

AHLA Health Law Week Session – Hiring Managers – What Are They Looking For?!

Hiring Managers' Tips, Tricks and Best Practices

Acumen in numbers (accounting and finance backgrounds) coupled with problem-solving skills will serve you well in Consulting.

If you want to transition into a new career, one of the best things you can do is to establish authentic relationships in that field, and to read – thought leadership, social media, and even article headlines will help you connect some dots before you are an expert.

Demonstrate that you are hungry, humble, and smart – grit, ability to thrive in uncertainty, and nimble enough to retool yourself as client demands and market needs shift.

Do your homework – show hiring managers what you will bring to the team and why you want to work there, specifically.

Anyone that is transitioning from the private sector to the federal government should expect to be asked why they want to make the transition.

If you list hobbies on your resume or application you should expect to get questions about them.

When you're applying for a position with the federal government you need to be particularly careful to make sure that your application materials (e.g., resume) reflect the requirements of the position. You don't want to get screened out by HR because they couldn't tell that you had the necessary experience.

Stay current to stay conversant.

Read industry publications and follow news outlets like the New York Times and Wall Street Journal. Health law and policy evolve rapidly and you want to sound (and ideally even be) knowledgeable.

Cast the net widely.

Schedule informational meetings—15 to 20 minutes—with as many people as you are able. Pursue two goals: ask the person to talk about themselves and their career and how they forged their own path; and get names and contact information for additional informational meetings. You want your name in circulation when positions open.

Don't be shy.

Once you've identified a position that may be a fit (or even a stretch), apply and then inquire. Don't expect (or try) to circumvent the hiring process, but do ensure that it's working. Sometimes hiring screens block good and qualified candidates and you want your candidacy considered by the right people.

Volunteer.

Join a nonprofit board. You will make new connections, you will help your community and you will gain experience and confidence in offering (non-legal) advice to further the organization's mission. Providing practical advice (meaning timely and actionable) is the sine quo non for in-house counsel.

Network for your career, not for a job. Don't just decide to network because you want a new job, or don't choose to network with only people where you want to work, that will come across as far too transactional.

Stay away from connecting on LinkedIn unless you actually know the person and have had a conversation. Recruiters get a LOT of LinkedIn requests, and nearly always decline ones from people they don't know.

Always email, don't call, if you're looking to set up a conversation or inquire about an application. If you want to call and get someone's voice message, always follow up with an email so as not to put the onus on them to call you back.

Do your research – there's plenty of public information, and asking questions during informational or actual interviews that can easily be found on Google isn't a good use of anyone's time.

Cover letters are important. Recruiters do read them so you should be thoughtful about what goes into them. Think about the gaps that may exist between your experience and the job you're applying for and the questions we may have and use the cover letter to address and answer them.

Be authentic. Present as yourself in an interview, not what you think the interviewer wants to see or hear. Be confident, but not boastful; enthusiastic but not overly hyped. Practice interviewing with friends and family.

Don't be evasive. If there is an anomaly in your CV/resume, be prepared to address it before your interviewer asks you – turn it into a positive and explain how it can benefit the employer.

If your skill set is outside of the usual box of skills expected for the job, be prepared to explain how/why your skills set you apart and would make you and your potential work team successful. You want an employer to take a chance if you are a non-traditional hire.

Spell check/proof-read your resume. This may sound over-hyped, but spelling errors can signal a lack of attention to detail to your interviewer.

FOR RECRUITERS

Look outside of the regular channels for candidates. Your new employee may have taken a non-traditional path and you don't want to miss out on their experience or skill sets that they bring. If you are hiring for an entry-level position, don't focus so much on grade point average or where they finished in their class – look to what they studied, what they took away from their educational experience and extra-curricular activities, like working while in school.

Be diverse in your choice, not for the sake of diversity but because diverse employees bring so much wealth of knowledge and perspectives to your team. Diversity isn't just race or ethnicity; consider political views, age, and socio-economic backgrounds, too. Integrate & include those differing viewpoints into your workspace & projects because you may find that a different perspective can be the key to solving a particularly difficult problem.

Take a chance. Too often we hire the "safe" choice. The worst thing that happens is that it doesn't work out and you and the employee part ways. On the flip side, you could end up hiring an employee who appreciates the risk you took and pays you back in dividends with great work product.