



Chapter 5 Resource

What Legal Employers Want

Feedback from those who make hiring decisions at small, medium, and large law firms, general counsels offices, and the Federal Government indicate that the attributes they desire in a new hire, and look for in potential candidates, include:

- Good Judgment
- Strong Communications Skills
- Maturity

The more prepared you are for the interview, the better able you'll be to respond to the interviewer's questions with thoughtful and well-articulated answers that demonstrate those attributes.

How Do You Prepare?

First, expect the interviewer to ask you why you chose law as a career and why you chose the particular area in which to practice. People who exhibit good judgment don't make decisions on a whim. So, be crystal clear about the reasons for your choices. Interviewers are looking for you to coherently articulate your thought process of how you went about analyzing your choices and the relevant considerations you took into account before making your decision.

Also, expect the interviewer to ask you what you know about the organization, why you are interested in it, and why you think you can make a contribution there. To thoughtfully, meaningfully, and effectively communicate your answers to those questions, you must perform sufficient due diligence regarding the organization. And that will take more than a casual scan of its website. You should read whatever you can find about the perspective employer and, if possible, talk with current and/or past employees. You should have a strong understanding of the nature of the organization's work and the clients they serve. Most importantly, you must be able to clearly connect your interests, experiences, and goals to the goals of the organization and its clients. Not being able to articulate a logical connection between the two not only casts a shadow on your communications skills, but also calls into question your judgment to interview with that firm.

Having a clear understanding of your own personal standards, interests, abilities, and goals, and being able to thoughtfully and coherently articulate those elements are signs of maturity (and a further demonstration of the communication skills) that interviewers look for. In addition to questions about your school and work experiences, they may ask you questions in a variety of areas, including politics and current events. They are not so much interested in your conclusions, but rather in your analysis of the issue and thought process that led to your conclusions. It would be smart to keep up with and give some thought to current events, especially political, legislative, and judicial issues.

Prepare, Prepare, Prepare.

There is no substitute for preparation. Providing well-thought-out answers to an interviewer's questions is the most effective means of demonstrating your judgment, communication skills, and maturity. Don't skimp on your preparation.