Laying the groundwork for your job search is an important part of the career development process. The preliminary steps you take will significantly impact your job satisfaction as well as the ease with which you are able to find employment.

The sections that follow contain information on researching employers and networking, why these areas are important, and how to start the process.

NETWORKING AS A JOB SEARCH STRATEGY

The first thing to understand about networking is that its sole focus is not getting a job, although it will hopefully lead to one. Networking is the systematic formation of new relationships for the purpose of sharing information, advice, and potential job leads. There is a misconception that networking involves using others. While networking is not pressuring others into finding you a job, it is a valuable tool for expanding and branching out relationships with people that can help lead you to a job and to success in your career. As your career progresses, you will find that your network can be a valuable source of information, not only for job leads, but also for your professional needs, such as client referrals.

Why Networking Is Important to You

Learning About Jobs/Career Paths

When you contact an attorney, you will not be asking for a job. Rather, you will ask for information about his or her practice area (e.g., litigation, criminal prosecution, intellectual property), employer (e.g., law firm, corporation, government agency), and career path. Learning about job options is a basic step in making your career decisions. Most practitioners are happy to help students. They enjoy reminiscing about law school and sharing advice about the education process. Therefore, for new law students, networking is an important way to collect information and advice about:

- Succeeding in law school, including how to prioritize time and keep perspective
- First-year courses, professors, and preparation for class
- Career options
Employers Hire Those Who Network

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 70% of jobs are secured through networking, making it the most effective way to find a job. Most recent law school graduates are hired by personal referral or direct contact, i.e. by talking to people, developing a rapport with them, and continuing to follow-up. Surprisingly, however, the primary problem among people seeking work is that they do not notify other people that they are looking for employment. As a result, they limit the number of tools they are using to find jobs.

Another astonishing fact is that many job openings are not publicly advertised. According to the George Washington Hatchet December 2007 issue, the published job market accounts for only 15% of the total available jobs. To find the remaining 85% (suitably named the “hidden job market”), unemployed individuals must research various social networks and develop a list of contacts they can tap into and utilize to the fullest extent.

Making Contacts Where You Want to Live

One of the major misconceptions law students have is that they can only find a job in the geographic area where they attended school. While it may be easier to find a local job, many students are successful in finding employment outside of the West. In fact, typically, 55% of BYU law graduates land jobs outside of Utah, including jobs on the East Coast.

Building a Support System

Another benefit to having a strong network, particularly as you begin practicing law, is the support and information you gain from those individuals. Your network of attorney friends can answer questions and provide assistance with many issues that you will face as a practitioner. Whether it is hiring a new secretary, trying to find clients, or wondering how to proceed with a rarely used legal procedure, having a network of other practitioners to assist you will be a great benefit.
Networking is not a quick job-search method, but it provides you with the opportunity to learn about particular types of employment and gives you data to make more-informed job choices. Networking is not something you do once; it is an ongoing process and should become a natural part of your professional life.

**Know Who Your Potential Networking Contacts Are**

The first step in networking is thinking about all your potential contacts. Keep in mind that no contact is too remote. Take a few minutes to fill out the “Who Are Your Contacts?” chart below. You may be surprised by how many contacts you already have. Look through your address books and alumni directories. Also, think of all the people to whom you or your parents sent or would send wedding or graduation announcements to, as well as those for whom you have performed volunteer work. Any of these people could help you in your job hunt.

Additionally, these initial contacts can refer you to other people, who can in turn refer you to other people, and so on. Your contact network can branch out quickly, and someone is bound to know of a job opening somewhere. What is even more valuable is that your network can be expanded and used continuously during your career as a method for obtaining information.

**Make a working list of all your potential contacts**

At this point, do not evaluate whether they would have any information about your area of interest, or even whether they might know anyone who does. Simply write down the names of all the people you know. Consider the following categories:

Accountants

Alumni Association

Armed Forces
Athletic Clubs

Attorneys

Bankers

Children

Church

College Acquaintances

Counselors

Current Job

Customer or Clients

Dentists/Doctors

Family

Friends

Hobbies
Insurance Agents

Judges

Neighbors

Prior Employers

Professional Associations

Professors

Sports Teams

Volunteer Affiliations

Seek Out New Contacts

Law School Alumni

The Law School Alumni Directory provides a searchable database of alumni, including their contact address, phone number, and areas of practice. The database is searchable by name, location, practice area, languages spoken, and more. You can get the username and password from the CSO once you begin to attend the law school in the fall.

www.law2.byu.edu (click on: Current Students > Careers > Networking > BYU Law School Alumni Directory)

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Law Society Advising Network

The Law Society Advising Network contains names, areas of practice, and contact information of Law Society members who are willing to speak with students. Although you are free to contact any attorney, members of the Advising Network have specifically expressed a willingness to talk with students. The Advising Network database includes information similar to that in the Alumni Directory.

www.law2.byu.edu (click on: Current Students > Careers > Networking > Law Society Advising Network) Username: law; Password: school

Law School Classmates

Do not overlook your classmates as a possible resource. Your classmates have information that can help you, and many students have found job leads by talking to their fellow students. Your fellow alums will also prove to be a valuable resource as you begin practicing.

Law School Faculty and Staff

Law professors and staff members are also valuable contacts. The law school faculty and many members of the administration were practicing attorneys before they started working at the law school. They are generally more than happy to meet with students to discuss career options and can put you in touch with attorneys who are practicing in areas that are of interest to you.

The CSO has many other types of published legal directories that give information on attorneys, law firms, corporations, and government agencies.

Use Law School Activities, Extra-curricular, and Volunteer Opportunities to Network

One of the best ways to network is to become involved in various activities. This is a particularly good method if you are reserved and are uncomfortable with the thought of calling anyone to ask them about work. By becoming involved, you can meet many different people, and you also have a reason to talk with them. Having a mutual interest or experience helps create a bond between people. By attending events or participating in activities, you may also escape the feeling that you are using someone just to get a job. The following are some activities to consider:

- Become a member of a law student club that interests you
• Publish an article in a school Journal or Law Review
• Interview practitioners in an effort to gather information for your substantial writing requirement
• Participate in the Research Pool (the Research Pool is a list of students available to do one-time research projects for practicing attorneys)—Contact the cso at cssec@law.byu.edu, if interested
• Write an article about a practitioner for the school newspaper or other publication
• Become a research assistant for a professor
• Volunteer to help with cso or other law school activities
• Volunteer to assist in alumni activities, such as the Alumni Weekend
• Volunteer in, join, or attend a local bar association or specialty section of the state bar, such as Women Lawyers of Utah
• Volunteer to help run (or attend) a Continuing Legal Education class on a topic that interests you
• Extern (work for credit) for a local judge or a judge in the city where you want to practice
• Take part in law school fundraising activities
• Do volunteer work at your ideal firm or job
• Attend lecture series, seminars, or brown bags that are of interest to you and be sure to speak with the presenter afterwards
• Attend alumni receptions held by local Law Society chapters when you are in their city
• If you find a bar journal article particularly interesting, follow-up with the author
• Join a lawyers’ sports team
• Spend some time observing proceedings at the courthouse
PLANNING AN EFFECTIVE NETWORKING STRATEGY

Begin Early

Remember, networking is simply forming new friendships with your career/profession as the initial basis of the relationship. It is not begging people for a job. Thus, the sooner you start this process, the easier it will be. As a pre-law or first-year law student, you can convincingly tell people you want to meet with them to gather information about their work as part of your job research. As a third-year law student, one month away from graduation, you will likely appear to be begging for work; the premise that you need some information will be unbelievable and will make a bad impression.

After Formulating a Potential List of Contacts:

- Contact the individuals on your list.
- Inform your contacts that you are going to law school if they do not already know.
- Ask if they have attorney friends or acquaintances you may contact for law school/career advice. If your contacts do not know attorneys, ask for names of business professionals or prominent community members who may know attorneys.
- Contact these referrals and build your network. Ask each attorney about his or her law practice and for advice about law school. You may also want to ask them for a resume critique.
- Stay in touch. Update contacts regarding your law school activities and build relationships. Remember, people do not hire strangers.
- You may also make cold contacts with attorneys who specialize in areas that interest you.

Your initial group of contacts is known as the Level I or Primary Group. The group to whom this Primary Group refers you is the Level II or Secondary Group. The next group is called Level III, and so on. Few people find jobs through Level I contacts. Instead, most people find jobs at the second, third, and fourth levels.

To contact your Primary Group, you can make phone calls. For subsequent referrals, you could start with a contact letter or email, but phone calls are always best. Of course, if a contact recommends that you send a resume to someone, send a resume and a cover letter, making it clear that...
you are interested in employment and identifying the contact who made the referral.

Most often, however, your contacts will refer you to other contacts who might have information about a job. In this case, requesting an informational interview is appropriate. An informational interview is simply an interview where you ask the questions. Your goal is to gather information about the contacts’ practice areas, including what their work involves, the pros and cons of their work, how they became involved in a particular type of law, and so forth.

The Networking Strategy in Action

One effective strategy involves (1) initial phone calls or emails, (2) follow-up phone calls, (3) the appointment, and (4) follow-up correspondence.

Phone Calls or Contact Letters

If circumstances and money permit, a phone call is the best first step. Tell the contact who you are, how you got his or her name, and why you are calling. For example, you might say:

Hello, Mr./Ms._________________. This is Mary Brown. I am calling at the suggestion of Bob Smith who is a mutual friend. I am starting law school at BYU this fall, and I’m spending time this summer contacting attorneys to learn about different practice options. Would it be possible to meet with you for fifteen or twenty minutes sometime next week to learn more about your intellectual property practice?

When you call, be sensitive to the attorney’s time and prepared to conduct your interview over the phone, either then or at a later time, if the attorney is too busy to meet you in person.

If your first contact is by email, include the same information as in the introductory phone call.

Remember that you are asking for career information and advice. Thus, do not put pressure on the individual to find you a job, interview you for a job, or distribute your resume. Although a job may be the eventual result or

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BYU Law School Career Services
your long-term goal, at this point, an informative conversation should be your objective.

**Follow-up Phone Calls after Initial Contact Letter**

A common mistake is sending contact letters and then passively waiting for responses. Your contacts are busy, so you might wait a long time. A follow-up phone call is a good way to remind the contact of your letter and to actually set up a meeting time. Before you call, prepare a script so you can clearly and succinctly introduce yourself and articulate your needs. Your ability to present yourself and explain what you hope to gain from the meeting may determine this contact’s response to you. You might try something such as the following:

Hello, Mr./Ms. __________. This is Mary Brown, I am calling at the suggestion of Bob Smith. I sent you a letter this past week explaining ... [restate the first paragraph of your letter], and I was wondering if you might have 15 minutes sometime this week to meet with me for the purpose of discussing __________?

Remember not to exert pressure on this person to find you a job. The objective is to arrange for a personal meeting to gather information and advice from the contact regarding his or her job experience.

**The Appointment**

If possible, when you make appointments with contacts or referrals, ask for a personal meeting rather than conducting your questioning over the telephone. It helps if the contact can attach a face and personality with your name.

Because you are the interviewer in an informational interview, plan specific questions to ask before the appointment. However, also be prepared to answer questions about your background, motivation for attending law school, and career plans. While you want to gather helpful information, you also want to make a favorable impression so the attorney will remember you and want to help you in the future. Your goal should be to acquire several additional contacts from each personal contact you make. If time permits, ask the person to look over your resume and offer constructive criticism.

Be prepared to lead the conversation. Here are some suggestions:
• Explain the purpose of the meeting and show your contact how he/she can be helpful.
• Remind your contact of the relationship that ties you together.
• Ask questions to elicit the information you need.
• Get the names of others who could be helpful to you.
• Be very considerate of your contact’s time.

Follow-up Correspondence

This last step is important but often overlooked. You should thank the contact in writing for the opportunity to meet, and you should also keep your contacts appraised of your job search status. If a lead results in an interview or new information about you becomes available, let your contacts know. A note or telephone call every month or two is appropriate.

Record Keeping

Networking should not be random or sporadic. You should formulate a plan and keep records on the people you contact, the information you receive, and your impressions of the interview and work environment. Many students find it helpful to use a spreadsheet to keep track of each contact. Each entry should include the following:
• The contact’s name (spelled correctly), phone number, and address.
• The date of the contact.
• The results of the meeting.
• Follow up that is required and the time frame.
• The person who referred you and that person’s relationship to the contact.
• Any additional personal information that may be helpful.
• Your impressions of the person and the organization.
FEARS, MYTHS, AND DISABLING BELIEFS ABOUT NETWORKING

Most negative attitudes toward networking spring from two misconceptions: (1) misunderstanding what networking means and (2) underestimating the ability and willingness of others to help.

Misunderstanding What Networking Means

Many people shy away from networking because they do not want to impose upon a relationship. This attitude substantiates a misunderstanding of networking. Networking is not asking for a job. Employment networking is a process of reaching out to a group of friends and acquaintances for their mutual personal and professional support, which includes help with the job-hunting process. The more people you have in your network, the more likely you are to receive leads, interviews, and job offers. The result will be a geometric progression of contacts working in your favor.

However, networking is not a one-way street. As you develop personal and professional relationships, they will also turn to you for assistance. As you progress in your law school and professional career, you will be able to enrich the lives of others by introducing them to the people you have already befriended.

Underestimating Others’ Willingness/Ability to Help You

Others fear that networking is an imposition on the contact person. This belief is disabling and simply untrue. The basis of all networking is relationships. If you have solid relationships with others, they will not feel that you are abusing the friendship. Your friends will welcome the opportunity to support you, and even new contacts will often be flattered that you are seeking their advice. No one forgets what it was like to be job hunting.

Some people are natural extroverts and have no fear or hesitation about networking, but those who are hesitant will soon learn that people like to help. Many people will befriend you in this process if you just make the effort. Attorneys like to talk about their work and are usually interested in helping students make contacts.

Inappropriate Networking

While networking is not job-begging, if you only communicate with networking contacts when you need something, they will know why you are...
calling and the situation may be uncomfortable. Do not call contacts just because you are looking for a job. Call to ask for advice, or send an article that made you think of them. Involve contacts in your search and interests, and become involved in theirs (thus the importance of following-up). The relationship must involve mutual support. You should expect to give of yourself. In addition, do not rush to network at every occasion. Use good judgment to decide if it is appropriate in a given situation. Inevitably, if all you talk about is needing a job, people will run when they see you!

**Negative Attitudes**

A genuine and confident attitude is extremely important in networking. If you view networking as laborious and a hassle, it is nearly impossible to be enthusiastic, have a positive attitude, or build rapport. Negative beliefs and behavior limit ability, so focus on a positive outcome and you will produce results. Remember: build relationships first; ask about jobs and referrals second!

**For More Information**

Visit the cso’s blog for more articles on networking tips – [www.byulawcso.blogspot.com](http://www.byulawcso.blogspot.com)


*Collection of articles, advice, and tips for having successful job fair and online job searching experiences.*
BEGINNING THE JOB SEARCH—
RESEARCHING CAREER OPTIONS AND PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYERS

When it comes to the job search, most students are so concerned about getting a job and making a good impression that they forget to ask themselves if they would really want the job. You need to find out if both the area of practice and the employer are right for you. Deciding while on the job that the job is not what you want is an expensive lesson and a waste of valuable time, energy, and resources.

There are three essential parts to the career-planning process. They are the what, the who, and the where of the career search. As you gather information about potential employers, you need to decide the following:

- **What**: What do I want to do, and what type of law do I want to practice? What appeals to me, and where would my skills be fully utilized?
- **Who**: What kind of organization or employer do I want to work for? What type of working conditions best suit me, and which employers provide them?
- **Where**: Where do I want to live? Why am I drawn to that particular area, and do I have any connections to that city or state?

Another significant result of doing your research is that you will be better prepared for the interview. You need to know enough about the position and the company to show how your qualifications fit the job requirements better than those of other applicants. You will have a much easier task selling yourself to an employer if you know what skills the employer values. You can also impress an interviewer by knowing the current issues of that particular business, or the up-and-coming legal issues that may impact the employer’s practice.

Research is an essential part of the job search. It should not be limited to preparing for on-campus interviews and resume drops, but should be expanded beyond employers participating in CSO programs. After all, your ideal employer might not be coming to campus.
Discover What Type of Industry You May Want to Work In

The following lists include questions designed to help you identify or revisit issues you should consider before choosing a firm, corporation, government agency, or public interest job to pursue a career.

Considerations in Selecting Law Firms

**Firm Character / Working Environment**
- What is the firm’s general character?
- What are its specialties and major areas of practice?
- Does the firm have a friendly atmosphere? Is there a sense of camaraderie and enjoyment or stiffness and formality? Do lawyers cooperate with one another, or is there a “survival of the fittest” atmosphere?
- Would you enjoy working with the firm’s lawyers? Do they have sufficiently varied backgrounds to make the office interesting?
- What is the relationship between younger and older lawyers in the firm? Are the channels of communication formal or informal? What mentoring opportunities are provided to new associates?
- What is the relationship between partners and associates? Between attorneys and support staff?
- What is the firm’s reputation among its peers, clients, and the general public?
- What are the firm’s prevailing attitudes and practices on such matters as ethics, pro bono work, community service, government service, and continuing education?
- What are the firm’s billable and non-billable hour requirements? Are there any unspoken billable-hour requirements or other requirements? Does the firm have other work-related requirements for its lawyers?
- What is the firm’s stance towards family? Is maternity and/or paternity leave available, and do employees take it?
- What is the attrition rate of young associates at the firm?
- How much control do major clients exert over the firm?

**Stability**
- Is the firm financially and professionally stable?
- Do you have confidence and pride in the firm’s lawyers, their legal ability, ethics, judgment, and standards? Do you trust, respect, and admire these individuals?
• Has the number of the firm’s partners and associates grown significantly in the past 15 years?
• Has the firm suffered any major defections of partners, associates, or staff?
• Are the firm’s organization and administration systems sound and running smoothly, or are there signs of cliques or dissidence?
• What is the firm’s future? Is it getting and keeping new people of high caliber? Has it acquired important new clients in recent years?
• Are the firm’s clients solid, varied, and of different sizes? Do clients have important and interesting concerns?
• Does the firm have an active local practice with substantial clients in its metropolitan area?
• Does the firm have an active national practice with substantial clients and offices around the United States?
• Does the firm have an active international practice with substantial foreign clients and offices outside the United States?
• Is the firm’s success tied to many clients or a few?
• How is the firm affected by business cycles of boom and recession?

Professional Development
• What do new associates do? How does the firm determine and assign work to associates? How do the work assignments and responsibilities change over the years?
• How does the firm train new associates? What members of the firm are responsible for training? Does the firm have a formal training program for new associates?
• Must an associate become a specialist in a particular area of law? When do associates specialize? Who decides on the area of specialty?
• Do associates have direct interaction with clients?
• How do the firm and the associate resolve differences?
• What emphasis does the firm place on the ability of associates to attract and retain new or existing business?
• Does the firm train associates in business development?

Performance Evaluation
• How, and how often, is an associate’s performance judged?
• What form of evaluation does the firm use? Who is responsible for evaluating associates?
What are the firm’s criteria for associate development? What emphasis does the firm place on an associate’s ability to acquire new clients and business when it makes evaluation decisions?

Who has access to an associate’s evaluation? Is the evaluation put in the associate’s permanent file? Does the associate get a written copy of the evaluation? Does the associate have an opportunity to discuss the evaluation?

Compensation

What is the firm’s policy on compensation, bonuses, and raises?

What fringe benefits does the firm offer to associates? Are the associates able to take advantage of these benefits (i.e., do new associates actually have the opportunity to enjoy their vacation days, or are they expected to be available at any time to respond to client concerns)?

Does the firm financially reward associates who generate new clients and business? What emphasis is placed on an associate’s ability to develop new business when it makes compensation decisions?

Partnership Opportunities

When does an associate become a partner in a firm? Do business cycles significantly affect partnership opportunities in the firm? Has the firm admitted fewer associates to partnership during periods of business contraction in the local community or economy?

Is the partnership track multi-tiered?

What criteria does the firm use in deciding to admit associates to the partnership? Does the firm use a competitive standard that places a predetermined number of partners to be admitted in a given field? Does the firm use a “meet the firm’s standard of performance” test and admit all associates who meet it?

Do new partners have to buy in to the partnership?

If associates may work part-time (e.g., while their children are young), how does this affect the partnership track?

What happens to associates who are not admitted to the partnership? If there are not opportunities for these associates within the firm, does it help place them in other jobs? If so, does the firm have many prominent and successful alumni?
Location

- Is the firm located in a city that is a good place to work and live?
  Are there cultural and recreational activities, citizen interest groups, adequate public transportation, and convenient and attractive residential areas with good schools?
- How long is the average commute to work?
- Is the firm located in an area with strong and active bar associations, continuing legal education programs, and interesting professional groups?

Considerations in Selecting Corporations

- Is the corporate counsel departmentalized, or does each attorney handle any matter of concern?
- Is it possible for attorneys to move into management?
- What other job opportunities are available for attorneys who choose or are forced to leave the corporation?
- How are attorneys viewed within the corporation?
- How often and for what matters does the corporation use outside counsel?

Considerations in Selecting Government Agencies

- How have the government layoffs of the past affected the agency?
- What kind of budget constraints does this agency have? How does the agency’s budget affect the workplace or environment (e.g., outdated computer systems)?
- Has the agency been able to replace attorneys when necessary or must it work with a smaller staff than is needed?
- Will you be handling matters that will give you transferable skills should you decide to leave the agency?
- What has happened to attorneys who have left this agency? Have they moved into private practice, corporations, lobbying, or other agencies?
- Is the agency doing work of declining significance to the current administration?
- Will the agency pay or assist in paying for bar fees, advanced degrees, and continuing legal education?
- What is the relationship between the attorneys and the support staff?

Considerations in Selecting Public Interest Groups

- Does this organization handle interesting matters?
Does the organization have severe budget constraints?
Is the size of the legal staff adequate to handle the workload?
How much staff turnover has the organization experienced?
What types of positions do attorneys take after leaving the organization?
Is this a legislative, advocacy, or litigation-orientated organization?
Will you be working with individual clients or groups?
Are the organization’s staff members dedicated to the organization’s goals?

Enroll in the CSO’s Professional Development Lecture Series

The CSO offers a 0.5 credit class both fall and winter semesters (Law 550 and 552) in which practitioners in a variety of areas talk about their work. It is a wonderful opportunity for students to gain information about a practice area or employer by listening directly to someone who works in that field. Some semesters, the lecture series offers multiple specialized tracks (e.g. public interest, small firms, big firms, international employers).

Utilize the CSO’s Home Page

The Career Services home page is a great place to begin your job search, and can be found at: www.law2.byu.edu (click on: Current Students > Careers)

The site is updated regularly and includes links to the following CSO publications and resources:

CSO Publications

The following CSO publications are available online at www.law2.byu.edu (click on: Current Students > Careers > Guidebooks):

- Guide to Professional Development
- The Job Hunt Guidebook
- Guide to Judicial Clerkship
- Guide to Alternative Careers
- Public Interest Guidebook

Symplicity

This system contains a listing of all student job notices posted by the CSO. It is also the program used for on-campus and job fair applications and
interview scheduling. You will create your own profile, and first year students can access Symplicity to apply for jobs on November 1.

**Externship Database**

One of the most popular programs for first-year students is the Externship Program. Under this program, students gain practical experience and earn law school credit while working for a private firm, corporation, government, or public interest office. More specific information concerning the program will be given out in the fall.

[www.law2.byu.edu](http://www.law2.byu.edu) (click on: Current Students > Careers > Externships)

**OCIs, Recruiting, and Job Fair Information**

Information about the CSO’s On-campus Interviewing Program and Off-campus recruiting events, such as job fairs and the NY/DC Early Interviewing Programs, is available online. The information includes names, locations, and hiring requirements of participating employers, information session dates, and Alumni activities.

[www.law2.byu.edu](http://www.law2.byu.edu) (click on: Current Students > Careers > Fall Recruiting > Employers Participating in Recruiting Events)

**Contact Practicing Professionals**

**BYU Almuni & Law Society Networking Databases**

The best resource for finding information about an employer or a career is to talk directly to someone who works for that particular employer or in that area of practice. The Alumni Directory and the Law School Advising Network are good places to begin:

[www.law2.byu.edu](http://www.law2.byu.edu) (click on: Current Students > Careers > Networking)

**Informational Interviewing**

Many students have found informational interviewing to be an essential part of the job search. Informational interviews are interviews in which the student or job seeker asks most of the questions. The student attempts to find out as much as possible about the field or area of practice, the employer, or the locale. Typically, the questions revolve around what the work involves, how the attorney became involved in the particular area of law, what a student can do to prepare for a career in a similar area, the
pros and cons, and so forth. Nothing can replace talking face-to-face with practitioners about their work. Again, the Alumni Directory and the Law School Advising Network are good places to locate contacts in your areas of interest.

**Browse Other Online Resources**

The CSO maintains online resources and subscriptions for various organizations, agencies, and job hunt services. You will receive the password in the fall.

[www.law2.byu.edu](http://www.law2.byu.edu) (click on: Current Students > Careers > Resources)

**NALP Directory of Legal Employers**

The NALP Directory of Legal Employers resembles a city telephone book containing more than 1,600 employer questionnaires (NALP forms) and the accompanying one-page resumes sent in by employers. Using this directory, you can:

- Find out which employers with a particular practice emphasis will be interviewing at your school.
- Base your employer research on your interests, for example, searching for employers working in environmental law.
- Retrieve other types of information, such as employers practicing business or corporate law in Anchorage, Alaska.
- Obtain contact information, including the name of the hiring partner and recruiting coordinator.
- Find the gender and ethnic makeup of the firm.
- Obtain hiring information such as who is hired (e.g., laterals, judicial clerks, summer clerks), when hiring takes place, what to submit, compensation, billable hours, and partnership data.

[www.nalpdirectory.com](http://www.nalpdirectory.com)

**Martindale-Hubbell Directory**

The Martindale-Hubbell Directory is probably the most comprehensive listing of law firms, although it is far from complete. Many small and solo offices are not in the directory. Each listing contains a general description of the practice area and often a list of representative clients, along with location and contact information for the firm. The listing also usually includes
an individual biography on each member of the firm. The Harold B. Lee library has a hard copy version, and the directory can also be found online:

www.martindale.com

Local Bar Directories
Believe it or not, a simple Bar directory can often have useful information. The contact information is likely to be the most up-to-date and accurate of any listing. Also, most Bar directories contain a firm listing showing which attorneys work for the firm. These names are often listed in order of seniority, allowing you to see how big the firm is and to distinguish senior members from junior members. To find the Bar directory in your state, do a Google search (i.e., “Utah State Bar Directory”).

Visit Utah’s Bar Directory: www.utahbar.org/forms/members_directory_search.html

Employer Websites
Many law firms, governmental entities, and practice-area associations maintain their own websites. Check employer pages in Symplicity, or Google the firm’s name, city, and state. These sites often have current hiring information readily available, as well as general information about the firm or agency. Unlike many job banks, these sites will also usually allow you to access their job postings without any sort of registration fee.

JOB HUNTING STRATEGIES AND ADVICE FROM ALUMNI & FRIENDS
Several strategies will be helpful as you go through the process of researching employers and making contacts. Below you will find advice and ideas about the job search from individuals who have been through the experience you are now facing.

Regional vs. National Markets
The tight job market for lawyers tends to be regional, not nationwide. While some cities have a high concentration of lawyers, such as Washington, D.C., there is a need for lawyers in smaller towns and cities throughout the country and especially in the Midwest. Other cities, although they have a lot of lawyers, have a shortage of lawyers in particular fields.
As you contemplate geographic areas, realize that some employers have lost BYU graduates who have returned to Utah only a few years after being hired. You must be prepared to address and overcome this “boomerang” concern by showing concrete ties or future goals linked to the area. If you lack such ties, create them through the wise use of summer clerkships or externships.

**Let BYU’s Reputation Work for You**

BYU is widely known in the intermountain states and Pacific coast region, and BYU students enjoy a reputation for hard work, high ethical standards, service, and character, as well as excellent academic qualifications and preparation. Also BYU has a growing reputation in other major metropolitan areas, such as Washington, D.C., and New York City.

**Utilize the BYU Law Society Advising Network**

The Advising Network is a group of Law Society members who are particularly willing to give counsel regarding their practice area specialties and regional job markets. These attorneys are waiting to assist you with helpful information:

www.law2.byu.edu (click on: Current Students > Careers > Networking > Law Society Advising Network)

**The Most Important Factors to Consider**

*Where do I want to live, work, and raise a family?*

You should choose a city or specific geographic area and target that job market. Consider places where you would be happy living for several years. Also consider similar markets. You may have to be more flexible on your choices based on the local legal market. Students who focus only on Utah may have a tougher-than-average job hunt.

*Your background, leadership, maturity, and character are vitally important.*

Big firms value diversity and unique characteristics. Small firms strive for harmony, and personality is key to getting a job. The individual applicant is more important than the applicant’s law school or the applicant’s performance in law school.

*Recognize that your legal skills, experience, and personality are a product.*

Products must be correctly packaged and marketed. In order to be successful you must know your product and how to deliver it. A more detailed
discussion of how to market yourself forms the basis of the Professional Development Skills Training Seminar, offered fall semester.

*Realize that it takes time to find a job, then make an ongoing commitment to network.*

Your whole law school investment hinges on your job hunt. You invested three years in getting an education. Do not short change the time you spend hunting for a job; it is the capstone to all your efforts. Setting aside a certain amount of time per day or week to explore employment opportunities will prove extremely beneficial.

**A Colorful Personality Can be an Advantage**

The biggest complaint interviewers have about BYU law students is that they are all alike. They are all nice, polite, and eager to please, but nothing special stands out. Interviewers have a difficult time distinguishing between students and seeing their true personalities.

Interviewers want to see more assertiveness in going after positions and more of an effort to sell yourself to them. They want to see confidence and personality, stopping short of arrogance. The worst thing you can be is dull and bland. Work on selling yourself; think of marketing yourself like you would market a product. Tell interviewers something unique about yourself and why you would be perfect for the job. Give them ammunition to take back to the firm so they can sell you to the hiring committee.

Knowing specific details about the employer will help set you apart and sends the message that you are interested in them. If they ask you what practice area you would like to work in and you can’t tell them what their practice areas are, you will have a problem.

**The Three Best Marketing Strategies**

Think about how you want to market yourself. When any product is marketed (and you and your law services are a product) there are three strategies the promoter can use to carve out a niche in the market:

*Low cost, good value*

Offer to work for reduced pay (or for free) for a trial period, and show your employer you can deliver a quality product at less cost.
**Specialization**

Target one particular area of the law where you have an interest, some experience, or education and where there is a need in the market. Be careful with this strategy. For a brand new attorney, being flexible may be a better approach in a tight market, unless you can pick an area where there is a real need.

**Uniqueness**

Focus on the skills and background you have that make you a one-of-a-kind product. For example, many firms look for a person with a combination of particular language skills and other technical expertise. Play up these unique combinations.

**Tips to stand out if you are in the middle or bottom of the class**

Students who lack enthusiasm and focus are much harder to place than those with mediocre grades. Here are some strategies you can use if you are in the middle to bottom of the class:

- Market yourself using the Three Best Strategies listed above. Print up business cards and carry them everywhere. Talk to everyone about your goals; someone will know someone who can help you.

- Remember that persistence, enthusiasm, and confidence count. You can make up for a lack of credentials by sheer determination. Keep going back to organizations and contacts without becoming a nuisance. A candidate who works hard at getting a job is attractive to a firm or employer because the employer knows that applicant will give them 100%.

- Get some solid training. Know where and how to file a brief, draw up agreements, and so forth. Get solid technical skills. Legal research and filing have gone high-tech, so know how to use the new techniques. Small employers do not have time to train you, and if you can walk into their office and say, “I can do X for you right now,” you will have a big edge on the competition.

- Where to get these skills? Learn from smart, successful people. Offer to work with them for free or at a reduced cost and observe everything. Take the time to figure out how and why great attorneys do things the way they do them.
• Believe in yourself! Employers hire people they can get along well with. A genuine, friendly, and hard-working personality, as well as confidence in your ability to work hard, goes a long way in the workplace.

Leaving Utah: Making the Transition Easier

Take along a friend to a new city. You do not have to go alone. One law graduate and some friends decided that they wanted to work in the Chicago area. They moved out there together, rented apartments in the same building, and shared job-hunting strategies and tips with each other. It made the transition to a new city and the job hunt a lot easier.

Job-Searching Tips During an Economic Downturn

When faced with a tough legal market, finding the perfect summer job may not be that easy, or even possible. However, it is important to remember that all is not lost and that the legal job market is like other markets in that it has its ups and its downs. The key to weathering the storm is doing things to make yourself more marketable. You have no control over the economic conditions of the market, but you do have control over your preparation and marketability. The following are five suggestions for helping you succeed in your job search in a not-so-friendly market:

• Focus on academics first
• Develop a compelling resume by undertaking initiatives that distinguish you from your peers
• Be receptive and open to various possibilities and opportunities
• Creatively manage your financial situation if you do not get a paid job
• Be savvy and aware of both local and national market conditions
• Regularly talk to your CSO counselors!

ON-THE-JOB STRATEGIES TO HELP SECURE A PERMANENT EMPLOYMENT OFFER

Whether you are in a summer clerkship or externship, have landed your perfect permanent position, or have taken a temporary job while pursuing your dream, you will want to excel and make good impressions on the people with whom you work. Remember that what you do after you are hired will determine the benefits you receive from the experience, such as a subsequent permanent offer, a good reference for your resume, or valuable experience and training. In addition to working hard and doing
quality work, you should gather information that will help you determine whether you can be successful and enjoy working there long-term. Review the suggestions below for ways you can enhance your working experience. These suggestions may not all be applicable to your job, but they will give you ideas.

Make Friends with the Secretaries
Secretaries can be your greatest friends or your worst enemies depending on the relationship they have with you and your supervisor. Experienced secretaries can correct mistakes (not just typos) in documents, such as pleadings and motions, that you might miss. Also, they may have the hiring partner’s ear when the discussion turns to making a permanent offer. If secretaries are in your corner, you have a better chance of getting an offer. As a summer law clerk or extern, you may use your secretary very little. When you do, treat your secretary with the utmost courtesy. Your support staff is your equal and an important team member.

Be Agreeable
One hiring partner informed us that during the summer program they were checking to see if the clerk would fit in because they, “can train you to do anything else.” Be sure to get along with your coworkers.

Socialize When Appropriate
If a group from the office goes to lunch, go with them. You want them to see your personality, and you want them to like you as a person. You will also make a better impression on others if you are sociable and personable to others who may have different values from you. If they want to go out for drinks after work, you can go along and order a soda. Participate in firm social events-picnics, sports teams, banquets, etc.

Work, Work, Work
Unfortunately, your summer break is the only time you have to show them what you can do. It is your time to shine. Work long and hard and let them see it.

Understand the Assignment
Take a pen and paper with you everywhere in the office. Restate the assignment to your supervisor in your own words to make sure you are on the
same page. Take thorough notes on what you are asked to do, especially when dealing with larger projects, so that you have something to refer to later on, if necessary. Everyone makes mistakes, but spending hours and hours researching the wrong topic is a mistake that can be avoided. If you are unsure what is expected of you, ask someone.

In addition, make sure to find out which assignments deserve the highest priority and focus your energies there. This is especially important if you receive multiple assignments from multiple people.

**Always Read the Updates**

Make sure you are dealing with the most recent version of the law, particularly with civil procedure and local rules. Pocket parts and supplements (and online Keyciting and Shephardizing) are vital to understanding current law.

**Know the Rules**

If you can stand it, take home the *Federal Rules of Civil Procedure*, as well as the local court rules, and study them. The sooner you get a good grasp on the rules, the more useful you will be.

**Get the Hang of the Billing System Quickly**

The bottom line is critical. Employers hire and keep people who make them money. Ask for a sample time sheet so you can see how things are phrased and get guidelines about what is billable and what is not.

**Observe Office Culture**

Watch your senior associates and other attorneys to see if the office is a place where you would like to work long term. Do not ask too many pointed questions (remember that anything you ask may be repeated to someone else), but keep your eyes and ears open. Do they have a big turnover rate? What work hours are really expected? Are people at the office late at night or on the weekends? Go do some work on a Saturday (or two or three), and see who is there and how long they stay. How is the morale? When was the last time someone made partner? Are the associates treated with respect? Do they get interesting work, or do the partners and supervising attorneys take the best assignments?
Seek Feedback

This may seem obvious and even automatic, yet many students do not receive needed feedback because they do not ask for it. Asking specific questions about your work is always more effective than asking general questions (i.e., “I was not sure whether to address issue X in Y way or in Z way. I chose to use Y way because.... “What would you have done?” rather than, “Do you have any suggestions for improving my writing?”). Asking such questions also shows that you thought carefully about your work and helps avert problems if you missed something or handled an issue incorrectly.

If you botch an assignment as a summer clerk, you will need to do a stellar job on another assignment for that attorney in order to redeem yourself.

Seek Variety

If possible, try to get exposure to the various types of law, and do some work for a variety of attorneys at the firm or organization. A summer clerkship is a good time to try something out to see if you will like it.