



## SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS + GUIDELINES FOR RESPONSES

### Job Fit

- Why should we hire you?
  - *This is the most important question you must answer, so have a strong response that concisely lists your 3-5 top selling points, at least 2 of which concern hard skills rather than soft skills.*
- Why do you want to work for us?
  - *Give a thoughtful answer that shows that you have done your homework about the specific organization and are not looking for just any job.*

### Strengths + Weaknesses

- What are your biggest strengths?
  - *Offer a concise STAR response. Show not only that you have these strengths, but also how you have applied them.*
- What's your biggest weakness?
  - *The key here is for you to offer a genuine weakness (e.g., not "I'm a perfectionist" or "I don't like billing my time"). You also want to let the interviewer know that your weakness won't be an issue at your target job, either because (1) that particular weakness won't apply in the new setting or (2) you have taken measures to address the weakness.*

### Work-Related Styles, Qualities + Skills

- What is your negotiating style?
- What is your work style?
- What is your management style?
- How do you work with other lawyers on your matters?
- How do you typically deal with conflict?
- Give me an example of a time when you motivated others.
- When you delegate assignments, how do you keep track of their progress?
- Tell me about a time when you showed initiative and took the lead.
- What do you do when clients disregard your advice?
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### Handling Challenges

[Organize your responses in the STAR format.]

- Describe your most challenging assignment and how you handled it.
- Describe a time when you were faced with a stressful situation that required you to cope.
- Tell me about a time when you had to deal with an upset or difficult client or co-worker.
- Describe a situation when you had to take directions from several people at the same time.

- Tell me about a time when your supervisor was unavailable and you had to solve an immediate problem. What was the outcome?
- Have you ever disagreed with your supervisor(s)? How did you handle that?
- Have you done anything you regret at work? Why did you regret it, and how would you handle it if that situation occurred again?
- What is the toughest decision you ever had to make?

### Legal Expertise

- What do you think is the single most important legal issue in this industry/field of law? What is your view on that issue?
  - *Demonstrate your research of current events related to the position/industry, as well as your creative thinking.*
- What is your view on the \_\_\_\_ (major court) decision that just came down?

### Compensation + Other Terms of Employment

- What range of compensation are you looking for?
  - In a face-to-face interview, you can say, “I would be happy to consider any fair offer. I’m fairly flexible regarding the compensation, as I’m considering the whole package – a great fit for my skills and personality, advancement opportunities and benefits.” NOTE: If you are asked this question earlier on in the process or in a phone screen interview, your answer should be different. See Phone Interview and Negotiating Your Offer.
- This job pays a fraction of what you are earning at your law firm. How do you feel about that?
  - *One way to respond is to let the interviewer know that you’ve planned for this move for some time, including preparing financially for a shift away from law firm practice.*

### Circumstances Surrounding Departure from Your Current Job

- Why are you leaving/did you leave your current job? (Other variations include the following: Were you asked to leave? Does your firm know you’re looking? Would your firm be surprised if you left?)
  - *Your answer depends on the circumstances and should be crafted and discussed in advance with your counselor. NOTE: It is not uncommon for lawyers to over-explain or sound defensive when answering this question for the first time. If this question makes you uncomfortable, we strongly recommend that you practice with your counselor (via a mock interview or an interview prep session), a friend and/or in front of a mirror. Another option is to videotape yourself responding to this question, paying special attention to your body language, facial expressions, eye contact and use of fillers (“um”, “like,” etc.). By the time you have your actual interview, you will feel comfortable with and “own” your answer. If your interviewer sees that you are comfortable, and not defensive, he or she will likely end the inquiry there.*
- Would you hire your current or most recent boss as outside counsel?
  - *Do not disparage your boss, but give a thoughtful answer. You do not necessarily have to say yes, but you should show that you understand what the organization would look for when hiring outside*

*counsel. It is also important to note that certain firms or groups at firms are “players” in certain industries, which might also be a factor when retaining counsel.*

## **About You**

- Tell me about yourself.
  - *Seize this chance to answer the Big Three Questions!*
- Why did you become a lawyer?
  - *Be honest!*
- Do you like practicing law/being a lawyer? What do you like about practicing law/being a lawyer?
  - *This is your chance to tell an interviewer what you enjoy about your chosen profession. If you can't convince someone that you have a passion for what you do, it will be tough for him/ her to envision you adding value to the organization.*
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
  - *You do not need to commit to where you will be working in five years, but you should talk about your goals for your own professional development and the kind of lawyer you want to be – develop your substantive expertise, mentor others, continue to learn, advance in your career, earn a great reputation in your field as someone who \_\_\_\_\_ [fill in from your professional brand], etc.*