



Networking: Real People, Real Tips!

Throughout this issue you will find hints, tips, tricks and just general down to earth advice from those in similar situations.

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How to Network as a Law Student and still Like Yourself

Networking is one of the great skills of surviving in the legal world – it will be essential to landing a job during and after law school, and will be crucial to attracting new clients, advancing toward partnership, and being considered for key promotions once you join the legal community. Not coming from a family of lawyers, I failed to appreciate the need for this skill-set when I entered law school. I remember watching students line up outside of interview rooms during on-campus interview season, in hopes of putting a resume into the hand of an interviewer when they opened the door to call in the next interviewee, or of making an impression by walking with one of the interviewers on their way to get coffee or (gasp!) to go to the restroom. Observing this spectacle made me feel sick to my stomach, and I

naively resolved to let my merits on paper speak for themselves. That resolution lasted less than two months, as I slowly came to the realization that my friends' networking efforts had begun to land them great jobs, while I was still waiting for the phone to ring. Through my clumsy efforts during law school, and in the years since, I have learned the wisdom of the adage "it's not what you know, but who you know that counts." With that said, you need to find a way of networking that is consistent with your personality, your style of communicating, and your comfort level. If your networking efforts come across as desperate, uncomfortable, or forced, they will have the opposite effect of what you are trying to accomplish: you

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EVENTS: LAST CALL

J. Reuben Clark Law Society Conference 2010

The annual J. Reuben Clark Law Society Conference will be held this year in Salt Lake City, Utah February 11 - 13, 2010. Venues for the annual conference include: University of Utah Law School, University of Utah LDS Institute, and the Assembly Hall on Temple Square.

EARLY REGISTRATION ENDS JANUARY 22, 2010. Register now to receive a discount on the conference.

Registration closes February 5, 2010.

We encourage all JRCLS members to attend the annual conference.

For more information, see <http://www.jrclsconference.com/>

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will actually hurt your chances of making a positive connection, and end up in worse position than if you had done nothing at all. The following are a few tips that may help you on this process.

1. Quality is more important than Quantity

For those of you who served an LDS Mission, you may remember the missionaries we referred to on my mission as “stat-monkeys”. If the mission goal was to teach 12 discussions a week or place 10 copies of the Book of Mormon, they bragged that they had taught 30 discussions or placed 40 copies. Their self-assurance in the numerical success of their efforts made them blind to the true purpose of their missionary efforts.

A similar disconnect is often found among law students who are in full job search mode. I have often heard law students brag that they have sent out “200 resumes since December” or have contacted “100 of the top law firms” about potential openings. In reality, this shotgun approach is rarely effective and generally a massive waste of time. If you haven’t found a job through the normal on-campus interviewing process, you will achieve far better results working through friends, family, and other contacts to place a handful of resumes at areas where you have carefully prepared the ground, so that your resume will be given full scrutiny and preference in the flood of cold-call applications.

Like the “stat-monkey” missionaries, law students who adopt the shotgun approach often fail to realize that people can tell when you are viewing them as a “statistic,”

and they will reciprocate this attitude in their treatment of your application materials. Successful attorneys prepare for every conference call, every meeting, and every presentation – regardless of the audience. They carefully research the client’s products, skills, and interests, and are largely successful based on how well they can anticipate the client’s needs and desires and bring them to fruition by resolving legal issues before they arise. This preparation and interest in the client’s needs demonstrates that the lawyer does not simply view the client in terms of the

“Successful attorneys prepare for every conference call, every meeting, and every presentation – regardless of the audience.”

fee the client’s work will generate – the client will not hire the lawyer if the client feels like a statistic.

Similarly, law students need to demonstrate that they are not simply accumulating statistics by diligently preparing for every contact with an attorney. As an interviewer, nothing turns me off faster than a law student who has done no homework on my background, does not know anything about my legal practice, asks only generic questions, and has generally given no thought to preparing for my interview with them. The same thing happens when someone sends me a resume without first calling me to establish some kind of connection and/or ask if I am willing to put their resume forward to the hiring partner. Regardless of how qualified the applicant is on paper, their interview will generally receive a negative evaluation, and their resume will generally be thrown in the trash.

In contrast, a mediocre candidate can rise to the top of an applicant pool simply by

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making strong interpersonal connections and using them in a way that demonstrates sincere interest in the networking target. One of my favorite examples of a law student who executed this perfectly was a local student at a mid-tier law school who received a call-back interview with my firm. Because his school was not a “target school” for my firm, his average grades and experience put him on the bottom of the list of our call-back candidates. While not a member of the JRCLS, this law student made a connection with me through a fellow law student with whom I had worked on various JRCLS activities. Instead of merely holding this connection in reserve as a “name-drop” in the event he had an interview with me, this applicant had his JRCLS contact call me and ask if I would be willing to speak with him. I accepted, and was delighted to find that he had carefully prepared for our informal telephone conversation with insightful questions about the firm and my practice. I invited him to call me back when the list of interviewers was finalized, and I helped him to prepare for his interviews with my colleagues. I later discovered that he had made a parallel contact through other channels with one of my fellow attorneys, and had used this connection in a similarly positive manner. Largely because of this over-the-top preparation, this “mediocre” candidate made an excellent impression across all of his interviews, and was one of our first call-back candidates to receive an offer.

2. Don't be a Chameleon

Many law students fail to appreciate that

lawyers have a pretty good radar for the glad-handing chameleons who will say or do anything to wheedle themselves into a job. One of the primary benefits of networking is that anyone with whom you network will also have their own network of contacts with whom they interact on a regular basis. Never forget that lawyers talk to one another! I recall one summer associate who consistently gushed enthusiasm for the regulatory compliance work I was doing, and expressed his unequivocal desire to be involved in that kind of work for the remainder of his career. While he was aware that my colleagues and I were all separately evaluating his work product, he probably didn't realize that we were each taking note of his career aspirations as part of the evaluation process. When it came time to distribute offers of permanent employment, it became obvious that he had



promised his undying devotion to three or four different practice groups in order to hedge his bets. Despite his uniformly excellent work product, his duplicitous attitude nearly cost him his job offer.

Another problem with the chameleon approach to networking is that you will fail to inspire people to reach out to their networks on your behalf if your sole criterion for contacting them is: “you're an employed lawyer, and I need a job.” Your networking target needs to have an explicit understanding of why you are contacting them instead of the thousands of other attorneys in your geographic area. Although it is tempting to believe that committing to a particular practice area

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I was in a federal courts and jurisdiction class and got the personal contact information from my teacher of local federal chambers. Because I knew the teacher, I was able to immediately get an interview for a federal internship which ended up being successful. So, my tip would be to know and use the law professors as much as possible because they have contacts who are actually out in the field.

- Britten Sessions

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will limit your options, your networking efforts will be most effective if you can narrow the scope of your professional interests down to one or two areas that you can demonstrate through your own experiences and established skills. By communicating these interests to the attorneys with whom you network, you give them some basis for determining who they should contact about you. If you fail to convince them of your serious interest in a particular area of practice, they are unlikely to risk embarrassment by referring a chameleon to their friends and contacts.

3. Don't ask for a Job

Elton John said "sad songs say so much," but do you really want the people with whom you network to think of you as "that

"There is no 'master vault' of resumes that employers dive into when things become desperate"

poor kid who just can't catch a break"? A far better approach is to have attorneys focus on your skills, interests, and optimism – a difficult proposition if your discussions are focused on how badly you need a job. In my own experience, I was laid off by my first law firm less than six months after graduation. I made the observation that when I discussed jobs with potential contacts, I gave them a quick way to get rid of me: "I'm sorry to hear about your situation, Ben. Unfortunately, we really don't have any openings right now. Why don't you send me your resume and I'll make sure we keep it on file." You may have heard similar lines, and thought you were making progress in getting your name in front

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Real People: You never know ...

In order to be a successful networker, you don't have to meet the "right person" to get you to where you want to be, but think of every person you meet as the "right person." You cannot control who you meet, but you can control how everyone you meet views your character.

You never know when someone who you have met in work or in school could become a valuable resource for an opportunity in the future. Even if your present job is not your favorite, try your best and put your best foot forward. Although "someone who knows someone" may not be available to help advance your career, a valuable reference from a boss or a professor can go a long way. Always get these on your way out the door, and keep in touch by email to someone of importance if possible.

Finally, treat everyone with respect and be humble. The person at the bottom of the law school class could one day run the most successful law firm in town!

Meghan Sheridan
J.D. Candidate 2012
William S. Boyd School of Law, UNLV

Real Student: Don't Be Afraid To Volunteer

I am currently a 2L and work at the Federal Public Defender's Office in Phoenix, AZ. During my first semester of law school I attended a judicial conference that took place at my school. During the conference judges spoke about the process of becoming a judge. I had always been curious in family law, and so after the conference I asked a judge working in family court if I could come volunteer for her during my winter break. She was more than happy to let me come watch trials and even let me do some research for her. She also introduced me to another judge working in family court.

At the end of the two weeks I asked both judges if they knew of any open job oppor-

tunities for 1Ls. One was able to send an email to his former place of employment, the Federal Public Defender's Office in Phoenix, and recommended that I receive an interview. Although I am far from the top of my class, I was able to secure an interview and obtain a summer position. It has been a wonderful experience.

TIP: Don't be afraid to volunteer for judges, or other attorneys. It will open many doors.

Sincerely,

Dan White

2011 J.D. Candidate, Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law, at ASU

Okay, when it comes to networking--there's all the obvious stuff (thank you cards, etc.)

The couple things I would add that are different:

1. Follow the Spirit. The Spirit has prompted me many times to go up and talk to people I ordinarily wouldn't have, and they have led to jobs & great advice & a whole host of other good things. So important!!

2. Be aggressive! Even if it's not in your nature, you can learn to be bold. (It's like missionary work.) You don't have to be overbearing, just bold.

3. Be genuine & humble. People aren't impressed by superficiality.

Jane Wilson, 2L
Columbia Law School
Teachers College, Educational Leadership

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of potential employers – but make no mistake, this is a brush-off. There is no “master vault” of resumes that employers dive into when things become desperate, and no one will resurrect the resume of a sad-sack applicant who came in moping about not being able to find work in this economy.

One way to make sure that networking opportunities remain focused on what a great person you are is to never ask for a job. Instead, your focus should be to get a few additional contacts, get feedback on your resume, learn more about what successful attorneys they know have done in the past, ask their opinion on the relative benefits of a volunteer position you are considering, etc. If you make clear that this is the reason you want to meet with them, you make it much harder for them to brush you off. Once you are face to

face with them, and have impressed them with your skills and potential, you can rest assured that they will be thinking of where they can get you employed. They will be asking you if they can pass along your resume to a few friends, or they will be introducing you to the hiring partner of their firm to see if there is any way to move mountains and get you the job you need. It may be counter-intuitive, but it works.

4. Make it Easy

Finally, the reality of networking is that many attorneys grow tired of taking the lead in initiating a networking exchange. You will do yourself a favor by taking the lead for them whenever possible, and making it as easy as possible to get to know you. For example, at nearly every JRCLS event I attend I am always chagrined to see the majority of the law stu-

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Real Story: Asking Works

Last summer I clerked for a federal district judge who often sat down with me to provide career advice. One thing he repeatedly mentioned was to always ask advice from successful people because they love to give back and are usually in a position to do so. When the externship ended I began calling every successful friend, family friend, acquaintance I had a contact for and asked them for advice. In October I attended the J. Reuben Clark leadership conference and bumped into one of these successful people. After talking with me for a few minutes she introduced me to an attorney well-known in the field of law I am

most interested in. After exchanging contact information our mutual friend insisted that I should contact this individual and ask for a summer internship. I did this and secured a very prestigious position for this Summer. Having been rejected for much less prestigious positions I feel that this opportunity arrived primarily as a result of an introduction to the right person by a mutual friend. I couldn't be happier.

- *Brandon Leavitt*

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dents clustered together, or sitting at tables with only other law students instead of taking the opportunity to interact with the attorneys all around them. Attorneys know they are supposed to be the networking target – they are not going to cross the line of demarcation and reach out to you. Find a wingman to help avoid any awkward moments where you are left standing alone, and break away from the herd. If you know one or two attorneys who will be at the event, don't hesitate to call beforehand and to ask for their help in

making introductions to some of the other attorneys they know. Most attorneys will want to help you, but you need to recognize that they are busy people with significant demands on their time – make it easy for them to help you by giving them a game plan for reaching your objective.

- Benjamin R. Lindorf

*Associate Counsel & Export Compliance
Manager
Institute for Defense Analyses*



Real Networks: Social Media

Using linkedin.com to meet and stay in touch with contacts is a no-brainer. LinkedIn is a professional networking website where you can "link" with other professionals that you know. It is a great, free way to build your Rolodex while still in law school.

Attending JRCLS lawyer events is a great way to meet local attorneys in a relaxed

and friendly environment.

Additionally, writing a blog is a great way to make yourself known in the legal community. My little blog mormonlawyers.com has allowed me to meet a lot of lawyers I would not otherwise have had the opportunity to meet.

- Clint Dunaway

Real Texas: Texas Two Tips

Two tips from successful students in our region:

1. Get to know the attorneys in your ward and stake. They seem very willing to help other members of the church be successful and give them advice.

2. Research attorneys in your area of interest and in the place you want to work. Find articles that they have written or other things they have published. Then contact them to let them know that you thought their article was interesting, and either ask them another related and pertinent question or send them a related article you think they might be interested in. This can establish contact with them and let you begin to establish a relationship with them. (A student in our region got a job by doing this.)

- Texas Region

This Month's Technology Tip

By Clint Dunaway

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

"I believe the Savior is telling us that unless we lose ourselves in service to others, there is little purpose to our own lives. Those who live only for themselves eventually shrivel up and figuratively lose their lives, while those who lose themselves in service to others grow and flourish—and in effect save their lives. (Quoting *President Thomas S. Monson, LDS Prophet*)

Accept that you have an eternally important destiny, a spiritual destiny.

As was said of Queen Esther of old, "Thou art come ... for such a time as this" (Esther 4:14). Believe it, and embrace it!"

- Neil L. Anderson,
LDS Apostle
January 10, 2010

1. Word provides a fast, efficient, and flexible searching feature. Using the Find option from the Edit menu, you can search for just about anything in your document. I find myself using Find quite often in the course of creating a document, but there is one thing about Find that bothers me. I hate having the Find dialog box block part of my document as I am stepping through occurrences of a search string in my document. Clicking on Find Next works great, but that bothersome dialog box is still blocking my view.

To overcome this, I generally do the following when I am searching for something:

Use the Find feature as normal (Ctrl+F), specifying what I want to search for and then looking for the first occurrence of the string.

When the first occurrence is displayed, I press the Esc key (or click on Cancel).

To find the next occurrence, I press Shift+F4.

This procedure works the same as clicking Find Next repeatedly, and it is just as fast, but it gets rid of the annoying Find dialog box.

2. Sometimes you want to move a paragraph or two around in your document. For instance, you might want to move a paragraph from its current location to before the preceding paragraph. You can quickly move paragraphs by following these steps:

Position the insertion point in the paragraph you want to move.

While holding down the Shift and Alt keys, press the Up Arrow or Down Arrow to move the paragraph

3. Word for Windows provides a way to quickly decrease the point size of a selection. To do this, follow these steps:

Select the text whose point size you want to decrease.

Press Ctrl+[.

Every time you press Ctrl+[, the point size of the selection will decrease by one point. If you want more precise control over the point size (for instance, making something 11.5 points), you must use the Font dialog box by choosing Font from the Format menu.

4. Word provides a way to quickly increase the point size of a selection. To do this, follow these steps:

Select the text whose point size you want to increase.

Press Ctrl+].

Every time you press Ctrl+], the point size of the selection will increase by one point. If you want more precise control over the point size (for instance, making something 11.5 points), you must use the Font dialog box by choosing Font from the Format menu, or by typing the desired font size directly into the Font Size control on the Formatting toolbar.

