

**Mastering Call Back Interviews
Duke Law School
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Firm's Call Back Strategy

- 50-70% offers from call backs
- A balance of sales and assessment
- Visit areas in more detail
- No great choreography
- All interviewers submit comments
- Committees evaluate and decide

The 2007 Market

- Strong across the board
- In most major markets
- The invasion of national firms
- Overhanging uncertainty about 2008 and beyond
- On balance: a very favorable market

From 60 Interviews On Campus To 3 Summer Associates in 2007

■ Campus Interviews	60
■ Invite to Office	26
■ Call Backs Declined	8
■ Call Back Interviews	18
■ Offers Given	14
■ Offers Declined	11
■ Offers Accepted	3

Campus v. Office Interviews

The Key Difference

- Assess v. Sell
- Campus Balance tips toward Assessment
- Office – Balance tips toward selling
- Both campus and office are critical

The day of interviews

- Exercise rest caffeine
- Yes I can tell that you smoke
- No, drinking the night before is not a good idea
- Arrive well in advance
- Things to bring
- Turn off your phone-blackberry!
- Get in your Phil Jackson Zen Zone

Wild Kingdom Rules

Observe Your Environment

- How lawyers relate to all in office
- Details and Knick Knacks in office
- Open and closed doors
- Does the firm (and interviewer) seem prepared
- Does it seem random or thought out
- Don't obsess the small stuff.....

Benefits & Burdens For Students At The Nation's Best Schools

- Greater Opportunities & Greater Stress
- Many Who Advise You Have Limited Experience or A Substantial Bias
- Many Interviewers Not From Top 15 Schools
- Being Surrounded By Extraordinary Success Can Be Discouraging & Unnerving

Time Allocation

30 Minute Call Back Interview

- Welcome 1
- Assess 5-10
- Answer Questions / Sell 15-18
- Conclude Interview 1
- Notes and Transition 2

Researching Law Firms

Dubious and Dangerous Sources

- Vault
- www.AboveTheLaw.com
- Friends and room-mates
- The law firm “closer”
- Law school ancient grapevine
- Greedy Associates
- Random anonymous bloggers
- Negative selling by competitors

The Vault Report: Students' Bible

- Why Vault is critical to students
- Easy free and apparent credibility
- Zagat's unknown 1st cousin
- Popularity and Prestige

Other Source Students Rely Upon

- Am Law Surveys of Summers and Mid Levels
- Am Law 100 Report on PPP and Economics
- Am Law Corporate Scorecard
- Am Law A-List

- **But not** Chambers and related “rankings”

Researching Law Firms

Dependable Sources

- Websites
- NALP reports
- Recent experiences with Duke Students
- Legal Media
- Business Media
- Your own independent assessment

To Master a Market

- NYT and WSJ –every day forever
- Local business weeklies / dailies
- Local legal media
- Become an active consumer of serious journalism about the profession

Assessment – Continues During Call Back Interviews

- All students Must be Assessed
- Don't prejudge – favorably or negatively
- Test ambition and hard work
- Is the student smart enough
- Achievers v. joiners
- Brilliance v. Bad Behavior?
- Is the student serious about the firm

Assessment - Continued

- Ties to the city –
- Pulse – energy –
- People Skills
- Long-term commitment to private practice

How Employers Elicit Facts

- Open ended questions
- Focus on key experiences
- Ask bottom line questions
- Maintaining control
- Drilling below the resume into life
- Testing lawyerly skills by discussing life experiences

Selling

- Why employers sell
- How they sell
- What should you believe? Distill? Ignore?
- What about comparisons with other firms?
- What about tough issues – hours / money

Why Some Students Fail

- Bad Attitude
- Poor Preparation
- Unrealistically Narrow /Optimistic Search
- Waiting To Contact Non OCI Firms
- No Commitment to Private Practice
- No Ties to the City
- Interviewing in Too Many Cities
- Aversion to Long Hours / Hard Work

Death by diction

- Dude they were , like, bizarre. Like I'm still so worried. They were full of like, freaks, and, like, strange dudes. I like wanted to get the hell out. I was, like, wow. But, like, the second firm was, like, spectacular. I think they'll, like, give me an offer, like, today. They're, like, the best place I've seen.

Death by diction 1970's style

- Dude it was so heavy. So far out I'm still jonesin' about that firm. It was wacked man –a spaz factory full of chumps and cheese weasals. Those zipperheads gotta get real. Just a major bummer – They made me want to book down the street and catch them on the flip side of nothin. But that second firm was so bad they were bitchen – kind of funky they probably know how to freak out. Solid. Mondo cool. Thought I'd get the offer RFN. Tubular. Can You Dig it?

Social Events

- You and a guest are invited to a dinner party at a senior partner's home 3 weeks from now. What do you do?
- R.s.v.p. promptly – attend – enjoy calamari, sushi, and grouper - have a sparkling time and do nothing anyone will remember next week

Or Perhaps... Instead.....

- **RSVP and no show**
- **Don't RSVP but show up anyway**
- **Change the name of your guest 3 times**
- **Bring your "crew" unannounced**
- **Complain about the food, drink, seating chart**
- **Decide you may like another partner's party better and go there uninvited instead**
- **Get bombed beyond comprehension**
- **Major meltdown with your s.o. on the patio**

Practicing and Parenting

- Demographic imperative
- Legitimacy of commitment
- Many firms still run by guys with limited parental involvement
- Peak years of parenting inherent conflict with peak years of professional development

Facts to Know

- Number of women equity partners
- Numbers of partners and associates with less than full time status
- Policies on time to partner, compensation, variations by department or office
- Women equity partners who run departments or major client relationships
- Beware data puffed by women members on administrative committees
- Listen and learn the story of the interviewer

Discussing Tough Subjects

- There is no “one” answer to any question
- Encourage open ended discussion
- Demeanor v. words
- Progress takes time

Why is this a priority

- Clients are demanding it
- Excessive attrition of valuable attorneys
- A recruiting priority
- But not all lawyers are on board
- No firm thinks with one mind or speaks with one voice

Practicing and Parenting Some Cautionary Advice

- Year 30 in a 100 year long process
- No easy answers for lawyers or firms
- Agendas initiatives and websites can disguise mediocre realities
- Will the commitment withstand a recession?

Practicing and Parenting

Practical Steps for Lawyers

- Live downtown
- Get exceptional child care
- Communicate with spouse about expectations and the table of life
- Parenting + demanding profession is hard, challenging, exhausting and rewarding

10 Predictions About 2027

1. 10 U.S. firms will have 9,000 lawyers with 25 offices in 8 nations
2. Starting Salary: \$700K / Average PPP Firm \$5MM
3. Law firms will go public in the 2020 boom – many will fail by 2025.
4. 50 National firms will declare a recruiting holiday during a recession
5. Law schools will have virtual campuses & merge with foreign schools
6. Law firms will hire off college campuses
7. A law firm will open an office in outer space and offer split summers
8. Wal-Mart will open a 5,000 lawyer firm called WalLaw.
9. A firm will offer to make its summer associates temporary partners.
10. Tiger Woods will win the Masters at 58
11. The Bears hire Ditka to reclaim 1985 glory. He leads them to the Super Bowl.