



The Practical Guide To Finding Your Next Legal Job

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Introduction

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Becoming a lawyer can be a long and challenging path. Achieving the required education and qualifications takes years of dedication and late nights.

Except, maybe you're not enjoying your current job.

Huge pressure, long hours, 6 minute billable increments – all of this can take its toll and start to grind you down.

There are countless decisions you will make during your career, with no clear or correct answers. Is it time to change jobs, and if so, should you work at a smaller firm with great people and a broad role? Or perhaps one of the larger firms with better name recognition and career opportunities but a narrower role focus and longer hours?

And should you look for a new role, or hold out for a promotion where you are? Stay in Sydney, or pick up and move overseas for a few years? Would an inhouse role suit me better?

You have put so much time into building a successful legal career so it's important that you make a considered strategic decision on your next career move. Taking the time to properly plan your legal career will have a significant impact on your long-term career trajectory.

The good news is that in Australia the legal industry is thriving and there are significant opportunities for qualified lawyers to progress their career.



There's more demand now for experienced lawyers than there has ever been. All the areas where deals are being done and businesses are being active, that's where we're really busy. Capital cities are the busiest but there is also regional work available."

– **JASON ELIAS, ELIAS RECRUITMENT**
(As appearing in the SMH 23-May edition
'Job-hunting made easy')

In this ultimate guide to changing roles in your legal career, we work through making the decision to move, how to decide what is next, and then working step by step to getting your next dream job.



Is it time to change jobs?

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Before you take the leap, take a moment to ask yourself the following questions:

1. Am I being challenged in my current role?
2. Am I still learning?
3. Do I feel respected and appreciated?
4. Am I developing new skills that will enhance my value?
5. Can I see a future career path?
6. Do I get up each Monday excited going to work or not?

Looking at the reality of your current role and being objective about whether it's something that you need to change vs if it's a change in employer that is required is often the most important first step.

Only you know when it's time to move on. But chances are you've at least thought about what the next move might be.

There are some clear warning signs that it might be time to move on.

1. Staying doesn't make financial sense

It probably seems risky, but changing job can often mean an increase in income or other non-financial benefits. New employers may offer an incentive to move across, some new firms are now offering "70 cents in the dollar on billings" and cross-referral/client introduction fees (often 10% of collected fees). Consider the other benefits you may currently be missing out on ... better hours, working closer to home or flexibility like working from home one day a week.

You may find you even have time to take that holiday that never seems to come around.

2. You're risking guilt by association

No matter how many hours you put in, if you're not working for the right people, that is energy wasted. Some firms are known for excellence in one area and not others. Ask yourself: how positive is our firm's reputation in my practice area? Who are we being compared to? Are we being held back or even missing out on work because of the way the firm is perceived? Perhaps moving on is a better bet for your reputation.

3. Politics is a tricky game

Managing demanding clients is one thing. Managing internal conflict is another level of stress altogether. Sometimes firm management just won't be on your side.

Perhaps they are excluding you from managing bigger clients because of some perceived conflict. Did you back the wrong person at the last partner's meeting?

Politicking is part and parcel of law firm life, but if it is taking up too much headspace, it may be time to outgrow the petty game playing.

4. Your firm is choked by bureaucracy

Too much paperwork and too many meetings might eat into your practice. You would be better off developing business and nurturing client relationships rather than attending endless irrelevant meetings that go nowhere. Overcomplicated workplaces can be very difficult to change. So ask yourself, do you have time to wait around while these knots are being untangled? Or do you have better things to be doing?

5. There's been a change in direction

When you started your current role it may have been a perfect match. But things change. If your firm decides to take things in a new direction, your areas of focus may simply not fit anymore. Perhaps they have brought in an outsider above you or merged with a firm with an incompatible culture.

6. There's a values mismatch

This is tough because values underpin every decision, big and small. Even if your situation looks fantastic on paper, a fundamental mismatch in values or personalities will wear you down over time.

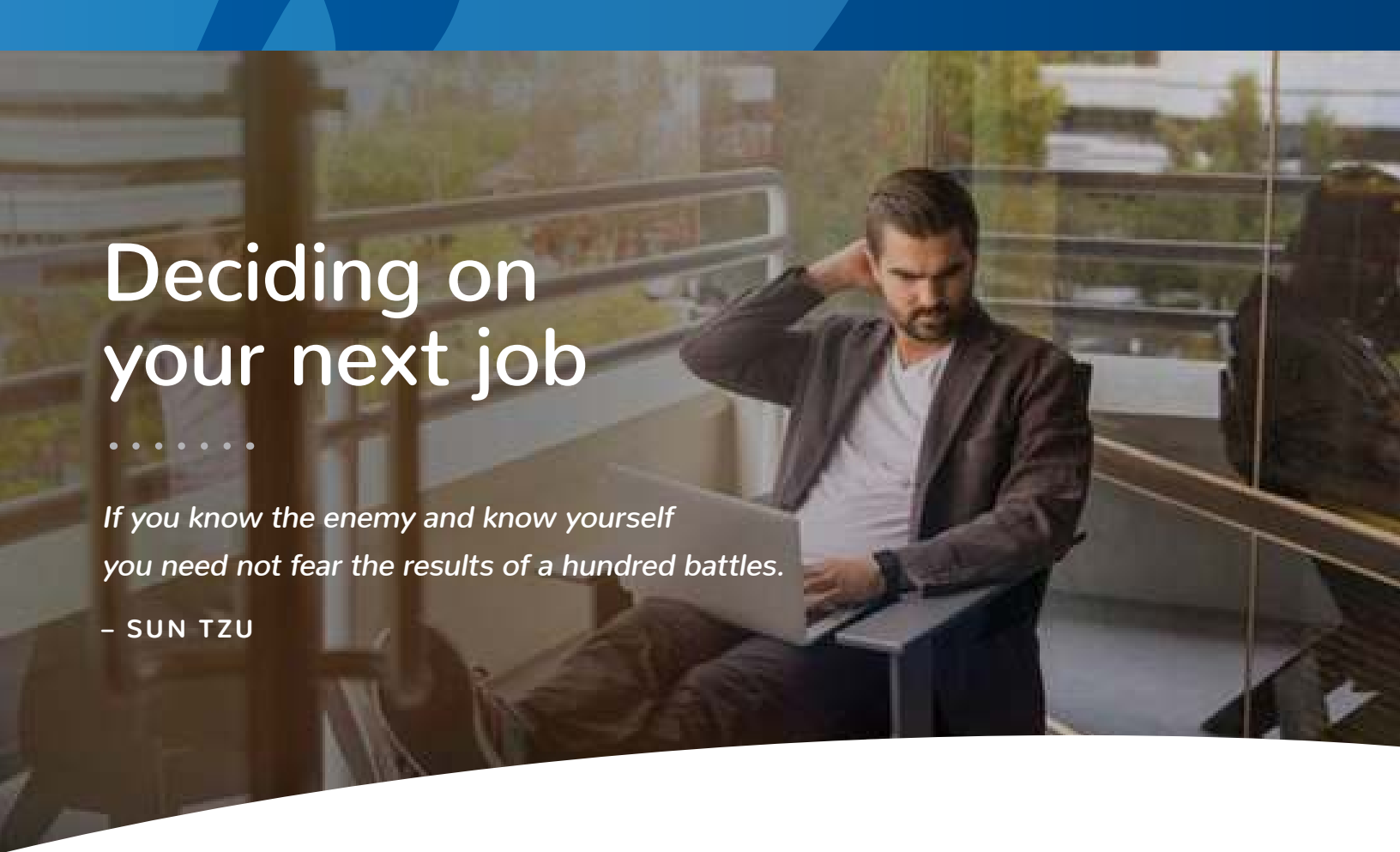
Values don't have to be spelled out in a strategic document. You'll know what your firm's priorities are, and whether you can keep working towards them.

7. You know something better could be out there

Even if you're sure you can stick it out for another year or so, you might be missing out on golden opportunities by keeping your head in the sand. We all know the best roles are often those that go unadvertised – part of the "hidden" jobs market. Now might be time to get a proper assessment of what your opportunities are and let those enviable jobs to come to you (ie. get headhunted) by getting to know connected recruiters in the market.

Start thinking about your next move while you still have a good bargaining position and can move on your own terms and timelines. It is always easier to find a role while you are currently employed so try not to hand in your notice (or even alert your current employer) until you have something secured (preferably a written and signed Letter of Offer).





Deciding on your next job

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*If you know the enemy and know yourself
you need not fear the results of a hundred battles.*

– SUN TZU

Once you have gone through this process of self-assessment it's possible you will make the decision that it's time to start considering a change in your career. To make a strategic decision about your next role it's important that you understand your own drivers and motivations better.

As a first step in self-assessment, it's important that you get clear (and brutally honest) about your priorities, goals, and motivations.

Do you actually want partnership in a firm? Are you willing to make the necessary sacrifices to become a partner? Or is your goal finding fulfilment and work life balance? Would you prefer to work inhouse or government or Not-for-Profit.

Any path is fine, but you need to get really clear on your own priorities.

Dan Pink's "Drive" looks at the things that drive people in their careers and lives, and finds that there are 3 things that most people are seeking from their career:

- **Autonomy** – are you directing your own life?
- **Mastery** — do you feel you are excelling and learning new skills?
- **Purpose** — do you feel you are achieving something that matters?

Finding opportunities for autonomy, mastery, and purpose in our careers is what will make you enjoy your next role, so it makes sense that prioritising these elements when looking for your next job will ensure you are happier and more successful in your new role.

There are several free and low-cost self-assessments that can also help support your career growth. Undertaking these assessments not only help you decide on your next role, but also can give you insight into how you can describe yourself when meeting with potential employers.

The StrengthFinders 2.0 assessment is a widely recognised, reputable, and inexpensive assessment that will help you decide on how you can better leverage your natural strengths (<https://www.gallupstrengthscenter.com/home/en-us/strengthsfinder>).

In addition to looking at which law firms might suit you, many people are considering opportunities within the corporate sector. Jason Elias, (CEO, Elias Recruitment) was recently interviewed by the Australian Financial Review on this trend recently, stating

“

Now people are getting three to four years in and saying 'this is not what I want to do for the rest of my life'... If you were going to work at Google or Mallesons, you would probably choose Google.”

– JASON ELIAS, ELIAS RECRUITMENT

Australian Financial Review, “Graduate Glut Turns To Drought”, Friday 21st Sept, 2018





Getting your social media profiles ready

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You have made the decision to leave, and know what you are looking for. Now it's time to start getting your social profiles in order.

Why do this before your resume?

1. Social profiles provide a point of verification
2. Being easier to find means that opportunities will start to find you
3. Having a strong personal brand will impact the type of opportunities you are offered
4. People within your network may start to think of you for opportunities

When we talk about getting your social profiles in order, in Australia, LinkedIn is the major platform that you need to give serious consideration. Virtually every major law firm and recruiter are actively using LinkedIn to identify and approach lawyers with potential job opportunities. Potential employers (and clients) will also use your LinkedIn profile as a point of verification and proof of your background and experience.

Here's what you need to do to be found:

1. Before you do anything, **check your LinkedIn privacy settings**, as you might choose to not broadcast to everyone initially that you are updating your profile – <https://www.linkedin.com/psettings/privacy>. Also here in this section you have the option of notifying recruiters that you are open to opportunities.
2. **Join the Australian Legal Community LinkedIn group here** <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/129190/> – It's a great way to expand your network within the legal profession.
3. **Get your personal LinkedIn profile 100% complete** – this makes you 40x more likely to appear in searches. Appearing in more searches means more employers and recruitment agencies getting in touch with relevant opportunities.

4. **Get a professional headshot.** Something modern and professional with yourself the only person in the photo. Avoid photos where it appears you're in a social situation (especially your wedding photos with an arm draped around you).
5. Ensure your contact details for your LinkedIn profile are up to date so that you are easy to find.
6. Update your headline to something "action based" – a format along the lines of "Qualified legal professional helping INDUSTRY achieve RESULTS".
7. Get your custom LinkedIn profile URL (eg <https://www.linkedin.com/in/eliasrecruit/>) – it looks better on your resume AND helps your profile appear as the first search result in Google (instructions [here](#)).
8. Consider keywords that you want to appear and then ensure they appear multiple times throughout your profile eg. If you would like to appear for the term "family law" then you could repeat this in your headline, position title, and in the description for each of your various position descriptions.
9. If you are genuinely committed to changing roles, consider a LinkedIn Job Seeker account which gives you InMail to approach potential employers, and gives you a higher visibility when you apply for new roles.
10. Get recommendations and endorsements on your profile – this helps you be found and also provides an unofficial reference/testimonial. Recommendations are more valuable than endorsements which can be quite random and inaccurate.
11. Connect with peers, industry leaders, relevant LinkedIn groups, and prospective employers' LinkedIn Company Pages.
12. Draft and post 2-3 blog articles that display your strengths and interests positively.
13. Google search yourself to double check what is appearing when people are looking for you.
14. Check your privacy settings on Facebook and ensure that you aren't sharing (or being tagged in) posts that don't display you in a professional manner. Also check the photos that you have posted on Instagram and consider making your profile private while you are applying for new jobs. You may even want to delete the account if there is anything controversial. There are now businesses especially in the US that are paid to review a candidate's social media presence before an offer is made. Don't let a silly post or dodgy photo cost you a great job.
15. Consider investing in a service such as Brand Yourself which is an online reputation management service that can help you clean up your social media presence and fix unwanted posts. Google (<https://brandyourself.com/>).
16. Excuse the plug but you may want to follow the Elias Recruitment LinkedIn page – where we share regular legal industry news and job opportunities – (<https://www.linkedin.com/company/elias-recruitment/>).

For further details check out our [8 ways to build your personal brand with LinkedIn](#) article.





Get your credentials and qualifications up to date

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You need to ensure that you have been keeping up with all your CPD requirements, and also there are many additional courses and qualifications.

We'd recommend our sister site, Bulletpoints (<https://www.bulletpoints.com.au/>) as a marketplace that allows you to find, book and track all of your CPD requirements. Bulletpoints aggregates courses from over 25 different legal industry education providers and you are able to choose from hundreds of live events, videos, online courses or onsite training options to obtain your CPD points.

Once you have completed all of the relevant courses and qualifications, be sure to update both your resume and your LinkedIn profile with completed certifications as this can help you stand out.

Relevant qualifications that you might include are AICD certifications, might include College of Law Masters (including the new Master of Legal Business), professional industry bodies, etc.

You may also want to build your profile by presenting at CPD courses either through Bulletpoints or a range of providers such as Law Societies, College of Law, and universities who are often looking for speakers.



Getting your CV ready

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A study by **The Ladders** ([source](#)) found that professional recruiters give most resumes an initial 6 second review to look at key details before deciding whether to contact you for an interview.

During that 6 second window recruiters are quickly scanning:

- Name
- Current title and employer
- Current position start date – and if you are still employed
- Previous employers', title, company and employment dates
- Admission date (years of Post qualification experience (PQE))
- Education (and awards eg Dean's List or Average marks- esp in earlier years)

Clearly lay out your CV so that visually you are giving the recruiter exactly what they are looking for as quickly as possible to increase your chance of scoring an interview. Avoid fancy fonts, boxes and unnecessary distractions.

Here is how to spruce up your resume in four easy steps:

1. Highlight your accomplishments, recent projects, & publications

Lead with your accomplishments, especially if you have recent project experience relevant to the role for which you are applying. Include any awards, commendations or industry publications – highlight your expertise in an area relevant to that role and you will stand out from other applicants.

2. Don't forget the selection criteria

Selection criteria are listed for a reason, so include them in your application. Wherever possible, tailor your CV to reflect the specified criteria. Note relevant skills or experience, and focus on demonstrating achievements in your recent position that match the role requirements.

Leave any material which may be the basis of discrimination (unconscious or otherwise) – for example, date of birth, race, marital status, sexuality or religion.

3. Make it an easy read

The worst resumes are a nightmare to read. Poor formatting, too much text, an absence of headings, or lack of clarity around what you did in each role make for a quick trip to the bin. As a rough guide, ask yourself, can your CV be read in 2 minutes or less? Would a total stranger understand what value you brought to each role, your strengths and your achievements? If you're unsure, run your resume by friends or family who are

less familiar with your career or industry, and ask them to describe what you do based on your resume. In terms of length, aim for 2 pages for a junior lawyer and up to 4 for a more senior lawyer. Provide more detail on more recent roles. If you have 10 years PQE we don't need much about your pre-legal work at McDonalds. Mention it of course (McDonalds gives great training) but prioritise the more relevant positions. Also even if you look like George Clooney or Scarlett Johansson- a photo on your CV is never appropriate.

4. Explain any absences or short stints – and don't embellish

Red flags pop up for unexplained leaves of absence and unusually short placements in a series of roles. While innocuous, these resume gaps may suggest underlying issues with colleagues or managers or an inability to focus and settle into a role. If you took extended time off, be up front about the reason – whether it was a career break to assist with an ill family member or a business venture or even further study, it's best to tackle the issue rather than allow employers to come to their own conclusions and prematurely rule you out.

Whatever you do, don't lie. Not only does it damage your credibility with your prospective employer, it may affect your overall reputation with future employers.

For further advice on getting your resume ready check out our list of 10 resume tips [here](#).





How to position yourself for approaches (headhunting)

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A few touches to your mobile phone and your groceries, an Uber or a pizza come to you. So why not a job? Many of the best jobs are never advertised so how do you hear about them?

Good employers know that the best lawyers are so busy running their practices that they don't have time to trawl through job ads. They also like keeping strategic hires out of the public eye so the marketplace doesn't catch on to what they're doing and where they're headed.

That's why, when it comes to bringing in the big guns, they'll use third party headhunters to track down, sound out and snare the best talent for themselves.

Headhunters don't use a scattergun approach. Once they've been briefed, they usually put feelers out via networks, compile a longlist, then research those

candidates to see who's likely to be a good fit. By the time they approach someone, they pretty much know who they are, what they do and what their reputation is like.

So, if you want to be in their sights, there are six things you should be doing.

1. Social networks – make LinkedIn work for you

Review your LinkedIn profile, make sure it clearly articulates your skills, experience and area of practice. Highlight projects you've worked on and the value you contributed (without of course breaching client confidentiality). Headhunters want to have a good understanding that you've worked on similar kinds of matters to those their client has briefed them about. Don't be shy about blowing your own horn. See Getting your social media profiles ready (Above).

2. Be known as an industry expert

You'll never be headhunted if no one has ever heard of you. So, if you're not already building a profile for yourself, start now.

Put yourself forward to present on your areas of expertise wherever possible, especially for industry events or CPD. As an example, check out Bulletpoints for content.

Write about important issues and hot topics affecting your work and share these – not just via your firm's newsletters but directly with contacts by publishing LinkedIn and other social media channels.

To ramp things up, join LinkedIn groups of like-minded people such as Australian Legal Community and start contributing to the conversations. Consider publishing in industry journals – or better still, form relationships with journalists to expand opportunities of being quoted in business or mainstream press as an expert in your field.

3. Releasing subtle signals

If you are considering making a move, it's a good idea to start putting your feelers out there. You can even change your LinkedIn settings to discreetly show that you are open to new opportunities (not viewable to your employer).

Also check that your Inmail settings allow you to notify users that you are open to 'career opportunities'.

4. Make contacting you easy, not a mystery

While gatekeeping receptionists can be great at shielding you from telemarketing calls, they can act as a block for headhunters who want to sound you out. So make yourself easy to contact by including your mobile number and personal email address on your LinkedIn profile. If a headhunter struggles to reach you, they may bypass you and run the opportunity by the next person on their list.

And, if a headhunter calls and you can't speak freely, set a time to chat when you're out of the office. This also gives you a chance to check out their LinkedIn profile to see whether you want to deal with them.

5. Remain professional, don't breach etiquette

Don't tell anyone in your firm – and that means anyone – about your plans to move, even once you've been approached. If the headhunting process isn't handled discreetly, you're likely to jeopardise your current position as well as any new opportunities.

If a headhunter alerts you to an opportunity never approach the employer directly. Not only will your overtures be met with blank stares, you'll be seen as disloyal. They're using a headhunter for a reason and it may be a confidential search.

6. But don't be afraid

If you are approached by a headhunter, you can benefit from their expertise. It never hurts to know the state of the market and have a trusted source of intelligence, especially around salary review time. Besides, even if the specific opportunity they wanted to talk about isn't right for you at the time, something may hit their desk in the near future.

Finally, if you've noticed that they've looked at your LinkedIn profile, drop them a line to find out why. Headhunting can be a slow dance of missed calls, profile views and unnoticed messages sitting in your personal email account. So, if you're open to a move, make sure you stay alert and responsive to any headhunter approach.



Finding a great recruiter

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Just speak to Elias Recruitment.

Seriously though, with almost 20 years of being dedicated legal recruitment specialists and helping legal professionals move both within practice and into in-house legal roles, we are a safe pair of hands with your next career transition. We can offer expert advice and insight into which opportunities will best suit your career ambitions.

Also, Elias Recruitment is a longstanding member of the NPWorldwide global network, the largest recruitment network that partners cooperatively to service clients around the globe. As the only legal recruiting firm in Sydney to be a member, our candidates have access to positions from over 1,500 recruiters worldwide.

Given that we do have some bias, here are the key questions that you should be asking yourself before you choose a recruitment agency to partner with on finding your next role:

1. Are they a dedicated legal recruitment agency that understand the profession?
2. Am I dealing with an experienced recruitment consultant within that agency? Do they have their 10,000 hours of experience working in the legal world or in recruitment?
3. Has the agency been running for long enough to establish deep and true partnerships within the legal industry?
4. Is the agency able to offer opportunities across a broad spread of industries, geographies that suit my needs?
5. Are they a member of the RCSA that subscribe to an industry code of ethics?

It's also worth remembering that you are better off partnering with a single, high quality recruiter that is able to represent you to multiple different firms.

Research potential employers before applying

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Extensively Research the Company. Your biggest advantage is information, and almost everything you need to know about a company can be found online. Here are the questions to answer about the company you're applying for:

- What does the firm/company do?
- What is their culture like?
- What kind of people do they typically hire?
- Do I know anyone who works there?
- Do I have any connections there?

Use the following resources to get your answers:

- The company website
- LinkedIn
- Google news
- Youtube
- Google Finance
- Glassdoor.com
- Twitter.com
- Facebook.com
- Instagram.com

Be armed with as much data as possible.



Four easy mistakes candidates make – and how to avoid them

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As recruiters, we hear, see and are sometimes surprised by some of the easily avoided yet common mistakes we see in the recruitment process. Here are some tips to help you along the recruitment process.

1. Overdoing a cover letter

There are circumstances that do require cover letters. Cover letters are not the place to rewrite your CV or attempt to write an award-winning novel. The cover letter needs to be concise and to the point (1-2 pages); address the selection criteria and make sure to double check your spelling. Most will receive less than 30 seconds attention so make sure the important information is upfront so the decision maker keeps reading. Dropping the name of well-regarded firms or partners you have worked for is a great way.

2. Not properly explaining job changes

The best way to raise red flags to a decision-maker is by having lots of moves in a short period. The inference is that you won't stay terribly long in this role if they hire you. We understand sometimes there are reasons beyond your control why you move jobs. Sometimes it is a good idea to have reasons for leaving at the end of role eg followed partner to a new firm, firm merged with another firm, offered in-house role with a client. If it is a fixed term contract or project then be sure to say so.

3. The follow up protocol

A phone call can be a good idea but it's not something that should be done directly after you push the send button on your application email. Recruiters and Human Resource Managers are often busy and may have a large number of applications to process. Normally when a job is first opened they are knee deep in the search and screening process. Generally online applications reduce substantially after 5-6 days so rather than calling on day 1, we suggest leaving the follow up phone call to 7-10 days after the applications were sent or opened.

4. Repeat applications

The 'serial applier' is not a good look when trying to establish a foot in the door with a prospective employer. Most organisations have advanced applicant tracking software that keeps an eye on applications and even stores CVs, including previous versions and also the number of applications made. While there are many candidates with multi skills we suggest it is not a good look to have made applications for the family law, M&A and personal injury law roles with the one firm.





Preparing for your legal job interview

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You only have one shot to make a great first impression so excellent preparation is the key to a successful interview. Some of the key fundamentals include:

Dress appropriately. How you dress tells your prospective bosses a great deal about who you are and the kind of employee you would be. You should wear appropriate business attire.

Be warm and polite with absolutely everyone that you meet and speak with during the interview process – that receptionist likely has significantly more influence in the hiring decision than you realise.

Say it out loud. You should rehearse out loud your personal elevator pitch on why you are a great fit for the role, while also practise saying out loud 2-3 “mini case studies” from your career that highlight your strengths and suitability for the role. Be prepared to answer the “tell me about yourself” question. Voicing out loud prior to the interview will help you then be more natural during the interview.

Take copies of your CV, cover letter and academic transcripts just in case they are required.

Be prepared to deal with areas of concern. These may include gaps between roles or education, sudden changes in job direction or inadequate results. Everyone has weaknesses apparent within his/her CV. Avoid appearing regretful, protective or insecure and be agreeable to discuss these weak areas briefly but freely.

It is likely that near the end of the job interview you will be given the time and opportunity to ask your own questions. So it's a great idea to anticipate this with some well prepared questions on areas that may not have come up during the actual interview itself.



Common Questions You May be Asked During Legal Job Interviews

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Questions about your experience

What were your accountabilities/responsibilities in your prior positions?

What did you particularly enjoy/dislike about that role?

Why did you leave your prior employment?

During law studies, what extracurricular activities did you participate in?

Do you think your University grades/scores are a good indicator of your academic ability?

Do you think they are an appropriate indication of your ability to do well in this job?

Questions about your personality

Tell me a little about yourself, particularly something that won't be on your resume.

How would certainly your friends and/or past colleagues describe you?

Exactly how would you describe yourself as a person?

What are your outside interests/hobbies?

Why did you choose to practise law/ why did you go to law school?

Questions about your strengths and weaknesses

Tell me about your greatest success at any of the firm's you have worked for?

What are your strengths/weaknesses?

Are you a team player or do you prefer to work alone?



Interview questions to ask your potential employer at the end of the interview

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1. What does a typical day in this role look like?

Ultimately you want to be able to imagine yourself doing the job, to have a clear picture of the different tasks you will do day-to-day, who you will interact with, what systems or tools you might use, what challenges are likely to come up, and what knowledge and skills you will use regularly. This will help you assess whether your interests and strengths will be well matched to this job. Examples of questions that work well here are:

- Can you please give me an idea of the variety of tasks I could expect on a daily basis?
- What matters would I be working on in the role?
- How much of my time would be spent on autonomous tasks versus team activities?
- What would success look like in this job – six months down the line?

2. What is it like to work in this organisation?

As well as understanding the accountabilities and tasks of the job itself, you will want to know what the work environment is like. People often refer to this as company culture, and it can be influenced by many factors such as how the company is structured, whether it is big or small, the physical workspace, and how different divisions and people interact with each other. Companies will often talk about the positives of their culture and values on their website, and the interview is a great way to find out how this resonates in the day-to-day. Try questions like:

- What do you think employees like best about working here?
- How do employees find out about important information from the leadership team?
- How would you describe the work environment?

- How do you think the company culture differs here, in comparison to other law firms?
- How does the organisation support employees with their professional development?

3. What is it like to work in this team?

A big part of any job is the interactions you have with your immediate team, including your manager. Usually you will have a chance throughout the interview process to meet the partners or senior associates, and sometimes you will also meet other team members. See this as a chance to observe their style as they interact with you, and to ask one or two questions about how they like to work. Remember that each team has their challenges, so rather than looking for perfection, reflect on whether you will get something positive from working with this team, whether it be a challenge, fun, cohesion or new skills. You may like to ask questions such as:

- Are you able to give me an idea of the different roles within the team and how they work together?
- How regularly does the team meet and what are the meetings like?
- What sort of background and skill sets already exist within the team?
- How would you describe your management style with the team?





Deciding on which legal job to accept

Now that you have some more information about the job, the organisation and the people, you are in a strong position to reflect on whether this opportunity is a good match for you. The next step is to ask yourself some questions to see how closely the role aligns to your strengths, interests and personal values.

- Do the day-to-day tasks sound like something I could do and enjoy?
- Is there enough challenge in the daily role to keep me interested?
- Could I contribute something and learn new skills in this role?
- Does the work environment sound like it will suit my style?
- Does the organisation value the same things that I do?

- Have I enjoyed interacting with the people I met at interview?
- Does the team sound well-structured and cohesive?
- Could I learn something from my team members or manager?

Asking yourself these questions is especially useful if you are trying to decide between a couple of different opportunities, as it will give you a point of comparison. And remember – as wonderful as it is to receive a job offer, this is your career and you have something valuable to offer, so ask questions and think carefully so that you can choose wisely. Often a recruitment agent can provide useful feedback on what it is like to work in each environment. Obviously some will have a vested interest if there are offers that are not from them, which is why it is good to stick with one recruiter.



How to negotiate your legal salary

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Much like interviews, successful salary negotiation happens BEFORE any conversation. Being well prepared will make you a lot more successful.

1. Know industry ranges so that you know what is realistic for any given role. An excellent resource is the www.legalsalary.com.au website which is a real time database of actual salaries. Feel free to add yours and see a comparison. [Glassdoor](#) while not legally specific may have some useful information.
2. Always remember that it is a collaboration – not a fight.
3. Speak with your recruiter about what is realistic.
4. Hold off on discussing money until they've made a decision to hire you. Potential employers will always be looking to lock you down to a specific range early, and you will have more leverage when they've decided that you are the person they are most interested in.
6. Quantify your value – know the specifics around your billable hours, charge rates, along with major new clients that you might have won, or initiatives that might have saved your firm significant amounts
7. Scarcity and competition are your friend – make it clear that you are in demand and have some other opportunities. This helps the company bring their best offer to the table.

8. Negotiate outside of just salary – many companies might have some limitations around salary banding, but might be able to help with additional working hour flexibility, training allowances, position title, travel allowances, education allowances, additional annual leave, etc.

10. Work with your recruiter – a good recruiter as an intermediary can really help you succeed here. They're able to have more difficult conversations

tactfully on your behalf. It makes things cleaner having an independent third party but obviously they are keen to get the deal done.

11. Don't haggle for the sake of it. I have seen too many people miss out on dream jobs for trivial amounts of a few dollars a day, particularly taking out tax and superannuation.





Don't burn bridges when leaving your job

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So you've decided it's time to move on and have secured a great new offer. Here are a few handy tips to ensure you leave your job on good terms.

Stay engaged

Don't check out too early. As long as you are being paid you owe it to your firm and your clients to do your best until you walk out the door. Organise a plan to transfer your responsibilities so your partner/manager and colleagues are not left with a mountain of unfinished work. Make sure there are no 'time bombs' sitting in your files that will adversely affect your colleagues down the track.

Write a resignation letter

Think of your resignation letter as a thank you note. It's an opportunity to express your gratitude to your manager for working at the company and for the help they may have provided. It should also include

your last day on the job. Where possible, resign in person to provide closure. Make sure you resign with adequate notice, particularly if your job is complex. If you would like some guidance, here is a template for a resignation letter from [Seek](#). Remember the legal world is very small.

Get your story straight

Once you've met with your partner/manager, ensure you're both on the same page regarding the reasons for your departure. It's vital to keep your approach positive – you want to leave the door open for future employment or at least a good job reference. Confirm with your manager how he or she would like your colleagues to be told. It may be worth suggesting that you tell colleagues individually and write a short email for your partner/manager to distribute.

Return any property

Make sure you don't leave with any keys, equipment or furniture (I know you loved that office iPhone). Leave with a good conscience and make sure to pass on your contact details to colleagues. If there is an alumni organisation make sure you sign up and if there is an exit interview – try and provide positive feedback and constructive criticisms. Try and refrain from 'going postal' irrespective of the reasons you are leaving.

Remember you are likely to bump into former colleagues at other firms, in court or they may even be your next client. It is a small industry and people have long memories. Try and move on without burning bridges.

Be VERY wary of counter-offers

Once you have signalled your intention to leave your potential employer, even if you accept a counter-offer to stay things will never be the same. Anecdotally, most people who accept a counter-offer still leave their employer within the next 12 months. The fundamental reasons that they were looking to change employers has not changed.





Conclusion

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If you have made the decision to make the move in your career and start looking for your next job, work through each of these stages properly and you will find yourself into your next role in no time.

If you want a professional, dedicated legal recruitment agency that truly understands your personal and professional needs then Elias Recruitment are here to help. Work with someone that has a trusted reputation and the relationships that help you into your next role.

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