

## **What Potential Employers Say about....**

### **Application Materials**

#### **If you want to IMPRESS us:**

- Draft succinct cover letters tailored to the employer and the position to which you are applying that clearly lay out your fit for the position
- Submit a well-written resume that lays out your job history, skills, abilities and interests
- Provide transcripts and if your grades aren't top of the class, point out clear improvement or highlight strong grades in classes that relate to the area of law in which you are interested in working

#### **Please don't DISTRESS us with:**

- Long wandering cover letters with typos (wrong employer or misspelled name of employer or recruiting contact)
- Cover letters that express interest in a practice area that a private firm does not have
- Long wandering resumes with typos and unexplained gaps
- Electronically transmitted documents in Word instead of PDF format (track changes and extensive editing often appear unintentionally in Word documents or the formatting can be off)
- Incomplete transcripts and transcripts that are not accompanied by explanation if your school is not on a traditional 4.0 scale
- Submission of writing samples when they are not requested or needed for the application

#### **Build your skills:**

- Practice persuasive cover letter and resume writing tailored to the potential employer
- Proofread your materials, have another set of eyes proofread your materials, **and** submit them to your CSO for review
- Learn to research and differentiate between firms and other employers and learn how the hiring processes and requirements differ
- Discern hiring timeframes for different employers (i.e. small firms typically do not hire as early as large firms; government agencies have different hiring timeframes or hire on an "as-needed" basis)

## **What Potential Employers Say about....**

### **Professionalism in the Application Process**

#### **If you want to IMPRESS us:**

- Follow your application materials with substantive follow-up that references prior conversations, restates qualifications and reaffirms interest in the employer
- Respond in a timely and professional manner to requests for additional information, clarification, or other employer outreach and follow all applicable timing or employer deadlines
- Recognize that some employers do not have a professional recruiting staff and busy lawyers are trying to handle recruiting as a sideline- they may not have time to field calls or respond promptly to frequent outreach

#### **Please don't DISTRESS us by:**

- Circumventing the application process outlined by your school or the employer such as contacting someone other than the designated recruiting contact
- Blanketing applications to multiple lawyers in a firm or agency
- Submitting multiple applications in a short time period when not encouraged to reapply
- Overstaying your welcome in hospitality suites or at job fair tables
- Reneging an accepted offer - to us, "yes", means "yes", not "yes unless something better comes along"

#### **Build your skills:**

- Read about, ask questions, and learn proper job search etiquette
- Be persistent without being annoying or stalking employer contacts
- Hone your self-awareness and relationship-building skills
- Network whenever the opportunity exists
- Attend events with a purpose - plan who to meet, what to ask, how to make a positive impression. School events, job fairs and employer events do lead to opportunities

## **What Potential Employers Say about....**

### **Presenting a Professional Image**

#### **If you want to IMPRESS us:**

- Understand and dress at or above the stated dress code
- Always be well-groomed and well-dressed; don't emulate the clothing "risk-taker". If people are talking about what you are wearing, you are wearing the wrong thing!
- Dress appropriately for different office occasions (going to court, a summer evening event, or working on the weekend require different attire)
- Always be a good listener - maintain eye contact
- Offer a strong handshake when meeting or greeting someone
- Present a poised, confident, proactive, can-do attitude
- Exhibit the potential for strong business development, leadership, and management skills
- Always treat the professional staff with as much respect and interest as the attorneys

#### **Please don't DISTRESS us with:**

- Frumpy, soiled, tight, or revealing clothing
- Strong perfumes and scents
- Unusual or distracting body piercings and tattoos
- Unkempt hair and other bad hygiene
- A casual, disinterested, arrogant or rude attitude
- Inappropriate images or posts on the Internet
- Unprofessional conduct (such as excessive drinking or gossiping)

#### **Build your skills:**

- Learn the difference between business attire, business casual, and casual attire and how they are defined by your employer
- Become a skilled observer of office culture
- Develop your presentation and speaking skills through courses or extracurricular activities
- Learn about generational differences - there are four generations in the workplace now
- Use in-person communication and take advantage of "face time" whenever possible instead of relying on electronic communication

## **What Potential Employers Say about....**

### **Interviewing**

#### **If you want to IMPRESS us:**

- Inquire in advance about the potential employer's policies relating to interview travel costs and follow instructions (such as booking through a firm or agency's travel provider)
- Call as far ahead as possible to give notice and a true reason for a necessary cancellation; apologize for the inconvenience it created and express your appreciation if you are offered a chance to reschedule
- Turn in receipts promptly with specific instructions as to what other firms/employers should share in the costs, if applicable
- Do your homework in advance: look at the website, talk to others in the organization, find out the necessary information about the firm or organization and the interviewers you will meet
- Arrive at least 10 minutes earlier than the scheduled interview time
- Come prepared with copies of resumes, transcripts, list of references and writing samples; ask in advance what is required
- Be energetic, positive, confident, and eager, not shy or self-effacing
- Project confidence through body language
- Maintain good eye contact and present a firm, dry handshake
- Provide cohesive and clear answers to stand out from other students
- Be prepared to tackle a variety of interview questions and styles (e.g. role plays, behavioral interview questions)
- Acknowledge if you are unaware of an answer
- Listen to the questions carefully and answer the question posed clearly and concisely, ask for clarification of a question if you are unsure
- Maintain your composure (appropriate tone and pace) when asked tough questions or a multitude of questions
- Let your personality come through during the interview
- Send well-written, error-free thank you notes that reference specific aspects of your conversation with the interviewer

#### **Please don't DISTRESS us by:**

- Arriving late to the interview
- Cancelling without notice
- Sending generic thank you letters and emails with mistakes and typos

- Being overbearing, entitled, negative, arrogant, argumentative, disinterested, or aloof
- Speaking negatively of other organizations or lawyers
- Interrupting the interviewer
- Having cell phones or other electronic devices that "join" the conversation
- Showing your ignorance of the business of the organization (e.g. giving a prosecutor's pitch to a public defender office)
- Asking poorly researched or uninspired questions; or questions that are answered on the website
- Providing non-responsive rambling and/or canned, impersonal answers
- Exhibiting unfamiliarity with contents of your own resume
- Exaggerating your experience, misrepresenting your language fluency or true professional interest
- Using curse words, casual language or slang, or bad syntax
- Crying or exhibiting other highly emotional responses
- Inquiring prematurely about salary and benefits

### **Build your skills:**

- Learn about the types of interviews you may encounter (e.g. public interest and government interviews may be significantly different than firm interviews)
- Practice your skills through role plays, answering hypotheticals and oral presentations
- Take advantage of all CSO offerings (including interview workshops, mock interview programs, and video-taped practice interviews)
- Gain comfort through informational interviewing with alumni or other potential employers
- Become familiar with behavioral interviewing techniques
- Periodically review your resume, as an employer would, to anticipate questions and practice answers
- Practice summarizing your experience clearly and concisely
- Take the feedback you receive about your interviewing skills to heart; do not ignore what you may not like hearing

## **What Potential Employers Say about....**

### **Being Successful on the Job**

#### **If you want to IMPRESS us:**

- Keep regular, standard, office hours
- Treat everyone with respect and act professionally at all times
- Be on time or early for EVERY meeting, conference and/or social event
- Be flexible and work when the work is available (even if evenings or weekends)
- Draft emails and other communications with the same care as published work product
- Understand from Day 1 that you have both internal and external clients and provide excellent client service to both
- Be responsive to all requests and outreach
- Act as an ambassador of your employer everywhere (in your social networking presence, in the office, outside the office, with other lawyers)
- Use every opportunity (cocktail parties, kid's soccer game) to build your network and strengthen your brand
- Treat your employer's money with as much care as if it were your own

#### **Please don't DISTRESS us by:**

- Exhibiting bad e-mail etiquette: using a casual tone or writing style, replying to all recipients when not necessary, over-reliance on email
- Sharing too much information via your on-line presence (remember: you are an ambassador of yourself AND your employer!)
- Casual behavior with supervising or more senior attorneys
- Checking electronic devices during meetings or presentations
- Being hard to find during the day, keeping odd hours at work or, alternatively, focusing on face-time and hours instead of the substance and quality of the work
- Acting entitled - don't ask for exceptions to rules that apply to everyone else
- Submitting expenses that are lavish or outside of stated business reimbursement rules (if you aren't sure - ask BEFORE you spend)

#### **Build your skills:**

- Brand yourself as a model junior lawyer
- Study firm culture and adjust your behavior accordingly
- Learn to emulate the communication style of your supervisors
- Develop and practice strong internal and external client relationship skills
- Ask for feedback and learn from the constructive feedback received

## **What Potential Employers Say about....**

### **Producing Quality Work Product**

#### **If you want to IMPRESS us:**

- Ask questions when receiving an assignment and follow-up with an email summarizing what you plan to do
- Make judicious use of online research and seek out training to ensure you are making the most of the employer's online research contract
- Enter your time regularly and provide detailed time entries, if required
- Prioritize work assignments and ask for guidance, if necessary
- Take ownership over your assignments and show initiative
- Understand and follow employer document/case management procedures
- Communicate regularly and often as to the status of an assignment
- Own up to a mistake immediately and seek out the assigning lawyer, in person, to discuss the mistake
- Recognize when you are in over your head and seek assistance
- Ask the assigning lawyer her preferred form of communication and use it
- Seek to understand where your assignment fits within the broader context of the case - this will allow you to provide a richer answer
- At the end of one assignment, seek to assist the lawyer with other aspects of the cases and build on your experience

#### **Please don't DISTRESS us by:**

- Not doing what is asked in an assignment
- Responding to a client with an opinion before checking with the lead attorney
- Giving up too easily when searching for the answer
- Turning in sloppy work product riddled with typos
- Improperly formatting documents (disregarding employer's standards)
- Missing internal or external deadlines
- Working in a disorganized workspace
- Failing to follow your employer's document filing and management guidelines
- Responding negatively to constructive criticism and failing to incorporate it

#### **Build your skills:**

- Force yourself to listen carefully to all instructions and to read an email from beginning to end to ensure you digest all information
- Take pride in your work and always create a finished work product that could be sent outside the firm or agency
- Take advantage of all "prepare to practice" courses and events that are available in law school and training opportunities with your employer
- Hone your time management and organizational skills
- Learn about and use available internal and external resources for handling stress, distress, or other conditions that could impair your ability to work