

## *How “Out” Should I Be On My Resume?*

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Generally speaking, it is a lot easier and safer to be out in law firms these days--and that has positive implications for your search. Many of the top AmLaw firms as well as several mid-sized regional firms have made impressive strides in their LGBT Diversity initiatives and there is increased emphasis on law firms hiring diverse candidates. Consequently, the way is paved in several firms across the country for openly gay and lesbian lawyers to be out and proud of who they are in the job search process. Given this, the short answer to your question is, be honest up front. After all, why would you want to work for a firm that doesn't accept you for who you are?

That said, I do understand that things can get complicated in this area: there can multiple variables to consider when making this decision, especially if you are working in a smaller market in a more rural or conservative community. In addition to considering the progressiveness of the city and community in which you live and work, you may also have to think about your own level of comfort in divulging something very personal about yourself; the duration and success of your job search thus far; and what you are willing to sacrifice, perhaps only in the short term, to get what you want. For some people, sexuality is a very private matter that they do not wish to be discussed or divulged either in the hiring process or with their colleagues. For others, it is imperative to be boldly out up front--and not succumb to outdated beliefs and attitudes, even to secure employment. Ultimately, it's a personal decision that should be evaluated on a case by case basis; you are in the best position to determine what you most need and what is most right for you in your job search.

It has been a while since I've heard of a law firm blatantly discriminating against an LGBT candidate in the hiring process because of their sexual orientation. However, I have seen firms reject candidates who have resumes that are heavily loaded with public interest externships and internships. In this instance, the employer is concerned about the candidate not having any experience (or genuine interest) in a law firm. Not surprisingly, many diverse candidates summer at public interest organizations that are dedicated to promoting LGBT rights. While law firms may admire a candidate's commitment to the cause, they are often concerned that the applicant lacks the necessary hands-on, practical experience of working in a firm--and they question that the candidate is really serious about firm life given their heavy public interest past. In this instance, I do recommend trimming out some of the public interest internship experience, particularly for positions that are very short in duration.