



## **DELIVERING STRATEGIC SOLUTIONS ACCA'S 2000 ANNUAL MEETING**

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Career Options for In-House Counsel

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The Following materials are intended to provide in-house counsel with information addressing the career options of in-house counsel. This information should not be construed as legal advice or legal opinion on specific facts, or representative of the views of ACCA or any of its lawyers, unless so stated. This is not intended as definitive statement on the subject but a tool, providing practical information for the reader. We hope that you find this material useful. Thank you for contacting the American Corporate Counsel Association.

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CAREER MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

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Create a Plan for Your Success

Navigating a Career Crossroads

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## OVERVIEW OF THE AFFILIATES

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### Career Strategies: A Quick Overview

Finding a new, rewarding position in the legal field is never a quick and easy task. In large part, the process requires the same skills necessary for success as an attorney - a solid work ethic, commitment to achieving your goals and a willingness to approach every situation with intelligence, ingenuity and flexibility.

In fact, your job search process may resemble the way in which you tackle a legal case: You need to research all of your options thoroughly and strategically, from the type and size of law firm or company for which you would prefer working, to how you can best present your credentials. You will also need well-written and informative materials to back your "case."

Even the most experienced attorneys can benefit from a refresher course on job-seeking fundamentals. This booklet will review the key areas critical to the successful management of your career.

### First-rate Resumes and Cover Letters

You may be surprised at how many highly experienced attorneys and other legal professionals have limited expertise in preparing a strong resume and cover letter. And while these tools are just part of the search process, they represent your one chance to make a winning first impression.

### Research

Research skills often are the cornerstone of a successful attorney. You can expand these very talents in your job search by reviewing legal trade publications and exploring the Internet. Trends in corporate law departments, management issues and articles written on prospective new employers are now within easy reach, not to mention online job listings. In addition, online job listings enable you to seek opportunities around the globe.

### Networking

Networking is an excellent means of advancing your career. By continually establishing new contacts and asking each of them for additional referrals, you'll tap the "hidden" or unadvertised job marketplace. Through networking, legal professionals can keep apprised of trends, business developments, job opportunities and other valuable information.


### Exploring Your Options

Many attorneys elect to work on a project basis in order to evaluate various industries and career opportunities, while gaining valuable experience. Taking on a variety of assignments gives you a chance to explore a prospective employer's corporate culture before accepting a full-time position. Many legal professionals enjoy the flexibility of this approach and the opportunity it offers to expand one's professional network while earning income.

### Creativity

When evaluating where you'd like to work, think as broadly as possible. Don't exclude opportunities at smaller firms or nontraditional employers, such as city or government agencies. Such organizations may provide you with a chance to assume a wider range of responsibilities, including managerial roles.

### Interviewing to Win

A strong and active networking campaign combined with effective resumes and cover letters will eventually lead to job interviews. The essentials to delivering your best performance during these important meetings include doing your homework  relying heavily on the Internet; anticipating likely questions; rehearsing your answers; and expressing your interest and appreciation.

A strong and active networking campaign combined with effective resumes and cover letters will eventually lead to job interviews. The essentials to delivering your best performance during these important meetings include doing your homework ® relying heavily on the Internet; anticipating likely questions; rehearsing your answers; and expressing your interest and appreciation.

### Negotiating Salary

Be prepared to reveal your salary needs during the first interview, along with a rationale for your requirements. Conduct research on this in advance. Discreet conversations with trustworthy colleagues and online inquiries to trade associations are two productive methods of gathering salary data. The Affiliates publishes an annual salary guide which may be helpful. Remember to take into account various benefits programs available when evaluating a compensation package.

### Involvement with Professional Associations

Assuming a leadership role in legal trade associations or in organizations serving specific industries of interest is a productive way to expand your network. Whether you're participating in committees or attending seminars, the opportunity to interact with busy professionals in these venues is invaluable.

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### Creating a Winning Resume

After eight years as a contracts attorney with a manufacturing firm, Amy was invited by the CEO to be considered for the position of chief corporate counsel. "Send the search committee a copy of your resume," he advised.

Although Amy was thrilled to have the opportunity to compete for the promotion, she did not have a current resume. In fact, she had not written one in nearly a decade. While still in law school, Amy had been recruited by her company and had joined them immediately after graduation. Now eight years later, with an enviable track record, she found herself needing a refresher on good resume writing in order to compete effectively for the chief corporate counsel opportunity.

Amy's situation is not uncommon. Many attorneys as well as other accomplished professionals not only lack an up-to-date resume, but also need advice on creating one. What information should be included? What is considered "extraneous" by today's standards? The following guidelines should be an asset for attorneys like Amy who find themselves in need of a current resume.

### Preparing a Winning Resume

It may at first appear odd to maintain a current resume even though you're employed and satisfied in your present position. However, there are several reasons why it is prudent to have one.

A current resume is a primary tool in professional networking as you're asked to deliver presentations, chair committees or pursue a leadership position in your bar association. Not only will it be available for such circumstances, but it will also serve as a reminder of your progress toward professional goals ® especially as you strive for promotions, increased base salary, bonuses or stock options.

Of course, resumes are also the calling cards for corporate attorneys who seek career advancement by changing firms. It represents you to prospective employers and hiring committees, and together with the cover letter, comprises that critical first impression. This calling card will determine whether you, in Monopoly terms, "proceed to Go" and "collect" the interview opportunity.

The first rule of resume preparation is to focus on key achievements and qualifications that relate specifically to the job opening. You'll need several different resumes if you are targeting varying positions. In this case, each one should be customized to highlight relevant skills, experiences and strengths.

When writing your resume, remember that the objective is to create an accurate and succinct account of your qualifications, professional experience, career accomplishments and education. The format should be readable and uncluttered. Some candidates do themselves a disservice by creating lengthy resumes detailing every aspect of their careers. (Most executives prefer a one or two-page resume. The reason? If you have filled more than two pages, you've probably included information that is extraneous and unnecessary in order for a hiring manager to make a decision.) Finally, remember to focus on accomplishments versus functions, and omit information that is unrelated to the position.

### Resume Formats

A survey commissioned by our company found that 78 percent of Fortune 1,000 executives polled prefer resumes written in a chronological format organized by dates of employment, rather than a functional format organized by skills.

The chronological resume typically consists of four to six sections:

The chronological resume typically consists of four to six sections:

- \* **Heading** - Your name, address, telephone numbers and e-mail address.
- \* **Objective (optional)** - A brief statement outlining the type of position you are seeking.
- \* **Summary (optional)** - Two or three sentences that summarize key elements of your background, skills, accomplishments and attributes.
- \* **Professional experience** - A listing of your most recent position, followed by previous employment - in other words, your experience - in reverse chronological order. Briefly describe your positions - your general responsibilities and significant contributions at each of your jobs - and, whenever possible, how they favorably impacted the bottom line.
- \* **Education** - Your academic credentials: colleges and universities attended, degrees earned, the dates on which you passed the Bar, and in which states.
- \* **Miscellaneous** - In the last section, list only relevant interests or special skills that do not fit elsewhere, but may nevertheless pique the interest of employers, such as language proficiencies, computer skills, and activities with professional, trade and civic associations.

(See sample resumes)

#### Resume Do's and Don'ts

- \* Begin your sentences with action verbs instead of the personal pronoun "I". Use an active, rather than passive, tense as much as possible.
- \* Keep sentences short and paragraphs brief. Avoid lofty and redundant language, puns and clever wordplays. Use professional jargon, acronyms and abbreviations sparingly.
- \* Use bulleted statements where possible - they're easier to read than run-on sentences.
- \* Don't use exact dates. Months and years are sufficient.
- \* Don't include irrelevant facts about your personal life. The only personal information you should include is what directly pertains to your career. Pro bono work may be one example.
- \* Although it will not reflect your qualifications as an attorney, a resume marred by typos, misspellings, or grammatical mistakes may send a message to potential employers that you lack attention to details. No matter how excellent a writer you are, it is always a good idea to use the computer's spell-check function and ask someone else to review your resume for errors.
- \* Don't list references or state: "References available on request." Today's interviewers assume that you will provide these contacts when asked.
- \* Do remember to give each of your references a copy of your resume.
- \* Use high-quality 100% bond stationery in white, ivory or pale gray that is custom printed with your name, address and phone numbers. The typeface should be simple, unadorned and easy to read.

#### Sending Your Resume Electronically

In the digital age, it's becoming increasingly commonplace to send resumes and other information via e-mail. Resumes can be posted on a wide array of job search sites; see page 17 of this booklet or page 356-358 of *Job Hunting for Dummies*, 2nd Edition by Max Messmer (IDG Books Worldwide) for online job search resources.

When sending resumes via e-mail, remember that any special or unique formatting will be lost, making your resume unreadable. Following are tips for adapting your resume and cover letter to plain text format that should translate well when sent electronically:

- \* **Line Length** - To avoid wrapping the line prematurely, set the page width at 4-3/4" and save the file as "Text with Line Breaks" to put a hard return at the end of each line.
- \* **Vertical Alignment** - To achieve an equal number of spaces from the left-hand margin, convert all the text to 10-point Courier or another fixed-width font.
- \* **Design** - Use characters such as dashes (-), asterisks (\*) and arrows (>) to highlight information. Do not use bold, italics, columns and bullets; they do not translate appropriately to plain text format.

#### The Cover Letter - Not to be Forgotten

Many attorneys have outstanding writing skills. This ability can be put to great use in the cover letter - a job search tool that is too often overshadowed by the resume. According to a survey of Fortune 1,000 executives developed by our company, 60 percent said the cover letter is either as important or more critical than the resume when screening applicants. Hiring executives look to the cover letter for insight into your career aspirations and level of initiative. It must communicate your interest in the position and incorporate information that reflects your understanding of the target

level of initiative. It must communicate your interest in the position and incorporate information that reflects your understanding of the target company, its issues and opportunities.

Your cover letter should focus on two or three qualities that distinguish you in the marketplace, related to the job requirements. It's also your first opportunity to pique the interest of the hiring executive, explain how you can make a tangible contribution to the firm, and provide a sense of your personality. The cover letter is always addressed to a specific individual and, of course, an entirely new one should be written for each position.

Although an excellent resume and cover letter cannot get you a job, a poorly prepared one will likely prevent you from being considered. You can rest assured, however, that if your resume and cover letter are relevant to the position for which you are applying - as well as professional, accurate and succinct - your prospects are good. These documents will be invaluable in shaping your successful career.

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Resume Sample:

In-House Counsel

THOMAS PAINE

1234 Main Street

Los Angeles, CA 90025

310/555-5555 (phone)

310/555-5556 (fax)

tpaine@email.com

## SUMMARY

Corporate attorney with five years of experience as in-house counsel and three as a law firm associate. Specialize in intellectual property issues, including patents, licensing and copyrights. Also possess expertise in employment law. Emphasis is in the computer software industry and Internet technologies.

## EXPERIENCE

XYZ Company, Inc.

July 1994 - Present

- \* As senior in-house counsel in the corporate legal department, advise and counsel company management on patent and trademark issues.
- \* Research and produce licensing contracts with outside vendors.
- \* Direct outside counsel in activities regarding U.S. patent filings for company designs and products, along with litigation pertaining to patent and copyright infringements.
- \* Advise management and human resources department on state and federal employment laws.
- \* Draft and implement personnel policies and procedures, and investigate discrimination and harassment issues.
- \* Oversee counseling, disciplining and termination of full-time employees and contract workers.

Franklin, Adams & Washington

October 1992 - June 1994

- \* Handled variety of litigation matters for clients in the high-technology industries.
- \* Activities included discovery and trial preparation, pre-trial and trial motions, and settlement negotiations.

- \* Activities included discovery and trial preparation, pre-trial and trial motions, and settlement negotiations.
- \* Drafted licensing contracts and conducted patent filings.
- \* Counseled clients on intellectual property issues pertaining to development of new products and technologies.

Law Offices of Monroe & Wilson

July 1990 - September 1992

- \* Served as associate attorney conducting case research, discovery, law and motion, trial preparation, and settlement negotiations.

#### EDUCATION

J.D., UCLA Law School, 1990

B.A. Political Science, University of California, Los Angeles, 1987

#### BAR ADMISSION

California State Bar No. 1234567, admitted 1991

#### OTHER INFORMATION

Member of State Bar Association of California, 1991-present

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#### Resume Sample:

Law Firm Associate

JOHN Q. ADAMS

1234 Oak Avenue

Boston, MA 02222

617/444-4444 (phone)

617/444-4445 (fax)

jadams@email.com

**SUMMARY** Attorney with six years' experience in corporate transactional law and business litigation. Background includes mergers & acquisitions activities on behalf of multi-billion dollar companies as well as emerging businesses. Seeking in-house counsel position with start-up corporation in the New England region.

#### PROFESSIONAL

**EXPERIENCE** Law Offices of Jefferson, Cleveland & Roosevelt

August 1998 - Present

Represent companies and partnerships in complex business litigation and transactions, primarily in real estate ventures, long-term lease negotiations, construction projects and receivership. Research and produce contracts for partnerships, mergers and acquisitions. Oversee discovery and handle cases from trial preparation to appeal phases. Consult clients on various employment law matters.

ABC Law Firm, Inc.

February 1995 - June 1998

Represented numerous businesses in mergers & acquisitions, domestic and international licensing arrangements, negotiations for joint ventures, venture capital financing, and agreements for new corporations and partnerships.

Lewis, Clark & Associates

September 1993 - December 1994

September 1993 - December 1994

Provided federal and state legal compliance in connection with securities filings, shareholder agreements, proxy solicitations, annual and quarterly financial statements, and other event filings. Assisted senior partner in handling major investment projects and merger agreements for firm clients.

The International Legal Group (Internship)

June 1992 - September 1992

Conducted in-depth client interviews. Gathered records and pertinent background information. Researched case histories. Prepared memoranda to supervising attorney and senior partner.

EDUCATION J.D., Harvard Law School, 1993

B.A. History, Stanford University, 1990

BAR ADMISSION Massachusetts State Bar No. 7654321, admitted 1994

OTHER

INFORMATION Member of State Bar Association of Massachusetts, 1994-present

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Resume Sample:

Law Student

Betsy Ross

123 Pennsylvania Avenue

Washington, DC 20000

(202) 555-5555 (phone)

(202) 555-5556 (fax)

bross@email.com

OBJECTIVE

To obtain a summer clerkship that will allow me the ability to utilize the analytical, interpersonal and communication skills necessary to begin an in-house counsel career.

EDUCATION

\* Georgetown University School of Law, Washington, D.C.

Juris Doctor to be obtained June 2000

\* Bachelor of Arts, History, June 1997

University of North Carolina.

G.P.A.: 3.8 -- Summa Cum Laude

HONORS

\* Member of the Georgetown University School of Law Honor Roll

\* Georgetown University Trustee Scholarship Recipient

\* Member of the National Dean's List

\* Member of the President's List of Outstanding Students in America

\* Member of the President's List of Outstanding Students in America

## EXPERIENCE

\* Legal Internship

Law Offices of Smith, Jones & Brown

May 1998 - September 1998

Conducted case research for clients in the aerospace and defense industries. Reviewed agreements for new contracts with government agencies. Prepared memoranda for supervising attorneys. Assisted in discovery and litigation support activities.

\* Office Clerk

Moore & Moore

January 1997 - August 1997

Conducted case research and provided administrative support for attorneys during trial preparation.

## SKILLS

\* Proficient in Lexis/Nexis and Westlaw for case law research.

\* Proficient with word processing and spreadsheet applications for both Windows and Macintosh systems.

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## Building a Legal Network from the Ground Up

When strategically managing your legal career, one of the most important skills you can develop is the ability to network. While often thought of solely as a job search tool, networking can benefit both you and the company for which you work. A solid system of contacts can prove instrumental when seeking outside counsel to handle overflow work or specialized cases. Your network can also provide information on current legal trends, news affecting your area of expertise and strong candidates for open positions in your department.

Regardless of where you are in your career, it's never too soon - or too late - to establish a professional network. These contacts can not only assist you in your current position; they can also serve as a critical source of support if you find yourself in search of a new job. Many of today's companies hire legal counsel based on the recommendation of other in-house attorneys. The more relationships you can establish throughout the legal community, the greater your chances of learning about openings before they are advertised.

Networking means more than simply chatting with other legal professionals at cocktail parties; it entails continuously updating your list of contacts and staying in touch with your professional acquaintances. The broader your contact base, the more successful you'll be in your network efforts.

### Getting Started: The Right Attitude

Networking requires determination. Although you may be very busy with a number of legal projects and cases, don't neglect this essential contributor to your professional growth. Be open to the challenge of introducing yourself to legal professionals whom you do not know. Keep in mind that just as they become your contacts, you, in turn, become a contact for them. While there may be some who are not as receptive to your efforts as you would like, most professionals find it rewarding to help a fellow colleague.

Begin by building a database of people you already know who might be able to assist you currently or in the future. Think carefully about what you want to learn from these individuals. This can cover anything from insights into recent rulings affecting a case you're working on to supplementary law classes that might enhance your professional growth.

There are a variety of strategies you can employ to create your contact list. Professional associations such as ACCA, American Bar Association, alumni groups, current and former colleagues, family members, friends and local community groups are all valuable sources for seeking information and expanding your network.

In many instances you can contact individuals via telephone or e-mail. For others, it might be more appropriate to send a formal letter of introduction that perhaps mentions a mutual acquaintance and briefly explains what information or assistance you seek. Over time, you'll also want to arrange one-on-one meetings with key individuals.



In many instances you can contact individuals via telephone or e-mail. For others, it might be more appropriate to send a formal letter of introduction that perhaps mentions a mutual acquaintance and briefly explains what information or assistance you seek. Over time, you'll also want to arrange one-on-one meetings with key individuals.

### Associations -- The "Off-Hours Impact"

One of the best ways to expand your network is to attend events organized by community and professional associations. Legal professionals, and attorneys in particular, typically have more time to talk at meetings or social events than during workdays.

Before attending these functions, research the groups sponsoring them. Contact colleagues who are members of the association for their thoughts on emerging issues, and read the organization's newsletter. The more knowledge you have about the group's priorities, the more informed you'll be when you speak with members. Also, be sure to bring plenty of business cards to the meetings.

If you want to meet a specific person, locate a familiar contact who can arrange an introduction. If this is not possible, wait for an appropriate moment to introduce yourself. Although approaching a stranger can be awkward, the chances are the individual will gladly make your acquaintance. If you find that this is someone who would be willing to help you, either now or in the future, ask if it might be possible to contact him or her at a later time. Afterwards, send a thank you note, and consider following up with a phone call or e-mail message a couple of weeks later.

An even more effective way to broaden your network is to become more involved in an organization's regular activities. Join committees through which you can demonstrate your professional skills, or write an article for the newsletter on a topic that allows you to showcase your legal expertise. You might also consider delivering a presentation at a monthly meeting.

As you participate in these groups, remember that the emphasis is less on asking for a specific job or information and more on getting to know people and expanding your base of contacts. Take time to listen to others discuss their work, and offer information on yourself when appropriate.

It's also critical to be attentive when your contacts - or their friends - request your time or assistance. If someone is referred to you and calls, respond promptly and consider making time for a face-to-face meeting. You should demonstrate the same spirit of helpfulness you'd like your contacts to extend when you're seeking information or advice. Of course, helping others will allow you to expand your own networking base, as well.

### Keep in Touch

In addition to making yourself visible, networking requires a disciplined approach to consistently keeping in touch, either in person, over the phone or through e-mail. Whether it's thanking someone for speaking with you, sending a relevant article or congratulating a colleague on a recent legal victory, the time you spend communicating with others will ensure that your contact base is continually active. This way, others will keep your name top-of-mind when they hear of a position that may be right for you, or come across information that may be of interest.

More than anything else, networking is a process. You need to adopt a methodical approach, carefully building your database, clarifying your goals, meeting new people, helping others and strategically focusing on both immediate and long-term objectives. Treat networking with the same thoroughness you would bring to one of your cases, and over time this process will yield significant benefits.

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### Job Search Sites on the Internet

One of the primary tools today's in-house counsel can utilize to explore new career opportunities is the Internet. There are a wealth of Web sites dedicated to providing job listings for all types of careers, including attorney. The sites listed below are but a few of the many helpful starting points. This section also includes a review of job search sites which focus exclusively on the legal field.

#### America's Job Bank

[www.ajb.dni.us](http://www.ajb.dni.us)

The U.S. Employment Service online; listings from all 50 states.

#### CareerMosaic

[www.careermosaic.com](http://www.careermosaic.com)

One of the oldest services; known in particular for its overseas listings.

The Career Development Center

### The Career Builder Network

[www.careerbuilder.com](http://www.careerbuilder.com)

Provides one-stop access to 18 different career sites.

### Monster.com

[www.monster.com](http://www.monster.com)

Companies can register their corporate profiles with the site. Offers job seekers the ability to search by category and location.

### CareerPath.com

[www.careerpath.com](http://www.careerpath.com)

Lists resumes, job listings and employment ads.

### JobOptions

[www.joboptions.com](http://www.joboptions.com)

Popular among job seekers because of its easily searchable database.

### HeadHunter.net

[www.headhunter.net](http://www.headhunter.net)

Jobs listed are keyed to five areas: information technology, engineering, accounting, sales and marketing. Positions listed range from entry-level to executive.

### HotJobs.com

[www.hotjobs.com](http://www.hotjobs.com)

Specializes in technology positions in Fortune 500 and top computer companies.

### JobTraker

[www.jobtrak.com](http://www.jobtrak.com)

Job listings are targeted primarily to students and alumni of more than 800 colleges throughout the U.S.

### America Online Career Center

AOL key word: Career Center

Includes extensive classifieds, online career counseling, resume help and other job search tips. Career Magazine

[www.careermag.com](http://www.careermag.com)

Offers a very large job openings database supplied by the major Internet newsgroups with postings searchable by location, job title or skills required. Also incorporates employer profiles, a message board for online networking and links to other career sites.

### Career Resource Center

[www.careers.org](http://www.careers.org)

In addition to job listings from across the Internet, this site features the Career Gems section which compiles the 100 most useful and creative job-related Web sites.

### Careers.WSJ.com

[www.careers.wsj.com](http://www.careers.wsj.com)

Lists more than 15,000 jobs from the world's largest companies, career news and information about relocating.

### CareerWeb

[www.cweb.com](http://www.cweb.com)

[www.cweb.com](http://www.cweb.com)

Job listings can be searched by category, city, state or key word, and the JobMatch feature uses automatic e-mails to notify you of opportunities that correspond to the type of job and location for which you are looking.

DICE

[www.dice.com](http://www.dice.com)

Over 85,000 high-tech jobs are listed here. The site provides daily e-mail delivery of the jobs best matched to your criteria.

NationJob Network

[www.nationjob.com](http://www.nationjob.com)

After asking you for a complete job profile, this site searches its database once a week and sends you an e-mail with a list of positions that fit your profile.

Telecommuting Jobs

[www.tjobs.com](http://www.tjobs.com)

Lists telecommuting jobs and also includes success stories from telecommuters as well as links to order "teletools," including books, hardware, software and supplies.

Legal Job Search Sites

American Corporate Counsel Association

[www.acca.com/jobline/index.html](http://www.acca.com/jobline/index.html)

Includes a comprehensive database that allows you to search by legal specialty.

The Affiliates

[www.affiliates.com](http://www.affiliates.com)

Featuring a searchable database of job listings as well as career tips, this site is solid resource for attorneys and other legal professionals.

AmLawJobs.com

[www.amlawjobs.com](http://www.amlawjobs.com)

Offers listings of attorney positions and legal jobs from the American Lawyer Media family of newspapers and journals.

Department of Justice

[www.usajobs.opm.gov/a9dj.htm](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/a9dj.htm)

The U.S. Department of Justice's "job listings" section lists vacancies and information about career opportunities with the agency.

EmplawyerNet

[www.emplawyernet.com](http://www.emplawyernet.com)

EmplawyerNet's site offers a searchable legal jobs database and a free trial membership. You can list your credentials for potential employers to view and access the site's legal library.

Jobsite UK

[www.jobsite.co.uk](http://www.jobsite.co.uk)

This site includes legal employment opportunities in the UK as well as an e-mail service that enables you to receive recent listings electronically.

Legal Internship

[www.usd.edu/~legalint](http://www.usd.edu/~legalint)

[www.usd.edu/~legalint](http://www.usd.edu/~legalint)

A wonderful resource for students, this site lists links to organizations and firms offering internships in law.

[Pro-bono.net](http://Pro-bono.net)

[www.probono.net/index.cfm](http://www.probono.net/index.cfm)

Provides information on how to get involved in volunteer service for private practitioners, law students, law school clinics, law firms, public interest law groups and legal service providers.

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### Other Job Search Tips

**Career Centers** - Career centers are a great resource and can usually help in all aspects of your job search. From listings of available positions to seminars and career counseling, it's to your advantage to become familiar with the career centers in your area. Even if you didn't attend your local college or university, you can still (in most cases) tap into their resources.

**Recruiters** - Recruiters, also known as placement firms or search consultants, are contacted by employers of all sizes to find suitable candidates for specific full-time job openings. They serve one principal function in your job search: to give you access to job leads you wouldn't hear about otherwise.

**Project Consulting Firms** - These firms specialize in temporary and temp-to-perm assignments, and most of the larger ones now offer their job listings online. Project work allows you to experience firsthand what it's like to work in a specific industry or company while expanding your network.

**Classifieds** - The classifieds (or "want ads") are convenient and easily accessible, whether in the newspaper or on the Internet. Though focusing your job search efforts on these alone is not a great idea since only a fraction of positions which are filled every day are advertised in this manner, ignoring them is unwise. Many small companies rely on classified ads; therefore, they should be included in your job search arsenal.

**Trade Shows** - Trade shows are a solid way to find out about the nature of work in a particular field because they bring large numbers of people from a single industry together in one place. Getting into the shows can be tricky because they're usually only open to industry or association members, but some shows -- large computer shows, for example -- are open to the public.

**Job Fairs** - These events put you in direct contact with in-house recruiters for a number of companies -- all in one venue. It's your chance to sell yourself face-to-face, so be sure to have a 30-second synopsis of your job search objectives ready and a few copies of your resume with you. Some companies even have on-the-spot facilities to conduct impromptu job interviews.

**Lectures, Courses, Seminars** - Read your local paper or national publications to find out about lectures at local community centers, churches and libraries. The lectures rarely cost very much and give you a chance to talk to people who are highly knowledgeable in fields that might interest you. Also, review community college brochures and catalogs for classes which could expand your education or allow you to explore a new field of interest.

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### Winning Interviews

An interview can change your life. Consider the fact that if it leads to the job you truly seek, you'll be spending most of your waking hours at it - at least 2000 hours a year! This relatively brief meeting is your primary opportunity to demonstrate to the hiring manager that you would be a great addition to the company. Regardless of your experience level as an attorney and how many times you've been interviewed in your career, it's always prudent to revisit the fundamental principles of successful interviewing. This is particularly true if you have not had occasion to be interviewed for several years or longer.

Simply stated, when a hiring executive invites you to a face-to-face interview, he or she wants to determine if you're qualified, motivated and a good fit for the position; your objective is to convince the manager that you are. To do so, you need to use the interview to learn as much as you can about the job, communicate your relevant experience and accomplishments as an in-house counsel or law firm associate, and detail what you can offer the firm.

### Gearing Up for the Interview

## Gearing Up for the Interview

Preparation is essential to staying calm under the pressure of job interviewing and the first step toward a successful outcome. Here are some suggestions for doing what you can in advance of the meeting:

- \* **Research the Prospective Employer** - Learn as much as you can about the company through the Internet or library, including pertinent facts about the organization's history, products or services, management style and corporate culture, as well as details about its corporate legal department. Knowing this will help you provide answers during the interview that specifically address the company's needs. Find out who will be conducting the interview, including name, title, current responsibilities and experience. Also, try to determine why the company is interested in your qualifications. This isn't always easy, but a few phone calls among your professional colleagues may prove helpful.

- \* **Rehearse Answers to Tough Questions** - Every prospective employer approaches an interview with three central concerns:

- \* Are you qualified to do the job?

- \* Will you fit in?

- \* Do you want the job?

Questions relating to these issues will always be asked and will serve as a springboard for conversation, encouraging additional discussion and queries. Develop concise yet informative responses in advance that detail situations at previous jobs where you capitalized on your abilities to add value to the firm.

One of the most effective ways to develop articulate, quality answers is to rehearse them on videotape. Reviewing and critiquing your responses will show you where you can improve, increase your confidence and help you communicate more clearly at the interview.

Some questions you'll likely be asked include:

- \* **Tell me about yourself.** Prepare a 15-second "sound bite" that describes your professional achievements and qualifications in two or three sentences. Detail legal experience, for example: cases and matters handled, working with outside counsel and managing project teams. Offer a brief description of what you would bring to the position and why you would be a good fit.

- \* **Tell me about your career.** This is an excellent opportunity for you to explain what's made you effective in your work as an attorney, the range of talents you offer and why you want the job.

- \* **What are your major accomplishments and/or strengths?** In response, review several projects you've handled that demonstrate your aptitude for the job. For example, if you're interviewing for a position in a high tech firm, you might discuss your role in producing software licensing agreements or overseeing negotiations on key contracts.

- \* **What are your weaknesses?** Answering this question is always difficult. It's best to be honest by addressing a skill that you've begun to develop but would like to make even better. For example, you may mention that you are working on certain areas that you would like to improve - such as management, computer or organizational skills - and that you welcome the opportunity to develop more of these abilities in your next position.

Two traps to avoid: overstating your lack of knowledge in a particular area or proclaiming that you don't have any weaknesses. The first answer isn't necessary. The second isn't honest.

- \* **What interests you about our firm?** Here's where your research can pay off. You can discuss the company's business, why you would like to work there and how your qualifications are a match with the firm's needs. Discuss how you might contribute specifically to the legal department. Communicate your willingness to take on new challenges and assignments. Present yourself as a strong team player with knowledge and interest in the industry.

## Plan to Ask Questions

It is also important for you to be ready to ask a few questions of your own - this will give you an opportunity to further convey your interest in the job. For example, you may ask about industry outlook, the company's long-range plans, and the growth potential of the in-house position for which you are interviewing. Inquire about plans to expand the legal department with the company's growth. Will you be allowed to grow in the job and eventually move into a position with new and greater responsibilities? Insightful questions help both of you determine if you would be a good "fit" with the company. However, remember that it's unwise to inquire about vacation time, benefits or your office space until the interviewer has expressed serious interest in hiring you.

## Tips for Success at the Interview

- \* **Hone Your Communication Skills** - How you express yourself is a critical element in successful interviewing. In a national survey of executives commissioned by our company, nearly 40 percent of respondents cited verbal skills as the one quality in a job candidate that impressed them most during an interview.

Make sure that your strengths come across to the interviewer in a factual, sincere manner. As you know, attorneys are expected to communicate well. The interview will be an important test particularly if your initial meeting is with the general counsel.

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\* **Maintain Positive Body Language** - Body language is an important element in job interviews. Be on the lookout for certain gestures that communicate negative messages, such as poor eye contact, hurried nodding or crossing your arms. Just being aware of your physical presence is all you need. What's most important is that you focus on having a productive conversation.

\* **Listen Carefully** - Interviews are two-way conversations. Although you are there to sell your abilities, you also must determine if this position matches your experience, interests and career goals. Listen carefully to how the interviewer describes the in-house counsel position and its duties, current business issues and goals, the office culture and the firm's management style. Focus your responses to questions on your skills and accomplishments that are relevant to the position: "Your emphasis on intellectual property matters also reflects my focus in recent years, working on proprietary issues at XYZ company."

\* **Look Your Professional Best** - Many first and lasting impressions of a candidate are formed based on the individual's choice of interview attire. The way you dress is one of the few directly observable features that can help create a favorable impression.

Select standard business attire for any job interview; even firms with relaxed dress codes expect candidates to arrive in a suit. Dress conservatively in simple, well-tailored clothing. The objective is to look the part of the job you hope to fill. Nothing in your appearance should fall outside what most people in the legal profession would consider the norm.

\* **Close the Interview Gracefully** - End on a positive note. As the interview nears its conclusion, reemphasize your key message points and summarize those qualifications that are particularly relevant to the position. If you still want the job, let the interviewer know that you'd make a valuable addition to the firm. Be proactive if you feel that you are a top contender. Reiterate your interest in the job and the company. Ask about the next step in the process or when the interviewer expects to make a final decision.

If you get the impression the interview is not going well, don't let your discouragement show. Remain poised, upbeat and professional. There could be other opportunities inside or even outside the company that would be a better fit.

\* **Follow Up Promptly** - You should follow up every interview with a written thank-you note. Express your appreciation for the interviewer's time, restate your interest in the firm and mention one or two of your key points that show you are an ideal candidate for the position.

#### Interview Gaffes: What NOT to Do at an Interview

The Affiliates occasionally polls clients about their experiences interviewing candidates. Almost too bizarre to seem true, these stories point out the fact that some job seekers can be their own worst enemy during the interview process! (Certain details have been changed to protect the identities of the candidates.) The following behavior was reported by hiring managers from around the country:

\* A candidate offered this excuse for arriving late to the interview: "I accidentally locked my clothes in the closet."

\* When asked why she wanted the job, a recent graduate replied, "I'm here for a paycheck. Isn't everybody?"

\* A job seeker showed up for her interview professionally dressed, except for her feet. She was wearing bedroom slippers.

\* During the interview, the candidate tilted his chair back and put his feet on top of the interviewer's desk.

\* When asked where she saw herself in five years, the candidate replied, "How am I supposed to know? Isn't that your job?"

\* In the waiting area, a job seeker told the interviewer that he could not work for a firm with no pictures on the wall and an overall lack of ambiance.

\* The first thing the applicant said when he reached the hiring manager's office was, "If I come to work here, you'll have to fix the door in the lobby. It aggravates me when it slams shut."

\* After a successful interview, the hiring manager decided to introduce the candidate to a high-level executive. The applicant asked to visit the restroom - and returned with a new hair cut. He had sloppily trimmed his own hair in an attempt to impress the executive he would be meeting.

\* A candidate waiting in the lobby opened a large bag of cheese crunchies and began eating them. When the interviewer greeted him, he extended a hand covered with orange dust.

Although most candidates realize the importance of creating a good impression at an interview, gaffes can and do occur - whether as a result of bad judgment, poor planning or simple anxiety. Situations such as those detailed here underscore the need to maintain your professionalism at all times when meeting with hiring executives.

[For more information on interviewing, read *Job Hunting For Dummies*, 2nd Edition (IDG Books Worldwide) by Max Messmer, chairman of The Affiliates]

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## The Art of Successful Salary Negotiation

Although attorneys are typically considered expert negotiators, they may find negotiating their own compensation package a much different - and possibly perplexing - challenge. Concerns that they may lose a potential job offer by trying to bargain for a higher salary may cause hesitation, as can the feeling that the negotiation process will damage their relationship with a future supervisor. While in rare instances these concerns may be justified, in most cases it's possible to negotiate a package that will be acceptable to both parties, especially if you come to the table well-prepared.

### Your Personal Market Value

A thorough understanding of the value of your legal knowledge is essential to your preparation. Consider whether you possess expertise in practice areas which are in especially high demand, such as intellectual property, civil litigation and employment law. A background and accomplishments that are in short supply among attorney candidates will help you build a case for a higher starting salary. Legal publications and information provided by trade associations such as the ACCA and the American Bar Association can help you assess the demand for people with your abilities, and industry surveys can provide salary ranges for various legal specialties. The Affiliates, for example, publishes an annual legal salary guide that contains average starting compensation levels for attorneys.

While it's important to be equipped with broad-based knowledge of the compensation levels your qualifications typically warrant, this cannot substitute for researching the specific needs of your prospective employer and how much they may be willing to pay you. Take into account how well your experience fits with the organization that is hiring. A software development company, for instance, will likely find experience in patents and copyright law highly desirable while a property management firm will require real estate law expertise. If your skills are not an exact fit Ⓜ yet you still want to work for the company Ⓜ keep in mind that you may need to start at a slightly lower salary and build a track record.

It's also helpful to search the Internet and trade publications for information on any recent occurrences that would have necessitated legal counsel for the prospective employer. Has the company been the subject of a recent lawsuit? Is a merger in the works? Additionally, try to determine if the organization's legal matters are handled primarily by in-house counsel, or whether outside firms are often used. This will give you an idea of the intensity of the company's needs and what legal specialty areas might be of the greatest value to the business.

You'll also want to network with friends and professional contacts to try to find "the inside scoop" on the position. If the job has been open for some time, for instance, this may enhance your bargaining power.

Gathering as much information as possible will help you determine how much leverage you have to negotiate a better offer. Optimally, you should conduct this research before an offer has been made, since you may be asked as early as your first interview to state your desired salary range. This information will serve as the basis for future compensation discussions.

### Consider More than Money

Once you have assembled the requisite information, don't be afraid to aim high when negotiating your salary. Be realistic, however, and bear in mind that companies sometimes have a specific salary range for in-house legal counsel. If flexibility in this area appears to be limited - but you are still interested in the position - consider other factors which may be negotiable. Vacation time, flexible work hours, telecommuting, company expense accounts and signing bonuses are options to explore. Additionally, many companies offer performance-based bonuses and stock options that can provide the additional compensation you may be seeking.

Sandra, a property attorney, benefited from considering alternative forms of compensation when negotiating an offer with a nonprofit environmental organization. She suspected that the environmental group would pay somewhat less than her previous employer but was surprised when the offer was substantially lower than her prior salary. Although the organization very much wanted to hire Sandra, the funding for the position had already been budgeted and could not be changed. Since Sandra was extremely interested in working for the organization, she asked if telecommuting would be an option, and it was. By working at home several days a week, she could save the money she otherwise would pay in childcare for her infant. Sandra also negotiated an extra month of vacation time. Because of her perseverance, Sandra found a compensation package satisfying to both her and her employer.

Here are some other negotiation alternatives:

- \* A lower starting salary with an agreed-upon raise in six months
- \* A guaranteed year-end bonus
- \* Reimbursed relocation expenses

Flexibility is essential to successful negotiation. Throughout the process, bear in mind that both you and the prospective employer are working toward a shared goal - finding a way for you to join their team. Determine what items within a salary and benefits package are vital to your job satisfaction versus those that aren't, and be willing to compromise on the less significant issues. Even if there seems to be a wide gap between what you're seeking and what the employer is offering, your negotiation position. Your ability to professionally discuss a salary offer will make a significant impression in the mind

and what they are offering, keep negotiations positive. Your ability to professionally finesse a fair offer will make a significant impression in the mind of your employer.

#### The Final Decision

If you are unable to negotiate a reasonable offer, remain positive and upbeat in your communications with the company. Politely decline, explaining that while you've given their offer careful consideration, it doesn't meet your current needs.

If, however, your negotiation was successful and you have accepted the position, ask for a letter of agreement that details the specifics of the offer, including salary and any negotiated perks.

Salary negotiation does not have to be a laborious or daunting process. Armed with ample research as well as a flexible and positive attitude, you can secure a mutually satisfying offer.

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#### Create a Plan for Your Success

People don't plan to fail; they simply fail to plan

Just as an entrepreneur needs a business plan to turn dreams into reality, attorneys should create a career plan to turn their hard work into professional success. A career plan is a document, or blueprint, designed to determine where you are professionally, where you want to be in the future and how you intend to get there.

A career plan can be a valuable tool, whether you're an experienced in-house attorney or in the early years of your career in law. It clarifies your goals, provides you with a clearly defined path on how to achieve them and helps you stay focused.

Indeed, creating a sound career plan takes time, but it can be less intimidating when you follow a few simple steps:

- \* Establish your goals. Goals give your career a destination with tangible rewards for your hard work. They can also keep you motivated. Goals can be anything you want them to be, such as attaining a general counsel post, joining the law department of a Fortune 100 company, launching your own practice or landing another corporate management position where your legal knowledge will be highly valued.
- \* Create time horizons for each of your goals. Establish short-term goals, such as monthly and yearly, as well as long-term objectives - those with three-, five- and 10-year time frames. Periodically, evaluate your progress in working towards them to help ensure you stay on track.
- \* Make an honest appraisal of your skills and strengths. Everyone has job skills that set them apart from others. Identify those that distinguish you among your peers. Are you a superior manager of a legal support staff? Do you feel you're more adept than others at using technology to enhance your research efforts? How are your communication skills? Can you produce succinct, well-organized reports for senior management? Are you effective in working with outside counsel? You might consider seeking input from your colleagues to answer these and other questions.
- \* Conduct an honest assessment of your weaknesses. By doing this immediately after you list your skills and strengths, you'll feel much more empowered in knowing which areas to develop. Make a checklist of those areas you would most like to address, and identify concrete solutions. Explore specific ways to improve upon your weaknesses. Again, ask trusted friends and colleagues for their opinions. If appropriate, speak with your general counsel and supervisor, as well. Don't feel awkward about seeking their advice: All successful professionals, from chief executive officers on down, take this step at some point in order to attain higher levels in their careers.
- \* Assess your personality. Evaluate what you like and dislike most about the legal profession, and your role as an attorney. Do you enjoy managing and mentoring? Do you prefer independent research or working with others? This step is critical because it will help you avoid making decisions solely for other reasons, such as money or status. You may even discover characteristics about yourself that you didn't even know existed. For example, you may find working as a project attorney is more desirable than climbing the traditional corporate ladder.
- \* Make a list of your network contacts or "external assets." These refer to contacts described earlier, who can help you during a job search or when you will need to update your skills. They can include attorneys, other legal professionals, organizations such as ACCA and bar associations, and friends and acquaintances. Even after you feel secure with the progress of your career plan, keep adding names to your list of external assets. In the highly competitive legal profession, you can never have too many valued contacts.
- \* Keep your pulse on the market. Today, attorneys with certain types of skills may be in demand, but over time new trends will emerge which will result in new requirements. Five years ago, not many people were aware of the Internet and its global implications. Those who were discovered opportunities long before others even knew they existed, as any Internet-savvy legal professional could tell you. To keep your pulse on the market and to become more in tune with prospective opportunities in the profession, read legal trade publications regularly, visit the library periodically and utilize legal resources on the Web.
- \* Tailor a plan of action to help you work towards your goals. Make a list of smaller goals that will help you move in the direction of your larger ones



- \* Tailor a plan of action to help you work towards your goals. Make a list of smaller goals that will help you move in the direction of your larger ones. Don't hesitate to ask others for their help. You will be surprised about how many people are willing to serve as an advisor, mentor or coach if you'd only ask. Again, if appropriate, share your action plan with supervisors or your general counsel and ask them for their advice on how you can achieve your goals.
- \* Don't neglect your "work-life" balance. Working hard is imperative to achieving long-term success, but it can lead to career burnout if you have no other interests. Schedule "down time" with friends and family members regularly. Take up hobbies and get involved in physical activities. Learn to recognize when you need to put work aside and go home ® without neglecting the responsibilities of your job.
- \* Consider doing pro bono work. Get involved in charitable work that incorporates some aspects of law that initially attracted you to the profession. This may add balance to your career and make you feel more satisfied both personally and professionally. It will also be an effective way to network with other legal professionals.
- \* Put your plan into action. After devoting the time and energy to create a sound career plan, you'll gain a great deal of satisfaction implementing it. To help ensure you stay on track in fulfilling your career plan, always have it accessible. Keep it in a book on your desk or on your computer, and refer to it regularly. You might consider expanding your skills further through consulting assignments that can broaden your exposure and enhance your strengths. Specialized staffing and consulting firms can play a significant role in helping you market yourself.

#### A Final Word

- \* Don't think twice about creating a career plan. Many professionals fail to create a career plan because they are afraid it will take too much time. But that's a misconception. You can create a sound career plan in a couple of hours once you have the framework and have done an adequate amount of brainstorming.
- \* Avoid striving to create a "perfect" plan. Some professionals will take an inordinate amount of time to form a career strategy because they want to make sure it's "perfect." But perfection is an unlikely goal. A career plan is a fluid document, not a one-time event. You'll likely make modifications to it as time goes on. In fact, count on it. You may find that certain goals are unrealistic within your predetermined time horizons, or that you possess certain skills and strengths that you didn't even know you had.
- \* Get started as soon as possible. Delaying the start of your career plan is similar to filing an important motion long after it was due. The sooner you launch your career plan, the sooner you will be on your way to working towards your true career goals.

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#### Navigating A Career Crossroads

One of the most difficult challenges you may ever face as an attorney is your arrival at a professional plateau. Following years of hard work, you may suddenly find yourself at a crossroads, unclear of the direction your career is taking.

Take the example of Don, an attorney with ten years' experience as in-house counsel for a telecommunications company. Don was brought into his current position as a major merger was underway. Following the merger, he was involved in many demanding situations, including securing patents for new technology and ensuring legal compliance with evolving state and federal regulations.

These experiences have helped Don develop a keen aptitude for managing multiple projects under stressful conditions. But at this point, Don rarely feels the energy and drive he used to get from high-pressure situations. Following a decade of rapid expansion, the company's growth has slowed, and much of his work is becoming increasingly routine. Lately he finds himself feeling unhappy and unengaged, and he wonders if it's time for a change.

As another example, consider the case of Emily, who three years ago joined on as full-time legal counsel to a start-up software development company. As the firm's only in-house attorney, she enjoyed the challenge and autonomy the position offered, as well as the camaraderie of working with a small group of people. Six months ago, however, the firm was purchased by a large corporation. While this was good news for the staff in terms of immediate stock gains, the legal department has since expanded to 15 people, and the intimate environment of the company that first attracted her is no longer there.

Increasingly, Emily feels dissatisfied with her job. Her projects have become less diverse, since each attorney has been given a specific area of specialization, and she misses the independence and sense of entrepreneurship that she enjoyed in her previous role.

Though Don and Emily are in different environments, they share a similar situation: Each has reached a crossroads. Both view their professional lives as unfulfilling. Both are frequently frustrated and bored, with no clear picture of the future. While neither is yet suffering from "burnout," they may not be far from it.

Situations such as these aren't unusual. Many attorneys reach a point in which their careers appear stagnant or lacking in development. Here are some guidelines for best handling this puzzling situation.

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### Assess Why You Took the Job

Making intelligent decisions about your career requires an understanding of your attitudes, objectives and long-term goals. As tempting as it is to simply blame the job for your feelings of discontent, you must remember that there once was a time when you chose to work for this particular organization.

Assess what attracted you to your current work as an in-house counsel. Consider many factors, including growth potential, job security and compensation. Revisiting your original objectives will provide an understanding of the ambitions and expectations you originally brought to the position. This will help you define which events and circumstances subsequently dampened your initial enthusiasm and, perhaps, allow you to determine what you can do to become more motivated in your job.

### Review Your Accomplishments

Look back on the time you've spent with your current organization. Revisit projects and cases which gave you a strong sense of satisfaction. This can cover a wide range of topics, from handling the company's labor negotiations to litigating a civil suit to securing a patent for a new engineering concept.

It's important to prioritize which factors contributed to your personal sense of achievement. Was it the intellectual challenge? The interaction with others? The opportunity to work on a high-stakes project? Answering these questions will help you better assess the factors that drive you - and, in turn, determine how you might more frequently perform those activities which provide you with satisfaction in your work.

This is also a good time to review your preferred working style and see if you've been able to operate that way in your organization. You might thrive on marshaling the talents of others. Or you may enjoy approaching projects best under deadline pressure, during which you focus on developing a precise plan of action. Or your preference could be to adopt a more methodical approach, with a view toward the long term. Each of these styles is effective. What's important is to identify which one you personally like best and whether you've been able to use it in your current position.

### What Are You Missing?

Taking a close look at your career requires honesty. Though it's easy to track your significant accomplishments, it's also important to review areas that might need improvement.

Because in-house attorneys interact with a wide range of people in their organizations, they must have exceptional interpersonal skills. Are your project management abilities as strong as they could be? Do you communicate effectively with company executives? Are there any particular departments with which you have trouble interacting? Are you effectively conveying what projects you would like to work on to the appropriate parties? Assess whether these or other areas have room for improvements that could help renew interest in your career.

### Become Professionally Involved

Understanding your work history and skills is only part of the picture. You must also determine how you perceive yourself as a legal professional beyond the day-to-day details of your position. What kind of role are you playing in your legal community?

Participation in legal trade and local business organizations provides a valuable means for building your expertise. Whether you become a member of one or more groups, serve as a guest speaker or instructor at a local college or work on a case pro bono, employing your legal talents beyond the office is an excellent way to improve your morale while becoming more involved in your community. You may also establish valuable contacts in the process.

### Think Forward

A candid assessment of what is missing in your professional life may be all you need to start changing your negative thoughts and begin the move toward a greater sense of challenge, adventure and engagement. By reviewing your career from many vantage points, you'll gain a broader sense of what you've achieved, what factors have contributed to your success and what areas of your work as an attorney provide the most satisfaction. You'll also uncover what skills you might want to improve.

It is said that if you don't know where you're going, any road will lead you there. In the course of this self-evaluation, you may come to see that what seems to be a crossroads is in fact an ideal opportunity to assess what's occurred in the past, understand where you are now and strategically take charge of the future.

Think not only about tangible goals, but also about bigger dreams. Now is the time to envision projects and cases you would like to work on as well as the types of organizations you would like to work for - not just today, but one, two, five and even 10 years ahead. Ambitious planning will provide you with the information necessary to approach your career wisely. And if you do determine that it's time for a change, taking stock of your career will help you establish criteria for a new position and focus on the steps necessary to obtain it.

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## How Mentoring Can Help Your Career

In today's fast-paced law offices, new employees are called upon to produce results with little or no learning curve. Yet many candidates, even new attorneys with your company, may require orientation and training, demanding time which attorneys and legal management often cannot afford to spend. As an experienced in-house counsel who is familiar with your firm and its corporate culture, you could provide an ideal solution by making yourself available to mentor incoming staff members.

Serving as a mentor can greatly benefit your career as well as your employer and co-workers. You will be acknowledged by new attorneys and paralegals who will appreciate your efforts to assist them in getting up to speed on office policies and procedures. They also will rely on your insights into the nuances of working with attorneys and the general counsel with your company.

In addition, management will value your skill in training and supervising others. Receiving recognition for your mentoring efforts can be intellectually and emotionally satisfying, and in some instances may even be financially rewarding should your firm consider these added responsibilities in determining bonuses and raises.

At first, you might feel hesitant about taking on such a role. It's perfectly natural to believe that you're hardly qualified to be an "expert" or a "supervisor." But the truth is that you do have significant legal experience and valuable knowledge about your company and the legal department. The ability to share it with others is an excellent way to increase your office's productivity.

As challenging as this may seem, keep in mind that a good mentor is less of a supervisor and more of a counselor. Here are a few guidelines for offering the best possible wisdom:

### Extend the Offer

Your first step should be to talk with your management or your general counsel. Explain that you're interested in serving as a mentor.

Mentoring takes on many forms in the workplace. Some organizations have formal programs, stipulating that you work closely with an attorney to determine mentoring assignments, what topics should be covered, how to best impart this knowledge and how long an employee should be mentored. In other instances, the process is more informal, wherein you spend time as appropriate with a staff member who could benefit from your knowledge. And there are also many companies that combine the two, simultaneously defining specific responsibilities for mentors and encouraging a fluid approach when needed.

### Spread Your Wealth of Expertise

An effective mentor is a valuable resource for a wide range of ideas and information. A new attorney, for example, might be quite proficient at conducting legal research, but may require your guidance on how to report findings to management. You might also be called on to offer insights in such areas as preparing exhibits for trial and communicating effectively with outside counsel.

A good mentor also knows when to defer to a more knowledgeable source. For example, suppose you have specialized knowledge in case research but you do not have extensive experience in preparing contracts for product licensing. It's best on these occasions to refer the individual you are mentoring to another source who has the expertise to provide proper instruction.

### Be a Good Listener

Most importantly, a mentor takes time to listen. New employees, whether they are first-year attorneys or experienced in-house counsel, face many challenges and will appreciate having you available as a sounding board for their concerns, questions and suggestions.

Listening requires commitment and a positive attitude. For starters, always maintain an open door policy to let people know they can come to you virtually anytime. Your years of experience may lead you to, at least initially, respond negatively to a new or different idea, or discount a co-worker's anxieties. But again, remember that a mentor plays a critical role in building morale, and a good way to do this is to listen carefully to the concerns and suggestions of others. In the process, you might find a new way to view a particular topic and subsequently develop innovative solutions.

For example, suppose your legal department has employed a graphic design agency to create its presentations. A young paralegal joins the company and suggests to you, as his mentor, that the department purchase a new computer graphics program to handle these tasks. You may be skeptical, having previously found many of these programs inadequate for the firm's particular needs, yet you still listen to the new hire fully explain how such a program might work. You may find that by developing and eventually implementing this idea, you and the paralegal can save your legal department considerable time and money.

### Be a Motivator

Everyone seeks recognition for their contributions. A good mentor actively celebrates the achievements of others. In selected instances, you'll want to put your compliments in writing and communicate this enthusiasm and appreciation to the general counsel and company management. On a more casual basis, good mentors are consistently upbeat, enthusiastic and always looking for chances to vocally praise others.

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As these guidelines show, mentoring is much more of an art than a science. As you continue mentoring others, you'll find yourself learning a great deal through trial and error. Some people value a mentor who offers specific suggestions, while others prefer a mentor who acts more like a partner and counselor than a director. Over time, though, you will find that committing to serve as a mentor is a way to build a collegial, supportive environment while helping your legal department develop a knowledgeable and efficient staff. In the process, you will bolster your career growth by becoming a recognized leader in your office.

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#### Additional Career Management Resources

##### Discovering Careers and Jobs -- CD-ROM

Gale Research, Inc.

835 Penobscot Building

Detroit, MI 48226

800-877-4253

[www.galegroup.com/index.html](http://www.galegroup.com/index.html)

Provides access to requirements and outlook for 250 careers and 1,200 job titles. Includes information about salary and licensing issues. Also gives contact information for more than 30,000 companies.

##### Occupational Outlook Handbook (Book or CD-ROM)

Bureau of Labor Statistics

Publications Sales Center

P.O. Box 2145

Chicago, IL 60690

312-353-1880

<http://stats.bls.gov/ocohome.htm>

Offers detailed descriptions of 250 occupations that account for six out of seven jobs in the economy. Each listing is divided into sections covering every aspect of the job, including the nature of the work itself, working conditions, employment opportunities, and basic qualities that employers generally look for in candidates. The information is, by necessity, somewhat general and not always 100 percent up-to-date, but no publication covers the American workplace more comprehensively or authoritatively. An online database version Career Profiles Database is available on America Online.

##### Dun and Bradstreet's Employment Opportunity Directory

The Career Guide

Dun & Bradstreet

3 Sylvan Way

Parsippany, NJ 07054

800-526-0651

[www.dnb.com](http://www.dnb.com)

A comprehensive job search tool providing accurate, up-to-date-coverage on prospective employers and career opportunities in an easily understood format. Provides information on approximately 5,000 companies located throughout the U.S.

#### Directory of Executive Recruiters

Kennedy Information

Kennedy Place

Route 12 South

Fitzwilliam, NH 03447

800-531-1026 or 603-585-6544

[www.kennedyinfo.com/js/der.html](http://www.kennedyinfo.com/js/der.html)

Lists more than 3,800 search firms, giving names, addresses, areas of specialty and salary ranges normally covered. Available in bookstores.

#### Executive Employment Guide

American Management Association

1601 Broadway

New York, NY 10019

212-586-8100

[www.amanet.org](http://www.amanet.org)

Extensive listing of search firms, career counselors and employment agencies. Listing information includes job specialties.

#### Gale Directory of Publications & Broadcast Media

Gale Research, Inc.

835 Penobscot Building

Detroit, MI 48226

800-877-4253

[www.galegroup.com/index.html](http://www.galegroup.com/index.html)

A good source for local newspapers and trade publications.

#### Hoover's Handbook of American Business

Hoover's Inc.

1033 La Posada Drive, #250

Austin, TX 78752

512-374-4500

[www.hoovers.com](http://www.hoovers.com)

This two-volume set includes profiles of 750 companies containing operations overviews, company strategies, histories, key financial data, lists of products, executives' names, headquarters addresses, phone numbers and fax numbers. It also has more than 60 pages of business lists, including the Fortune 500 list of the largest U.S. corporations and the Forbes 500 list of the largest U.S. private companies.

#### Non Profits and Education Job Finder

Daniel Lauber

Planning/Communications

7215 Oak Avenue

7215 Oak Avenue

River Forest, IL 60305

888-366-5200

<http://jobfindersonline.com/howtoget.htm>

More than 2,222 listings of job lead sources for nonprofit positions. Listings are organized according to fields (education, environment, health care, and so on) and also by state.

Professional's Job Finder

Daniel Lauber, Planning/Communications

7215 Oak Avenue

River Forest, IL 60305

888-366-5200

<http://jobfindersonline.com/howtoget.htm>

More than 3,000 listings of job lead sources, including directories, classified sources, salary surveys, and trade publications. The information is organized according to fields, industries and states.

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## The Affiliates

Located in major markets throughout the United States and Canada, The Affiliates is a premier provider of experienced temporary and full-time professionals for law offices and corporate legal departments. The firm places highly qualified candidates in a wide range of specialized positions, including project attorney, paralegal, administrator, litigation support specialist, legal secretary and executive director. Through its expertise, diligence and exceptional attention to meeting the needs of its clients, The Affiliates has earned a reputation within the legal community for outstanding service and professionalism.

Because many of The Affiliates' account executives have experience working both in legal departments as well as law firms, they bring with them an "insider's knowledge" of clients' needs, enabling them to serve as advisors on hiring and personnel management issues. On the candidate side, The Affiliates maintains an active referral network along with an extensive, detailed database of legal professionals currently available, offering access to a large talent pool for fulfilling the staffing needs of legal practices and departments.

The Affiliates routinely assists legal departments in identifying the appropriate personnel resources required for each particular circumstance, and provides specialists whose specific training and experience make them ideal for the assignment, whether it is temporary or full-time.

The Affiliates also serves as a reliable information source on management issues and workplace trends within the legal community. The company regularly conducts national surveys of attorneys and other legal professionals about topics ranging from the fastest growing fields of law to the expanding responsibilities of paralegals and administrators. In addition, The Affiliates has produced a number of informative pamphlets for management within law firms and corporate legal departments, complimentary copies of which may be requested by contacting The Affiliates.

For additional information, please visit The Affiliates' Web site at [www.affiliates.com](http://www.affiliates.com). To reach the office of The Affiliates nearest you, call (800) 870-8367.

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