

Navigating Your Job Search through the Holidays

Question: It seems that many decision makers are already away for the holidays. Are firms really interviewing right now? Should I suspend my search and hold off until the New Year?

Answer: I know that it's tempting to take the holidays off from your job search, but in reality this can be a significant missed opportunity. Law firm hiring is extremely active between Thanksgiving and the New Year. I, personally, have numerous attorneys that are actively interviewing right now across a variety of practice areas.

There are several reasons to continue your job search through the holidays:

If a firm has a serious need to fill, many decision makers want to fill the slot before they take off for the holiday season. Often, if the group has a real need, the attorneys in that practice are being overworked, especially with year-end closings. Just before Thanksgiving, I had an attorney that received an offer with the stipulation that she start before the end of the year because the group was so overwhelmed with work. This, of course, was negotiated, but partners at least want to rest assured that they will have someone in place for the New Year. No one wants hiring decisions to linger over their heads through celebrations.

Firms have new hiring budgets. Many firms have their fiscal year end in November, December, and January. This means they have ample room in the budget to hire new associates and can often be more generous with signing bonuses, relocation fees, etc.

There is less competition. New year, new job search. Many attorneys fall into this trap. They prefer to "get through the holidays" without the added pressures of interviewing. This means that there are less resumes on the recruitment coordinator's desk and in the partner's inbox, which makes your resume stand out.

Best of both worlds. You still get your year-end bonus. At this point in the year, firms will not expect you to start prior to January 1, nor would that speed be feasible. They would prefer to have an offer accepted by the New Year, allowing you to give notice after the first of the year and receive your bonus with your current firm.

Yes, it may be more difficult to get everyone together in the office for the interview, but you would be surprised how securing the new hire before the New Year becomes a priority for firms. Try not to go out of town for too long. Make yourself available to interview during the holiday season. Maybe, this way, you'll get a real fresh start in the New Year. *New Year, New Job.*

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