

## *Your Resume Needs to Show a Trajectory*

I recently had a conversation with a law student who was about to graduate from a [top law school](#) but could not find a job, or even get an interview. She said to me, "I'm willing to do anything, so why can't I generate any interest from law firms?" My answer to her is that sometimes, being too flexible can actually work against you.

Too often, the resumes I see from junior attorneys, clerks, and law students scream, "I'm indecisive, and I don't know what I want to be when I grow up." Law firms don't generally want someone who doesn't have an inclination toward a particular area of law. An attorney without a clear idea of what areas interest her may end up liking the practice area that she happens to be hired into, but maybe she won't, and she will want to switch after a year or two. Such an attorney is essentially asking the firm to let her figure out what kind of law she likes, on their dime. Why would a firm hire such a person? Firms want someone who already knows what she wants, and will remain in the practice area that she is being hired for.

**See [6 Things Attorneys and Law Students Need to Remove from Their Resumes ASAP If They Want to Get Jobs with the Most Prestigious Law Firms](#) for more information.**

There is nothing wrong with trying different things while you are in law school; to a certain degree it is expected. Even in the early stages of law practice, it can be possible, if the firm permits, to dip a toe in different practice areas. In fact, certain firms make it their policy to "float" entry-level associates through different practice groups for a certain time period. You can find out who these firms are from your career services office at school. Keep in mind, however, that firms who will allow associates to experiment with different practice areas are not the norm.

By the time you are in your third year of law school and looking for your first job, your resume needs to show a direction. You may have several directions in mind; there is absolutely nothing wrong with that. It only means that the resume you send for a particular position needs to speak to that position. You may certainly have different resumes for different types of positions. For example, if you are targeting corporate positions, and you interned at an in-house legal department, that resume should highlight those skills. The in-house job description should be several lines, while your stint at the Public Defender's office should have little or no description. For the litigation positions you are targeting, you should do the opposite.

If you still feel that your resume does not clearly highlight a particular direction, see if you can convince a professor of a topic you want to target to let you work as a research assistant. This is usually only a 10-15 hour per week commitment, and the professor sometimes ends up being both a legal and a career mentor. Professors often know the players in the legal community as well, and some still practice law (adjunct professors can be especially helpful in making connections).

Many, many junior lawyers don't really know what they want to do. However, don't let your resume reflect this. [Have different resumes that highlight different skill sets and interests](#), so that you always show some kind of trajectory on your resume.