

What NOT To Do After You Receive an Offer at a Law Firm

The interview process with firms has become quite lengthy. Now more than ever, firms are scrutinizing candidates and are much more concerned with finding the right person than filling an immediate hiring need. After the submission of materials, the screen interview, the multiple follow up interviews, the preliminary reference check, you are finally fortunate enough to receive an offer from your dream firm. Yay! You accept, quit your present job, and go out to celebrate, right? Not if you want to keep your offer.

Offers are conditional. For most firms, they are contingent on a clearing a conflicts and background check. These are essential steps that must be completed before the deal is done, even if you have already negotiated a starting date. The conflicts check can take longer than you anticipate (I've recently seen this take over a month). Be patient. You've come this far. You do not want to jeopardize your offer by doing the following things:

QUIT YOUR JOB

I know you want to get out there and start the next chapter in your professional life. **Remember, your offer is contingent on a conflicts and background check.** Should the offer fall through for any reason, you do not want to jeopardize your current position. It is easier to find a job with a job and proves much more difficult if you find yourself unemployed.

It is essential that you keep a good relationship with your present employer because your current firm could play a big part in assuring your offer stands. After you accept a position:

1) A firm may use contacts from your present employer as a final reference. These individuals could speak to your character, the quality of your work, as well as confirm your employment dates. If you quit your current position before conflicts/background has gone through, your dream firm will find out and will induce that you have not been completely honest with them. They may question if you were telling the truth about the circumstances regarding your departure or may become suspect about your judgment. **Yes, it is proper for you to give notice prior to the firm calling your current employer as a reference. However, you should be in conversation with the human resources department of your potential new firm and your recruiter to determine exactly when is safe to give notice.**

2) You might need help from your present employer to clear conflicts. Should a conflict arise with your potential new firm, you may need to get a waiver signed by a client. A good word and assurance from a partner that handles this client can go a long way to get the client to cooperate and grant you the signed waiver necessary to join your new firm.

POST YOUR CELEBRATIONS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Even though you have an offer and a start date, until everything is completely finalized, assume that human resources is stalking you on social media. In fact, a good examination of your Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google +, etc. are all part of your background check. In a recent survey by CareerBuilder that questioned 2,184 hiring managers, 43% reported that they found information on social media that led them to not hire a desired candidate. This information includes questionable photos; over use of alcohol or use of drugs; bad-mouthing previous employers (the new firm will assume that you will in turn bad mouth them via social media); poor communication skills or grammatical errors; discriminatory comments related to race, gender, or religion; that a candidate lied about his/her qualifications. If you are representing to the firm that you are currently employed, your Facebook should not host what-look-like-vacation photos that are uploaded in the middle of the work week for several weeks in a row.

It's fine to have a Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, but keep it professional. Even better if you can post some work related activities or business development efforts. If something negative comes up on your background check and you have no idea what it could be, chances are that it has to do with social media. Yes, this can result in a withdrawal of your offer.

DISAPPEAR FROM YOUR RECRUITER

I received and accepted my offer, why do I need my recruiter now?

Many times, at the offer stage, firms begin to deal with candidates directly. This is especially true when the conflicts check is underway and candidates might have to answer questions from the firm's conflict personnel regarding specific matters. You may not think so, but it is important to keep your recruiter abreast of everything that is happening so that we can operate appropriately.

Remember, the recruiter's job is to act as your agent. If the conflicts process is taking longer than expected or if a potential conflict arises and has to be handled, your recruiter will continue to follow up with the firm so that everything is resolved in a timely manner. We can harass to the point of annoyance..... and you keep your hands clean.

I've been a recruiter long enough to know that many things can happen in between an offer's acceptance and your first day of work. Good recruiters keep working for you after you receive an offer, after you accept the offer, after you've given notice, and until your first day of work.

It's my objective to do everything in my power to help attorneys receive offers from the firms they desire....and then once they receive those offers....to keep them.