

LOOKING FOR A NEW LEGAL JOB? HIGHLIGHT THESE 7 AREAS

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When you apply for legal jobs, you might think employers are evaluating you solely on how your skills and experience match up with the requirements of the position. In reality, however, hiring managers are looking at more than just your stellar skills or years in the legal field. They're also taking into account your workplace readiness, or how quickly and easily you'll settle into the job.

Sure, managers are willing to train new hires, and many do so all the time. But they'd rather make a [job offer](#) to someone who's ready to go from the first day. And there are certain abilities that are harder — some would say nearly impossible — to teach employees.

With that in mind, here's some legal career advice on seven areas you should spotlight when applying for a new job:

1. Innovative ideas

Law is a dynamic field, and firms want to hire job candidates who are up-to-date on [legal trends](#) — particularly any technology that allows them to serve their clients more effectively and efficiently. During job interviews, make sure to provide hiring managers with examples of your innovative contributions at your past and current firms

2. Commitment to customer service

In today's competitive legal environment, clients have plenty of choices, and good customer service is paramount to keeping clients satisfied. So when you're applying to legal jobs, emphasize your [soft skills](#) and detail what you do in your current position to put client needs first. For example, if you've implemented [client satisfaction surveys](#) that got results, tell the hiring manager about them during your interview.

3. Flexibility

Employers want to hire staff who are versatile and open-minded, and it's always smart to demonstrate your willingness to tackle whatever challenges come your way. For instance, if you've had legal jobs where you consistently went beyond the requirements of the position, (maybe you were a junior legal secretary who regularly drafted legal briefs), highlight that during interviews. Also, give employers examples of times you worked outside your department or specialty area as proof of your ability to easily switch gears.

4. Big-picture thinking

Partners and managers like to hire job candidates who think beyond the day-to-day duties and responsibilities of their own position and consider the effect of their work on the entire firm. When you're interviewing for legal jobs, demonstrate that you understand how your role would fit in to the organization's overall structure, and explain how you could contribute to the company's long-term success.

5. Positive attitude

It's not just a cliché. Hiring managers really are attracted to professionals who exude energy and a can-do attitude. So be friendly and enthusiastic — without going overboard — in your interactions with prospective employers, from the cover letter to the post-interview thank-you note.

6. Ambition and involvement

Firms look for motivated, driven job candidates who'll work hard in their legal jobs. Show potential employers that you're committed to the legal field by describing pro bono work you've done, detailing your [continuing legal education](#), and listing any legal associations you've joined, particularly if you have a leadership role.

7. Humility

There's nothing wrong with being proud of your career growth and accomplishments, but remember that achieving success is a team effort. So when you highlight your achievements, emphasize that your success owes much to the colleagues you worked with. That way, the hiring manager will know that you're a team player with strong collaboration skills.

Many of these “workplace readiness” traits are not easy to highlight in your cover letter and resume. So when you're asked to [interview for legal jobs](#), be prepared to demonstrate these skills and show managers you have what it takes to be successful in the legal workplace.

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