

How Do I Create Conversation from Research during Interviews?

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It is elementary that once you have your interview schedule, you should find out as much as possible about the attorneys with whom you will be meeting. At a minimum, you should review their biographies on their firm website. You can supplement this basic research by doing an internet search in order to find out more information (e.g. articles, speaking engagements, recent newsworthy cases or transactions, philanthropic activities, community involvement, etc.) The internet is a wonderful tool so use it! Assuming that you have completed this non-negotiable and extremely important preparation for your interview, how do you use all your hard work in a seamless and natural way in order to succeed on your interview?

I wish I had an easy answer, but unfortunately I do not, as every interview is a unique odyssey; and you may or may not be able to effortlessly (or at least seemingly effortlessly) interject your interviewer's latest triumph into the conversation. Often candidates are too eager to demonstrate they that have done their research; and while I am sympathetic to their desire to "show" what they know, an awkward soliloquy about your interviewer's background is not conducive to a lively exchange of ideas (i.e. a good interview!) It is far better to play it cool and ask general questions your interviewer's practice. (E.g. "It is my understanding that you focus primarily on white collar defense, and I am wondering about the types of cases you are handling presently?) As your interviewer begins to regale you with war stories about his practice, you might find an opportunity to reference the fact that you are aware of a particular case because you - like him - work in the white collar defense realm and share his interests and passions.

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

If you are bound and determined to work in the fact that you have done your research (and are not willing to hope that the opportunity arises organically), then please know that there are ways to do it that are on the opposite end of the spectrum from the awkward soliloquy! For example, if you regularly write articles or serve on panels and you know that your interviewer does too, then you could reference this common ground in a way that is leading somewhere and is not just a recitation of your research. For example, you could say "I noticed when I was preparing for our meeting that you often serve on panels discussing recent developments in real estate. I often serve on panels too, and I am wondering - as a new lawyer - how serving on panels has enhanced your career?" What a great question! You will not only get some valuable career advice for free, but you will have demonstrated that you did your research and have something in common with your interviewer. It is critical that any direct references to your interviewer's background are phrased in a way that will engender an animated response from your interviewer, not create an uncomfortable silence!

Learn why attorneys usually fail law firm phone-screening interviews in this article:

[Why Most Attorneys Fail Telephone-Screening Interviews](#)

However, please remember that regardless of whether you are able to casually reference your interviewer's most recent quote in the Wall Street Journal, knowing as much as possible about your interviewer will inform every aspect of your interaction in a positive way. Never forget that knowledge is power and the more you know about your interviewer, the more likely it is that you will succeed on your interview!

See [Interviewing Tips](#) for more information