

## *Don't Panic Over Law Firm Silence*

I am currently working with a candidate who specializes in a very unusual area of law and who is quite unhappy in her current position. She came to me looking for a new position in the same of the law but at a firm with a better culture. Finding such a job was not easy, especially in this market, where the need for associates in general is not particularly high.

After about 6 weeks of working together, I was able to obtain an interview for this candidate at one of Chicago's premier law firms with a strong practice that matched her experience. She had a fantastic interview, loved everyone she met with and walked out of the interview believing that she had just found the perfect firm for her.

- See [Top Ten Interview Questions](#) for more information

As I always do, I warned this candidate that firms tend to move much slower in this economy, and that it may take a few weeks to hear back as to whether the firm was going to extend her an offer. She appeared to be fine with that, although she admitted that she was anxious about it.

A week passed, during which I had followed up with the firm to see where they were in the process. I learned very little in terms of details, other than the firm was still considering my candidate. I reported this to candidate, who was becoming increasingly anxious about the job. She kept asking me what was taking so long and suggesting that if the group really liked her, they would move faster.

Another week passed with no updates from the firm, despite my efforts to follow up. With the passage of this time, my candidate began to rethink the firm and her opinion of the people she met. "Maybe they weren't as nice as I thought." "Maybe they don't do quite the type of work I want to do." "Maybe they aren't as great of a firm as I originally thought."

By the time I heard back from the firm three weeks later, my candidate had convinced herself that she hated the firm, did not want to work there and was not going to accept an offer if given to her. As she put it, the fact that the firm took so long to get back to her was a "clear indication" that they didn't really like her and she therefore did not want to join them. Of course when she learned from the firm that they were, in fact, extending her an offer, she didn't know what to feel. After all, she has initially loved the firm but spent the last month talking herself into hating it. Now what?

Talk about mentally sabotaging a possible job opportunity!

Remember that firms spend significant time collecting and reviewing resumes, eliminating those they aren't interested in, and narrowing it down to a reasonable number of candidates to interview, they have to schedule and actually interview the candidates. Finding a single day that 5 or 6 busy attorneys can interview a single candidate can take weeks. Scheduling multiple candidates to interview can be next to impossible. Furthermore, even after the firm interviews the candidates, each individual lawyer has to complete and return an evaluation form, and we all know that attorneys are notoriously terrible at doing these types of administrative things. Once the evaluations are collected, they must be reviewed, often by a committee of attorneys, and then a decision made. All of this can easily take weeks, especially when you factor in that attorneys would much prefer to service their clients than deal with recruiting and hiring.

So, remember this: Firm silence does not mean that the firm is not interested in you. Don't torture yourself or talk yourself out of what could be a fantastic job opportunity simply because the firm's attorneys do not move as fast as you would like.

After much discussion, my candidate took the job with the firm that sent a "clear indication" that it was not interested in her.... And you know what, she is back to loving the firm and the people with whom she works.

**Learn why attorneys usually fail law firm phone-screening interviews in this article:**  
[\*\*Why Most Attorneys Fail Telephone-Screening Interviews\*\*](#)