



Biggest Job Search Mistakes

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The biggest mistakes that attorneys and law students make in their job searches can be summed up by looking at the letters that make up one word: ASSUME.

Assume. Don't assume anything. Whether this is your first job or your twentieth, always be aware that the job market has surprises in store for you. Nobody—whether it is you, a colleague, a mentor, or a professor—knows everything. Only people trained in legal employment can offer accurate advice, and even then, you'll find that there are thousands of opinions out there. For every "fact" that someone tells you or that you think you know, there is someone who can show you the truth. If you keep an open mind in your job search, you will be able to avoid the biggest mistake out there.

Settle. Never settle for something until you've made sure that there is nothing better out there. Too many attorneys take the first opportunities that come around, only to realize a month later that they had made mistakes. You don't need to be desperate. By performing a job search that is comprehensive, you will always know that not only have you found a job, but you've found the best job that is out there for you. One offer is good, but getting four or five offers is great!

Snooze. Once you've decided that you need to look for a job, don't snooze. Mount a complete, aggressive job search that will be proactive. The worst job search is the occasional one, applying to the select job opening every few days. That type of perpetual job seeking is useless, depressing, and will rarely provide the best opportunity. By snoozing, you'll end up making bad assumptions, as well, giving yourself inaccurate advice about the state of the job market and your chances of finding a job. It's self-perpetuating, and before you know it, you're miserable at your current job again.

Underestimate. The job market is huge. Many people think that because there are only a few jobs being posted in their areas, there are only a few opportunities available. This is absolutely not true. Most major locations have hundreds, if not thousands, of legal employers. Since most jobs are never advertised, underestimating the job market by focusing on job postings will limit your possibilities a hundredfold. Most Legal Authority clients send out 500 or more letters, and they're only tapping into 5-10% of the job market in their given location!

Mismanage. Spend your time wisely. If you're currently employed, you have very little time to look for work, and you need to avoid mismanaging your time. If you're not employed, you need to find the best job out there (not just any job!) as soon as possible. If you can simultaneously mount an aggressive job search, network, draft the perfect resume and cover letter, and apply to any openings you see, you will find that success is much closer. Being able to rely on a service like Legal Authority to do the grunt work for you will allow you to spend your time wisely and find the best opportunities much quicker and more efficiently.



Expect. Don't expect things to happen for you. You have to make them happen. Even if you have great contacts and people have said that they would "pull some strings" at work, don't rely on that. If a recruiter says she has a great fit for you and just has to check with the firm, that's great news, but why would you want to wait and see? What if it doesn't work out? Then you're three weeks behind in your job search with nothing to show for it. The only person who has your job search as his/her top priority is you.

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If you don't assume, settle, snooze, underestimate, mismanage, or expect, you will find that your job search is much less painful. You'll be able to find more opportunities, get the best possibility for your experience, and avoid being trapped in that cycle of job-seeking and depression that happens to too many attorneys and law students.