

Business & Careers

Going beyond the usual Q & A session



Warren Smith
The Headhunter

Recruiters are in the unique position in the market where we conduct countless interviews, but also see how many other organizations conduct their interviews as well. With my company, we are frequently asked to sit in on interviews, often to help improve the overall interview experience and provide feedback to employers who don't have the opportunity to independently evaluate their current hiring practices.

Having seen countless different law firms, law departments, and companies go through the hiring process for lawyers at all levels of experience, here are what some of the best law firms and law departments are doing to ensure they get the most out of their hiring process.

Testing

We are seeing an increasing number of companies, and even some law firms, begin to introduce substantive testing as part of their skills assessment. Some companies even provide a written exam, where they will provide a simple fact pattern and ask the candidate their thoughts on how they would resolve the issue.

Typically, it is not the actual answer they are looking for; rather, it is the manner in which the candidate both seeks information and how they go about trying to resolve the issue that is being tested. Some companies will do a similar test using a scenario example, but then engage in a dialogue to achieve a similar result.

Behaviour profiling

Many companies and an increasing number of law firms are exploring behavioural assessments to better understand candidate personalities beyond the initial interview.

Behaviour profiling can allow prospective employers to better understand how to both assess and manage new hires. For some firms, they take the additional step of understanding which profiles best fit the particular roles within their firms: a research lawyer profile is clearly going to be different than a rainmaker profile.

In creating profile templates, this also forces the firm to think more critically about what they are hiring for, and focus their recruitment based on need, as opposed to reactive hiring based on a positive interview experience. DISC and Myers Briggs are common tests used in the market for this purpose.

Convert to specifics

Candidates can often create a great interview experience by keeping the conversation at 30,000 feet, leaving their

“

Comparing both sides of the experience can afford law firms the opportunity to better focus their recruitment process, yielding a better overall hiring pattern.

Warren Smith
The Counsel Network

experience open to favorable interpretation by the interviewer. For many law firms (and companies), they don't relish the prospect of a lengthy interview process, and will hear what they want to hear in the interview, only to later discover their inferences did not match reality once the candidate is in the job.

Smart interviewers will force the candidate to convert their experience to specifics—discuss what their role responsibility was on a given transaction, but also ask them to explain why what they were doing on the deal was important to the overall client objectives, or for more junior lawyers, how their part tied into the overall transaction, for example.

Converting interview answers to more specific information is critical in properly assessing a candidate's abilities with your need, and the best interviewers in the market do this on a consistent basis.

Compare intake, exit interview

Some of the largest, global firms have taken the added step of comparing their intake interview notes with the exit interview, to see whether their initial assessment of a potential hire matched with the final experience.

It can be acceptable to hire someone with a 'known' risk (no candidate is perfect); by comparing intake to exit interview notes, law firms (and corporations) can better assess whether their intake interviews are properly designed to catch these risk variables, or whether they are simply missing issues altogether that a more focused interview might otherwise uncover.

Comparing both sides of the experience can afford law firms the opportunity to



RILUEDA / ISTOCKPHOTO.COM

better focus their recruitment process, yielding a better overall hiring pattern.

In the end, as always, hiring is a time-intensive process when done right, but taking some of the steps above can help ensure the process has a more consistently positive outcome, making the time investment more effective and productive for the organization as a whole.

Warren Smith is managing partner of The Counsel Network, Canada's oldest and most respected lawyer recruitment and career consulting firms. He is also the first Canadian to be elected president of the National Association of Legal Search Consultants, North America's leading legal recruitment industry association. Follow him on Twitter @lawheadhunter.

REAL ESTATE / DEVELOPMENT LAWYER — HAMILTON/2+ YEARS

Our boutique firm focusses on residential/land development, including a wide variety of subdivision and condominium work, acquisitions and new home sales. We are looking to add a junior associate to join our growing Hamilton-based team. The ideal candidate will have 2 to 4 years' experience, preferably in a real estate oriented practice, and is a quick learner with an entrepreneurial spirit and strong drafting skills.

Please e-mail resume to tcosby@dcalawyers.com.



The Law Department is recruiting for a **Vice President, Law** to support Janssen Canada, our pharmaceutical business located in Toronto. This Vice President will sit on the management board of Janssen (Canada) Inc., advise senior management on general legal matters, oversee our Janssen Canada legal team and be primarily responsible for Law Department alignment with this business. This position is located at company headquarters in Toronto, Canada.

This attorney will be responsible for providing the management board and other cross-functional business partners with strategic legal advice and counsel in all areas of law, so as to further the interests of the business, while protecting the company's rights, interests and reputation. As a member of the Janssen Canada management board, main responsibilities would include coordinating legal matters for the business; partnering with business clients, colleagues in the Johnson & Johnson Law Department globally and with outside counsel, all to support business opportunities while ensuring compliance with applicable legislation, industry guidelines and internal policies. You would provide strategic proactive and reactive legal advice on a wide range of proposed business initiatives and issues, including in the areas of sales and marketing, regulatory and medical affairs, clinical trials, quality, access and reimbursement, health care compliance, privacy and employment.

The successful candidate will also be responsible for preparing and negotiating complex commercial agreements across the functional areas listed above, including services, access, partnership and distribution agreements. For more information, please visit our **Johnson & Johnson Careers website www.careers.jnj.com** and enter **7186140908** in the search field.