



5 Biggest Attorney Job Search Mistakes

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Attorneys and law students are one of the most ill-informed groups of people there are when it comes to conducting a job search. We hate to criticize the group in society who comprises our clients; however, this is true. There are so many misconceptions out there about the best way to go about a job search in the legal profession that it is often very difficult for us at Legal Authority to believe.

Conducting an improper job search can have all sorts of negative repercussions that stretch way beyond making a simple mistake. If you conduct an ineffective job search

- you may not find a position at all,
- you may end up in a position you are not happy with,
- you may be forced to relocate geographically to a place you do not want to live just to work,
- you may be forced to work in a practice area you do not enjoy,
- you may find yourself in a firm with no potential for advancement,
- you may make much less money that you should be making.

The following are 5 of the top job search mistakes most attorneys make when looking for a position. Please note that this list is by no means comprehensive. Legal Authority was developed in response to most of these mistakes, and for our clients, all but eliminates them.

1. **Most Legal Job Seekers Do Not Give Themselves Enough Options When Searching for a**

Position-In most cities, there are so many law firms and corporations with legal departments that it would boggle your mind—there are thousands. These include companies and law firms of all sizes. Continuously, these organizations are growing, while others are shrinking. Some have no idea how to recruit attorneys, and some are just waiting for the right person to come along.

At all points in time, most of these employers are actively interviewing people—or would be if the right person came along. Think about it this way, if you are happily single and were going around telling everyone you loved being single, and all of a sudden George Clooney or Claudia Schiffer wrote you a letter and announced they were interested in having a relationship with you, what would you do? Furthermore, since attractiveness is all relative, we are all attracted to different kinds of people—and everyone's buttons can be pushed by the right person. So, to be clear, most legal hiring organizations are always hiring. This bears repeating: If the right person comes along, the legal organization will interview them, and if it makes sense, will hire them.

The fact that the right employer for you might simply be the one that posted a job on a job site is insane. The same thing goes for newspaper ads and so forth. Some people hang around waiting for the best job to appear on one of these sorts of sources for years.



If there are 1,000 law firms in a given county, the chances are something like the following at any point in time:

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- 20-30 of these law firms are looking and may have posted their jobs on one of numerous job boards or newspapers. If you do not go to a job consolidation/aggregation website, you will probably have to visit 25+ different places to find these jobs.
- 25-100 of these firms are interviewing people informally (sent through other associates in firm, for example) but are not advertising for people.
- 100-300 of these firms have unarticulated needs that they would hire for if the right person came along. Nevertheless, because the firm is busy, no one has gotten around to posting an ad or doing any recruiting for this position.
- Approximately 5-20 of these firms may have told legal recruiters about various positions and is using them to assist them in hiring someone. They may have been looking for someone for months.
- Probably 100-200 of these firms have one or more attorneys they would like to “phase out” if they hired someone better in the future. The problem is these firms are not actively recruiting; however, if the right candidate came along, they might hire.

Depending upon how you look at these statistics, somewhere around 25% to 50% of law firms and hiring organizations are hiring at one time—but we would estimate the percentage is actually much higher. However, due to the fact that you could only find out about 2-5% of these positions if you really did your homework by perusing classified ads, and so forth, there is a problem for most job seekers.

The result of contacting all of the employers whose profiles are such that you might work there in a given city is ridiculously profound. When you do this, you can make contact with the 25-50% of employers who are actually interested in interviewing people at any one time. None of this is to say you will get this sort of response rate (you will not); however, we believe that this is likely to be as much as 10 times more effective than other job search methods on their own. We risk credibility making such a profound statement; nevertheless, this has proven the case for thousands and thousands of Legal Authority clients. Many of our clients tried other job search methods for years before trying us and were absolutely blown away by the results. We receive testimonials to this effect nearly every day.

There is nothing all that scientific to what Legal Authority is doing, and there is also nothing we are doing that is a “breakthrough” of sorts. We are merely bringing our resources to bear to insure our clients conduct a thorough job search. Being thorough makes all the difference in the world, and fortunately for our clients, most legal job seekers are not thorough.

Other job search methods simply pale in comparison to Legal Authority because the market out there is huge. In addition, the number of people employing a service like Legal Authority



is miniscule compared to the number of positions available in the market. Even the National Association of Law Placement (NALP) has confirmed that our methods work. According to NALP:

The most common way attorneys get jobs is through unsolicited contact with prospective employers.

This is where Legal Authority comes in. We give attorneys and law students access to this other large percentage of the market. This market is huge. The majority of clients of Legal Authority who use our service are amazed at the results they get when they tap into this hidden market—and you may be too. Let Legal Authority get you in touch with this market today—your life may never be the same.

- 2. Most Legal Job Seekers Do Not Take the Time to Prepare Professional Application Materials for Mailing**—Many attorneys seeking a job (which could pay \$100,000 or more) may simply email a resume to an employer with a few short words that they want to be considered. This is hard to believe. You are not applying for a normal job when you approach an organization for an attorney position; you are applying to be an attorney.

When an employer is evaluating your application, they are judging how attentive you are to details and how well you write. They are examining the formatting of your resume, how you use language, and how many words you use to say one thing or another. Notwithstanding, many attorneys simply approach this in a lackadaisical manner. Incredible. Attorneys and law students are ostensibly going to be hired because of their ability to craft words and pay excruciating attention to small details.

When someone emails an application to an employer they are a pixel on the employer's computer screen. Everyone emails their resumes these days. Emailing resumes is a very easy way to get your resume deleted from an inbox and also very impersonal. In contrast, people love to get mail. How excited are you to open your mail each day? Mail that is customized for a particular person, personally signed, contains a stamp, and is all carefully assembled makes a far, far different impression than an email.

At Legal Authority we have prepared thousands and thousands of attorney and law student resumes. The people who work for us are professionals and were all trained by high-level attorneys who did things like went to top 10 law schools, were on law review, worked for federal judges and practiced at major American law firms. The result is that people will approach your resume and cover letter with a high degree of precision.

There is more as well. The people creating your resume and cover letter also know what to say and *how to portray you*. This makes a huge difference in your marketability as an attorney—no matter what level you are. The difference with this is huge and is like night and day for our applicants.



- 3. Most Legal Job Seekers Do Not Conduct Precision Marketing Based on Understanding and Experience-**When you sign up for Legal Authority, you will be speaking with an attorney (we call them Employment Advocates) about your job search. The Employment Advocate you are speaking with has experience looking for a position themselves and has also been trained on how to assist attorneys in marketing themselves. The one-hour phone conversation you have with your Employment Advocate will assist you more than you may ever know.

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The reason this conversation will be so productive is that most attorneys do not have any idea about how to strategically market themselves. For example, many attorneys come out of school with a desire to practice law in a certain practice area and often this practice area is something that is simply not in demand at the time. Many recent examples come to mind such as Entertainment Law in Los Angeles and Sports Law in Miami. If you are putting all your eggs in a one basket like this, you may run into trouble. Similarly, in a bad economy, you may be seeking a position doing corporate law in a major city when there is no demand. Often times, people with no scientific background have a strong interest in pursuing intellectual property law in cities and areas where they are not likely to have a lot of luck.

Based on all of the people we speak with and our understanding of what types of positions you are most likely to get, we can help you apply for “dream jobs” and also “slam dunks” and position your set of application materials in such a way that you are positioning yourself and your candidacy in the perfect way. This is not an easy thing to do and something one can only do with a lot of experience. In fact, we believe we are better at this than anyone.

From a business standpoint, we depend on positive word of mouth and need you to get multiple interviews and the very best position possible when you work with us. This is exceptionally important to us not only from an ethical point of view, but because well over 60% of our clients are people who are using us again after having successfully used us in the past. People come back to us because what we do works, and we depend on you coming back—and we predict you will if you are ever looking for another position again after using Legal Authority.

- 4. Most Legal Job Seekers Are Afraid of Making Themselves Vulnerable-**When you are applying for positions, you are making yourself vulnerable. You are vulnerable to rejection. Many attorneys who have been practicing are especially afraid of being rejected. They believe they cannot apply to an organization that is going to reject them. Accordingly, they only try working with a few organizations by maybe approaching a few people they know. They may settle for the best they can get (most attorneys and law students do), or they may simply stay employed in a position they do not enjoy. This process and cycle repeats itself all over the United States each day. What a waste.

When you let go of fear and make yourself vulnerable, great things begin to happen. There are so many potential places you can work it is nothing short of amazing. Yes, no matter who you are some of these organizations are going to reject you. No doubt about that. By making yourself vulnerable, though, you are going to open yourself up to a whole world of opportunity that never



before was accessible. You may find the perfect environment and people you are comfortable with, you may find a higher paying position, you may find a position in your dream practice area, you may find a position that gives you the opportunity to run a company, you may find a position that allows you to travel and see the world, or you may move from an associate to a partner position.

The fact is that so much is possible with Legal Authority. Every single day we get testimonials from clients whose lives we have changed. Every single day, tons of attorneys have life-changing experiences through our site that we know we'll never hear about. Great things happen to so many of our clients.

Many attorneys and others are nervous about the cost of our service. Legal Authority was started by a law professor as a nonprofit organization and actually used to be free (you had to bring your own paper) and was a cooperative where students and attorneys built the database, while the professor edited their resumes and cover letters. As this organization and word spread, we had to charge money to continue to provide this service. No institution can survive on passion and good intentions alone.

Our service does cost money. It is a remarkable bargain for the breadth of the service we do, however. You work directly with an attorney to identify your marketing strategy; your resume and cover letter are rewritten; we do exhaustive research (we have a huge staff maintaining our database) to maintain and update our database daily (unlike many "mom and pop" companies in our business, we stand behind our data and are a division of a 200+ employee company with a massive research staff that operates only in this field); we print your materials and make sure they are perfectly formatted and printed error free; and, then we ship the materials to you. We then proceed to follow up to insure you are pleased with our service. We also guarantee our service as well. ****SIGN UP NOW!**

- 5. Most Legal Job Seekers Do Not Realize that Every Private Legal Employer is a Business-**Every single law firm, corporation and other private organization with a legal department is (with very, very few exceptions) in business to make money. This statement is a lot more complex than it sounds, so we will explore it in further detail.

Law firms are businesses. Most law firms are in business to sell billable hours. Other law firms may be contingency-fee based and make money as a percentage of the verdict or settlement from a given lawsuit, for example.

What most law students and attorneys do not understand when they are searching for a position is that these legal employers are in a position where they want to marshal their assets and troops as efficiently and as effectively as possible to make money. This is their main objective, and whomever the law firm is, their objective is almost always going to be the same.



When you are applying to a given employer, the employer is not necessarily looking at your resume (or any other resume) and thinking to themselves what you may think.

What most attorneys think employers are thinking when they see a given resume is:

“Wow, this guy went to Stanford Law School and so did I. I should bring him in and hire him if he seems ok. We would be blessed to have a graduate of Stanford. He must be really smart!”

What the employers are likely really thinking when they see a given resume is:

“This is interesting. This guy went to Stanford Law School. One of our largest clients is CISCO, and I know a ton of people from their legal department who also went to law school there. I would really like to get more business from CISCO, and I bet having a fellow Stanford grad would help me connect more with CISCO. I am going to bring this guy in. Maybe he knows some of those people over at CISCO. If he does, and we can get more business from CISCO, that would really improve my bonus at the end of the year. My wife is also pushing me to enroll our kids in private school once they get to high school. How am I ever going to afford that?”

What most attorneys think employers are thinking when they see a given resume is:

“It would be great to hire another person because this guy’s qualifications look so interesting to me.”

What the employers are likely really thinking when they see a given resume is:

“This guy has done a lot of litigation work. We are currently leaving a ton of money on the table in our litigation department because we are not working each case as much as we should be, or could be. I know several of our clients would happily pay for more litigation work. We have a lot of work right now and not enough people to do it. I cannot believe my luck in stumbling upon this resume. I am going to call this guy in right now. We need to staff up around here.

What most attorneys think employers are thinking when they see a given resume is:

“This person’s cover letter nearly moved me to tears. I better bring them in and speak with them. I want to meet this person because they seem really interesting.”

What the employers are likely really thinking when they see a given resume is:

“I cannot believe we do not have a good writer around here. If we could get a better and more persuasive writer, we could probably win a lot more motions. We are losing clients to better litigation shops because we do not have enough good writers. I think we should bring this person in and speak with them immediately. They could also do some writing on our firm brochure and that would certainly help us in getting some new clients as well. I bet this person likes to write too and would probably bill a lot of hours writing. This could be a good situation for us.”

What most attorneys think employers are thinking when they see a given resume is:

“It would be great to have someone who played college football working here.”



What employers are likely really thinking when they see a given resume is:

"The people in this firm are such introverts and so bad with meeting new clients. I bet this guy could really impress our clients and is probably very likeable. He could also help us with recruiting attorneys. I think I am going to bring this guy in and speak with him.

What most attorneys think employers are thinking when they see a given resume is:

"This guy has been unemployed for six months! No way would I ever hire someone who has been unemployed for six months!"

What employers are likely really thinking when they see a given resume is:

"I wonder why this guy has been unemployed for so long. You know, I am getting sick and tired of these associates around here who think they are so special and have a sense of entitlement. They are also not working hard enough and a lot of them are also hurting morale. I would like to get someone in here who knows the value of a job and will work hard to prove they are worthy of working here. I bet rewarding a person like that could help change the entire culture around here. I also bet that this guy would work really hard. I am going to bring him in and talk with him.

What most attorneys think employers are thinking when they see a given resume is:

"I know Sally's parents are good people. I better bring in Sally and interview her. She is likely to be a nice person too."

What employers are likely really thinking when they see a given resume is:

"Sally's father is so influential. I know he would be very appreciative if we brought Sally in for interviews. Why, the Motorola Account he controls alone must be worth \$20,000,000 in legal billings per year. If I could get just 10% of that. Where is Sally's phone number? I am going to call her and tell her how impressed I was with her application right now!"

What most attorneys think employers are thinking when they see a given resume is:

"We do not do any patent prosecution here, but Jim seems like a nice fellow. I'll bring him in."

What employers are likely really thinking when they see a given resume is:

"Man, patent prosecution has been a goldmine for so many firms lately. I know at least two of my own clients that we could do patent prosecution work for. We referred them to the Jones & Waldo firm and now Jones & Waldo is doing all their corporate work too. I never thought about it, but it would be really, really smart of us to hire a patent prosecutor. I'm going to bring this guy in.

When you look over this logic that various employers follow in response to an application, a couple of things should become immediately clear.

First, all of the decisions to bring these people in were made for strictly business reasons. The person reviewing the resume had a thought about how they could increase the money their law firm was earning by bringing in one of these candidates.



Secondly, all of these decisions to bring in a given person were made on the basis of the fact that the person at issue was simply there at the right time—none of the employers above likely even had openings. In addition, all of these analyses were made on the basis of unique aspects of the given person's background that not one of them probably thought would be such an important determinant when applying for the position.

A discussion about how applying for a position is so akin to running a business could continue for some time. The more you can communicate to a potential employer the fact that hiring you will assist them with the all-important task of making money, the better chance you have of getting hired. In the making money calculus, it is all about what sort of result you can get the potential employer in this particular realm.

We know that a lot of people may find this particular statement objectionable. However, you need to understand that law firms and most legal hiring organizations do not sit behind ivory towers supported by alumni endowments, tax dollars, and tuition payments. They are in the real world and need to produce immediate results to pay their rents, pay salaries, and more. This is all important for legal hiring organizations, and they know that if they do not do this, they will go out of business.

When people are examining your interest in working for them, it is all about them and has nothing to do with you for them. Can you make them money? Will your addition be something that can assist them in increasing their revenues?

When you are marketing yourself to legal employers, it is important to never forget you are a commodity. People who experience failure in job searches a lot of the time are approaching the job search with the attitude that it is about them and them only. No! Your job search is about how much you can financially enrich a given employer and how much you can contribute. This fact is so important to understand, and if you understand it—realize you are selling a commodity every time you interview, you will be far, far more effective in any job search.

Legal Authority is the most effective method to search for a job because it is based on the premise that you have something to sell which needs a buyer. It is also based on the premise that you never know why someone is going to purchase something. Why did you choose the color you did for your last car? Why did you choose the pair of shoes you are wearing? How many other pairs and styles of shoes were out there competing for your money when you purchased the shoes that you did? Every purchase is unique, and by putting yourself in front of buyers, you stand a far better chance of being purchased. How can someone purchase your services if they do not even know you are there?

Finally, in terms of the shoe example, what if you were the only pair of shoes that was for sale and you appeared to the buyer at the moment she needed new shoes. Perhaps, the buyer did not even realize she needed new shoes, but your appearance made her aware of this. Do you think you would have a good chance of being purchased? What if the buyer put an announcement out



that they needed a new pair of shoes and received 2,000 shoe samples. What would your odds of being purchased be then?

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Legal Authority helps our clients stand out. There are numerous reasons why Legal Authority works—some better than others. The most important reason it works, though, is related to its ability to help our clients (often unbeknownst to them) make business proposals to legal employers of ways they can make more money by utilizing their services.

Legal Authority is absolutely the best way to get a legal job. We invite you to try Legal Authority. We know you are going to like what we do here, and we hope that you too find more satisfaction and a better life as others also have through our company. ****SIGN UP NOW!**