

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Your job search begins long before the cover letter is written or the resume is printed. Finding a job involves a great deal of self-evaluation, employer research, and market analysis. Your job search is ultimately a search for SELF. Where do you see yourself in five years? Ten years? What kind of lifestyle would you like? What type of work environment do you seek? Do you want to work in a large metropolitan area or a small rural setting? Are you interested in transactional work or litigation? What type of litigation: commercial, personal injury, criminal defense, prosecution? Are you interested in public interest law, corporate law, or administrative law? The answers to these questions should provide some helpful guidance as you begin your job search and define your career goals.

Personal Qualities

How would you describe yourself? Employers will often ask you this in an interview. Review the following list of characteristics and note which apply to you. Not only will you be better prepared for interviews, you will have a way to assess different work environments-is the personality of this organization compatible with who I am?

Accurate	Diplomatic	Persevering
Adaptable	Discreet	Poised
Ambitious	Disciplined	Positive
Analytical	Efficient	Practical
Articulate	Enthusiastic	Precise
Assertive	Flexible	Productive
Attentive	Friendly	Professional
Calm	Honest	Prudent
Capable	Independent	Persuasive
Competent	Innovative	Realistic
Confident	Inquisitive	Reliable
Congenial	Intelligent	Resourceful
Conscientious	Inventive	Respectful
Considerate	Logical	Responsible
Consistent	Motivated	Self-starter
Cooperative	Objective	Sincere
Creative	Open-minded	Tactful
Decisive	Optimistic	Team player
Dedicated	Orderly	Tenacious
Deliberate	Organized	Thorough
Dependable	Outgoing	Tolerant
		Trustworthy
		Versatile

Job Satisfaction and Work Environment

The American Bar Association conducted a survey on professionalism and lawyer dissatisfaction with somewhat staggering results. More often than not, those indicating some dissatisfaction with the profession cited lifestyle and quality of life (or lack thereof!)

as the two greatest problem areas. Peer pressure and skewed perceptions of success were cited by some as being the reasons for accepting certain employment. Throughout the job search process you must always remember to base your decisions on who you are and what is important to you. Review the following lists to identify which factors you would like to find in a work environment.

Working Conditions:

Flexible hours	Type of supervision
Regular 8-5 day	Work for several superiors
Required weekend work	Flexibility to move within organization
Required travel	Opportunity for advancement
Number of billable hours expected	Work alone or with others
Pro Bono commitment	Formal or casual atmosphere
Compensation	Socializing with colleagues
Benefits: health, life, disability, pension, parental leave	Fast pace or low key environment
Self-employed	Short-term or long-term projects
Work close to home	Amount of research and writing
Own office or shared space	High client contact
Large or small organization	Competitive environment
Willingness to transfer	Work under pressure

Work Values:

Job security	Independence
High salary	Intellectual challenge
Prestige and high profile position	Believe in what you are doing
Regular routine	Have a "helping" role
Variety and change	Societal contribution
Be a "team" player	

Quality of Life Considerations:

Large urban setting	Live near family or relatives
Rural setting	Free time for family
Apartment	Time for volunteer activities
Single family dwelling or own home	Opportunity to be active in community
Commute to work	Time for self
Walk to work	Access to cultural events
Live close to schools	Access to professional athletic events
Climate	Ability to travel/vacation time
Live near the water, mountains, or desert	Free time on weekends

How many of these considerations have you thought about? Which ones seem to be priorities to you? Is there any consistency throughout? As you conduct your research are you able to identify the priorities of the employer? Do they match up with yours?

What skills are needed?

Self-assessment includes skills assessment. What types of skills and abilities do you have? Which are necessary to be an effective candidate for a position? Some skills identified as important are:

listening	empathy
reasoning	public speaking
analysis	problem solving
mediation	negotiation
interpretation of data	research and writing
organization	time management
diplomacy	client development

These are just a few of the many skills necessary for success. Think in terms of what skills you currently have or are developing. Make sure that you identify in either your resume, cover letter or interview those skills that make you an ideal candidate for the position.