

FROM STEVE MARCHESE:

IT'S APRIL. NOW WHAT?: Job Search Strategies as the Semester Winds Down

For many of you, the arrival of spring only means warmer weather, greener grass and sunnier days. For others, it means time to switch gears as employment concerns grow like dandelions. It's not too late to find a job for the summer or fall, but it will take time, organizational skills and commitment. Here are some tips for those of you wondering what to do when finals are over:

3Ls: Now is the time to put in place a long-term strategy for finding permanent employment. This means moving beyond the paralysis of checking job postings on E-Attorney and getting out to meet people. Since the vast majority of hiring does not take place in response to job postings or interview programs, you will need to devise ways to put you and your credentials into wider circulation.

- ? Think about who you know and who they may know. Don't just consider people who are hiring people like you. Who would you like to talk to about an area of practice or employment that interests you?
- ? Make the commitment to devote several hours each week to contacting people, sending e-mails, making phone calls and attending coffee breaks or lunch meetings.
- ? Have an agenda when you talk to contact people. What do you want to know from them and why? Also, take the time to ask them about their own career paths. The stories may surprise you. Finally, never leave a conversation without the name of at least one other person to talk to.
- ? Take advantage of bar-related programs and CLEs as a way of both meeting practitioners who work in your area of interest and gaining additional substantive knowledge. List the CLEs you attend on your resume.
- ? Devise an organizational system that helps you keep track of contacts and follow-up information. Any system will work as long as you can use it effectively to save and retrieve information.
- ? Expand the number of places where you check job listings. Try the State Bar classifieds on the web, Minnesota Lawyer, and, yes, even the Star Tribune classifieds. For those interested in local non-profit and alternative careers, the Minnesota Council on Non-Profits (www.mncn.org) maintains the single most helpful job listings page on the internet.
- ? Get into a job searching routine BEFORE you start studying for the bar. It will be much easier for you to devote time to this effort if you don't have to create an entirely new process from scratch while re-learning such long-forgotten topics as the doctrine of cy pres and the rule against perpetuities.
- ? While it may seem tempting, don't stop your job search (or, worse yet, do nothing) until after the bar. You will not feel like gearing up for a big job search on July 30th and, quicker than you think, it will be October and you're still at square one.
- ? Take another look at your resume and cover letters. Have you updated your resume to include current or more recent experience? Do you need to change the tone or substance of your cover letters?

1Ls and 2Ls: Many of the aforementioned tips for 3Ls, particularly meeting people and getting organized, apply to you as well. In addition, consider the following:

- ? Ask yourself the following question: What about the legal profession would I like to learn this summer that would help me figure out what I want to do my JD? It's important to keep focused on the long-term, even if short-term opportunities don't appear plentiful. Also, remember there probably are many ways to answer this question, ways that might never appear in an E-Attorney job posting.

? Although earning money is great, consider acquiring experience and skills, even if it means working for free. In the long term, it may help you more than working for pay at a job that provides you with little practical or otherwise helpful exposure.

? If you can't get legal experience, can you develop other helpful skills? For example, this may be a great time to improve your foreign language proficiency, particularly if you have an interest in international law.

? Consider judicial externships, research assistant positions and taking summer classes here at the law school or elsewhere.

A final point: We in the CSO can best help you if you let us know who you are and what your interests might be. Don't be shy about letting us know you are out looking for employment. We can't help your job search if we don't know you are searching.