

Ask yourself, “Are there any weaknesses about the above that could come up? If so, what are my best responses?” **Visit your career services office for a mock interview!**

b. *Demonstrate your interest in and enthusiasm for the firm*

- i. Use the FACTS section above to show that you researched the firm
- ii. Clearly articulate why you are interested in the particular firm
- iii. Clearly articulate why you are interested in a particular area of law (interest in multiple practice areas is fine, so long as you can articulate why you are interested in each)
- iv. Ask thoughtful and substantive questions that show your interest in the firm
- v. Focus on how you can add value to them, not what you want for yourself

3. **BOND WITH THE “JUDGE”**

a. *Collegiality and interpersonal skills are perhaps the most important aspects of this case*

- i. Talk about the interviewer’s personal experiences with the firm
- ii. Listen attentively to what your interviewer has to say, rather than simply listening with the intent to respond
- iii. If your interviewer asks you to debate a point in your writing sample, go with it. A logical, friendly debate about a point of law is fine, but do not get too heated or overly defensive.
- iv. Have a good time, laugh, and smile!