

Job Search Strategy

Step One: Create/Refine Your List of Goals

- 1) Create a list of short-term and long-term career goals.
- 2) Use resources like The Pathfinder and What Color Is My Parachute to determine what you're good at and/or passionate about.
- 3) Determine what the range of salaries is for each type of job in which you are interested.
- 4) Determine what your ideal, realistic salary goal is.

Step Two: Create/Refine Resumes, Cover Letters, and Follow-up Letters

- 1) See your paralegal studies professors for tips on writing resumes and cover letters.
- 2) Create/refine your resume.
- 3) Create/refine generic
 - a) Cover letters;
 - b) Follow-up letters.
- 4) Have someone proofread and review the documents generated in item #s 1 & 2.
- 5) Make any necessary revisions.

Step Three: Make Three Master Lists of Potential Jobs

- 1) Look for both advertised and unadvertised jobs. Many of the jobs available in the law are never advertised.
- 2) Look for advertised jobs and job search tips in the following places:
 - a) American Association of Paralegal Education (AAfPE): www.aafpe.org;
 - b) American Bar Association (ABA): www.abanet.org;
 - c) Boston Bar Association (BBA): www.bostonbar.org;
 - d) *Boston Globe* classifieds (Boston.com): <http://www.boston.com/jobs/>;
 - e) *Boston Herald* classifieds: www.bostonherald.com/jobfind/;
 - f) Findlaw.com: <http://www.careers.findlaw.com/>;
 - g) Massachusetts Bar Association (MBA): www.massbar.org;
 - h) *Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly*: www.masslaw.com;
 - i) Massachusetts Paralegal Association (MPA): www.massparalegal.org;
 - j) National Association of Legal Assistants (NALA): www.nala.org;
 - k) National Association of Women Lawyers (NAWL): www.abanet.org/nawl;
 - l) National Federation of Paralegal Associations (NFPA): www.paralegals.org.
 - m) Local/regional newspapers.

- n) Look at advertisements from and web sites for any institution that is likely to have a legal department:
 - i) Corporations;
 - ii) Hospitals;
 - iii) Schools;
 - iv) Federal, state, and local government.
- 3) Look for unadvertised jobs and map the legal world in your area by looking at *Martindale Hubbell* on-line at www.martindalehubbell.com (*Martindale Hubbell* lists law firms and other legal entities by area of practice and location):
 - a) Make a list of places by location (look at any locations you can get to by car, T, commuter rail, etc.) and area of practice (divide these areas of practice into litigation and non-litigation areas).
 - b) Use this list to make calls for informational interviews.
- 4) Make three master lists: one for advertised jobs, one for unadvertised jobs, one for contacts obtained via networking.

Step Four: Apply for Advertised Jobs, Set Up Informational Interviews, and Network

- 1) Systematically apply for advertised jobs and continue to check the sources listed above so that you can be aware of newly advertised jobs posted since your initial check of these sources.
- 2) Follow up on networking leads by setting up informational interviews and continue to network.
- 3) Use your master list of unadvertised jobs obtained from *Martindale Hubbell* and other sources to begin setting up informational interviews.
- 4) How to set up an informational interview:
 - a) Initial call: "Hi, my name is _____, and I am a student in the ABA-approved paralegal studies program at Suffolk University. I know you may not be hiring at the moment, but I am interested in learning more about the type(s) of law your firm/agency practices. Who would I speak to in order to set up an informational interview (or May I speak to the person in your firm/agency who hires paralegals to set up an informational interview)?"
 - b) Speaking with specific person: "Hi, my name is _____, and I am a student in the ABA-approved paralegal studies program at Suffolk University. I know you may not be hiring at the moment, but I am interested in learning more about the type(s) of law your firm/agency practices. Would it be possible for me to set up such an informational interview at a mutually convenient time?"
- 5) How to set up an informational interview from a networked contact:
 - a) Initial call: "Hi, my name is _____, and I am a student in the ABA-approved paralegal studies program at Suffolk University. _____"

- suggested I contact you. I know you may not be hiring at the moment, but I am interested in learning more about the type(s) of law your firm/agency practices. Who would I speak to in order to set up an informational interview (or May I speak to the person in your firm/agency who hires paralegals to set up an informational interview)?"
- b) Speaking with specific person: "Hi, my name is _____, and I am a student in the ABA-approved paralegal studies program at Suffolk University. _____ suggested I contact you. I know you may not be hiring at the moment, but I am interested in learning more about the type(s) of law your firm/agency practices. Would it be possible for me to set up such an informational interview at a mutually convenient time?"
- 6) Treat each informational interview like a job interview:
- a) Dress as you would for a job interview.
 - b) Bring copies of your resume, a writing sample, references, etc.
- 7) At the end of each informational interview,
- a) Thank the person for his/her time.
 - b) Say something like the following: "I'm really interested in the kind of work you do! Please keep my resume on file, and if a suitable job opens up here, please contact me! It would be an honor to work with you all!"
 - c) Then say something like: "I'm interested in finding out all I can about this area of the law. Do you know anyone else in the area who practices this type of law?"
 - d) If they give you a name, be sure to get contact info. for the person, and then say something like: "When I contact _____, may I say that you suggested I contact him/her?"
 - e) End by thanking the person once more for his/her time.

Step Five: Interview & Follow-up

- 1) See your professors for tips on interviewing.
- 2) Follow up with a thank you note.
- 3) Call the person after a reasonable amount of time.

Other Resources

Setting Goals/Finding Your Passion

1. Richard Nelson Bolles, What Color Is Your Parachute? (2008, updated annually).
2. Nicholas Lore, The Pathfinder: How to Choose or Change Your Career for a Lifetime of Satisfaction (1998).
3. Paul Tieger and Barbara Barron, Do What You Are: Discover the Perfect Career for You Through the Secrets of Personality Type (2007).

Paralegal Careers

1. Chere Estrin, Paralegal Career Guide (2002).
2. Angela Schneeman, Paralegal Careers (2000).

Paralegal Job Searches

1. Richard Nelson Bolles, The New Quick Job-Hunting Map (1990).
2. Michael Farr, Seven-Step Job Search (2006).
3. Marie Kisiel, How to Find a Job as a Paralegal: A Step-by-Step Job Search Guide (1996).
4. Margaret Pickard, Job Placement Strategies for Paralegals (2008).
5. Andrea Wagner, How to Land Your First Paralegal Job (2001).

Paralegal Internships

1. Richard Hughes, Surviving and Thriving in the Law Office: What Every Paralegal Should Know (2005).
2. Heidi Nasheri and Peter Kratcoski, A Guide to a Successful Legal Internship (1996).
3. Charles Nemeth, Paralegal Internship Manual (1995).

Resumes & Cover Letters

1. Richard Beatty, The Perfect Cover Letter (1989).
2. Michael Betrus, Perfect Phrases for Cover Letters (2006).

Networking

1. Anne Baber and Lynne Waymon, Make Your Contacts Count (2002).
2. Diane Darling, The Networking Survival Guide: Get the Success You Want by Tapping into the People You Know (2003).
3. Michael Salmon, Super Networking: Reach the Right People, Build Your Career Network, and Land Your Dream Job Now (2004).

Interviewing

1. Jay Block and Michael Betrus, Great Answers, Great Questions for Your Job Interview (2004).