

# Legal Veterans Advise Newbies How Not to Blow Their Job Search

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- See **Top Ten Interview Questions** for more information

Law firm partners: George Bostick, *Sutherland Asbill & Brennan*; Christopher Davies, *Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr*; Katherine Fallow, *Jenner & Block*; Julia Kazaks, *Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom*; Julie McEvoy, *Jones Day*; Elissa Preheim, *Arnold & Porter*.

## 1. What do you look for when hiring summer and first-year associates?

"The most important factor is whether this is someone whose academic or work performance thus far indicates an ability to juggle multiple tasks and to achieve deadline-driven success." -- Julie McEvoy

"Excellent grades and strong writing skills and strong interpersonal skills and a demonstrated interest in being in D.C. and in the firm's practice areas." -- Julia Kazaks

"The first thing we look for is a self-starter. ... Prizes don't go to wallflowers."  
--Christopher Davies

"Three key factors are: (1) students with strong academic records who are critical thinkers; (2) people who take ownership of projects and (3) those who work well on teams." -- Elissa Preheim

"Experience that will convince me the person can work as part of a team." -- George Bostick

"The question is if this is someone I would feel comfortable bringing to a client meeting as a summer or first-year associate. ... That's a pretty important benchmark." -- Julie McEvoy

## 2. What do you seek to avoid? Any big mistakes on resumes or in interviews?

"Resumes that are unattractive or have typos or are just strange will attract attorney discussion." -- Christopher Davies

"Anything you list on your resume you should be prepared to talk about." -- Katherine Fallow

"Law firms are full of Luddites, and we are amazed at what students will post about themselves on the Internet." -- Julie McEvoy

"Too Much Information Syndrome. ... I recall thinking, 'Oh my God, I can't believe someone said that.'" -- Christopher Davies

"It's important to us that people actually care about the law and not just focus on the \$165,000 or whatever it is today." -- George Bostick

"The main mistake is seeming bored or uninterested, either with things you have done or in the firm. ... Find a way to show enthusiasm." -- Katherine Fallow

"About the worst thing a candidate can do is to ignore the junior person [in an interview]. ... One time, I had to step out to handle a client phone call, and I told them to go ahead and start. I later heard that while I was out, the guy hadn't engaged on much of anything short of shopping at Costco." -- George Bostick

"Don't waste time on cover letters and thank-you notes. They can create more problems than they solve." -- Julie McEvoy

3. What could law students do most easily to improve their chances of being hired?

"Pay attention to comments made by interviewers in the early part of the day and incorporate them into interviews in the later part of day. ... It's important to show that you picked up on what others have said. Interviewers talk to each other afterward." -- Julia Kazaks

"Invest in a comfortable or well-fitting suit. A flashy or ill-fitting suit can highlight a student's lack of comfort or familiarity with a professional workplace." -- Julie McEvoy

"Schedule morning interviews with firms that you are most interested in. Both candidates and interviewers are more tired in the afternoon." -- Christopher Davies

"Come to an interview prepared with a range of questions. ... There's nothing more terrifying than reaching the point in the interview when the interviewer asks if the student has any questions and the student says, 'No, I think I've asked them all already.' The interview comes to a screeching halt." -- Julie McEvoy

"Educate yourself about the firm or place where you'll be interviewing. Educate yourself to see if it's a good fit." -- Katherine Fallow

"It does matter if someone [at the firm] who's well regarded will vouch for you. ... It generally helps people who are on the margin." -- Christopher Davies

- **See [Interviewing Tips](#) for more information**

**Learn why attorneys usually fail law firm phone-screening interviews in this article:  
Why Most Attorneys Fail Telephone-Screening Interviews**