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Do NOT Pass Up an Interview Just Because the Firm Is Not Footing the Bill

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We all know this is a very tough [job market for attorneys](#). There have been countless law firm layoffs and fewer openings for lateral hires at the firms. As such, the competition has gotten out of control. In fact, it is not unusual for a firm to interview upwards of ten attorneys for a single position. Gone are the days in which associates are confident that they "have it in the bag" if they are invited back to a firm for a second round of interviews. Instead, I am seeing attorneys invited back for third rounds, asked for a writing sample and references, only to be turned down in favor of another candidate.

While the competition is tough, the *only* way to obtain a new job is to actually get before prospective employers in an interview setting. And in this market, it may require you to shell out a few dollars to do so. For example, a few weeks ago I submitted a fantastic candidate, currently practicing in New York, to a firm here in Chicago. The firm responded by letting me know that they liked the candidate's resume and asking if I knew whether this candidate had any plans to be in Chicago in the next month. If so, the firm would like to interview her, but the firm was not willing to pay for the candidate to fly into Chicago for the interview.

Knowing that my candidate had no immediate plans to come to Chicago, I called her and told her to book the first flight out here to meet with the firm. While she was excited at the prospect of doing so, she pushed back at my suggestion because, as she put it "my [current] firm pays me next to nothing, and I cannot afford to pay for my own flight."

While I felt badly for this candidate, I spent the next few minutes explaining to her that in this market, firms have plenty of candidates to choose from, so if she didn't fly in for the interview, the firm was going to find other candidates who would. Thankfully, it clicked with my candidate, and \$350 later, she was on her way to Chicago and ready to meet with the firm.

Thankfully, the interview went very well. In fact, the partner with whom she met liked her so much that he invited her back on the spot for another round of interviews while she was in town. This time, the firm would pay for her to change her return flight so that she could stay in town for the interview.



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This full round of interview took place yesterday, and while we have not yet heard whether she is going to be given an offer from the firm, the point of the story is that she would never have found herself in this position if she hadn't taken the chance and come out, on her own dime, for the interview.