



Get off the Bench and Into the Game: Strategic Resume Skills

RESUME BUILDING GUIDELINES FOR IN-HOUSE AND LAW FIRMS

1. Formatting

- a. “Your resume is like a triangle”
 - i. Most important details should be placed at the narrowest part of the triangle. The further information is down a page, the less people will care.
- b. Format should be appealing to the eye
 - i. Underline, indent and use bullets to make your resume stand out.
- c. 1-page maximum
 - i. Clearly and concisely convey your message in one page; unless you are senior.
- d. List experience in reverse chronological order
 - i. Your current employer should be listed first as it is the job that will likely provide the most transferable skills to the position you are currently applying for.
- e. Tip specific to law firms
 - i. Education before experience - Law firms are more likely to request grades, class rank and GPA until you are a 6th-year associate. However, do not be discouraged if your academic history is less than stellar; grades do not equate to ‘rainmaking’ ability.
- f. Tip specific to in-house legal departments
 - i. Experience before education - Employers are interested in your experience in the field. Grades, class rank and GPA should be removed.

2. Content

- a. List all notable recognitions you have received
 - i. Scholarships and awards should be listed to highlight achievements in the field.
- b. Thesis or published legal writing(s)
 - i. When going in-house, do not list writing(s) unless it is relevant to the position.
 - ii. When going to a firm, scholarly articles can be weighed heavily in your favor, especially if it is relevant to the position or industry.
- c. Discuss experiences that show you work well with people



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- i. It is important to show you have managed, supervised or collaborated with different groups of people to demonstrate your ability to be a team player.
 - d. Demonstrate business knowledge
 - i. Research terms frequently used in the industry and apply them to your resume.
 - e. List involvement with highly regarded organizations
 - i. Any outreach or collaboration with organizations in the employer's field will boost relevance. Be sure to note any role you've played in assisting the organization.
 - ii. Sitting on a board shows that you collaborate well with others and that you are good at managing a project. Also, be sure to note any board certifications you possess.
 - f. Word choices matter
 - i. Avoid using words that suggest weakness (i.e. advised, supported, etc.) and words that do not convey community (i.e. "I" or "me").
 - g. Involvement with controversial figures and companies should not be listed
 - i. Avoid taking the risk of not being interviewed by listing controversial experience, activities, or involvement.
 - h. Interests/Hobbies
 - i. When going in-house, hobbies are overlooked unless they are extraordinary.
 - ii. When applying for a firm, hobbies can make you more unique compared to other applicants (i.e. fluent in multiple languages, attend CrossFit, etc.).
 - i. Tip for law firm interviewees
 - i. List any trial experience
 - 1. Firms will be interested in knowing whether you currently possess skills they can use or will need to develop those skills. List trial experience and note whether you have any substantial deposition experience.
- 3. Submitting applications
 - a. Unless the full application is sent by UPS, always send in one clearly labeled electronic PDF (e.g. Michelle Banks – Chief Compliance Officer & Corporate Secretary position).



Get off the Bench and Into the Game: Strategic Interview Skills

CONSTRUCTIVE INTERVIEW TIPS

1. Executive Presence

- a. Be mindful of your appearance and dress professionally.
 - i. First impressions can make or break your chances of joining the firm or corporation.
- b. Always have your gravitas on display
 - i. Convey confidence, decisiveness, integrity, emotional intelligence, reputation, and ability to be forward thinking.
- c. Master your communication skills
 - i. Flex your communication style depending on the interviewer and demonstrate your versatility. (Is the interviewer more formal and solely interested in discussing your experience? Is the interviewer relaxed and also interested what you've done over the weekend?)
- d. Research company or firm
 - i. Familiarize yourself with the firm or company's services and ask targeted questions to demonstrate your knowledge.
- e. Answer questions appropriately
 - i. Use active listening skills to restate questions and properly answer them.
- f. Answer negative questions positively
 - i. When employers ask questions that reflect negative experiences; spin them around. (Example: Q: Your academic record is very inconsistent. Why should we hire you? A: Although I have not always excelled in academics, I have been part of many civic associations that demonstrate my ability to commit to a task, communicate effectively, and get the job done.)
- g. Rehearse answers to complex questions
 - i. Be sure to rehearse answers to questions such as:
 1. What is your biggest weakness?;
 2. Where do you see yourself in three to five years?;



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3. How are you creative?; and,
 4. Why should we hire you over the next candidate with a perfect record?
2. Specific Tips In-House Interviewees
 - a. Demonstrate your cost-conscious
 - i. You will be part of a team that spends money. Discuss any opportunities you've had to manage a budget or save money for an organization.
 - b. Never say in-house departments work less
 - i. If you are making a shift from a law firm to a corporate legal department, state that you want to be more collaborative, creative or you want to finally use your M.B.A. (if applicable).
 3. Specific Tips for Law Firm Interviewees
 - a. Subpar grades are not the end of your career
 - i. Detail other facets of your experience that should overshadow your academic record by discussing cases you've tried (and won) or any depositions you've taken.
 - b. Confidence is key
 - i. The strength of your character in an interview will demonstrate how you will speak with clients and colleagues.
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