

Why Should We Hire You? Perfecting the Art of Persuasion in Interviewing

Presented by:

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SCENARIO #1

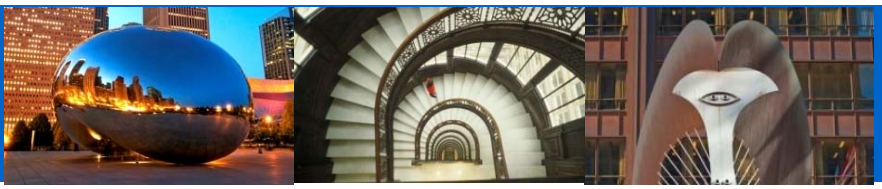
Samson is a 2nd year law student who has been interviewing for a 2nd year law summer position with no success. His grades are good and he held a number of sales positions and worked briefly in the finance industry prior to law school. Samson consistently shows up for his interviews in a flashy 3-piece suit with a very loose tie knot. When you conduct a mock interview with Samson, he spends most of the mock interview interrupting your questions by launching into stories about himself and his accomplishments. You do not feel as if he is listening to you. He tends to ramble in his answers, speaking for 4 to 5 minutes per answer, but it is hard to determine the context of his stories, or the nature of his specific accomplishments. He also has a very strong handshake, to the point where previous interviewers have commented that he has caused them pain.

Suggested Strategies for Scenario #1:

- Ask about his pre-law interview experience; explain differences between law firm interviews, and other industries (i.e. sales)
- Determine skills and strengths needed for the job – identify stories from resume that demonstrate these skills/strengths
- “3 Es” and “Rule of 3s” to structure answers
- Reverse mock interview – mirror his behavior and ask him how he felt and why (to show impact of behavior on others)
- Focus on finding common ground with interviewer
- Demonstrate appropriate handshake strength
- “When you dress like X, the impression you give is Y”

SCENARIO #2

Jessica is a shy 3rd year student interviewing for a full-time legal position following graduation. She has not had much success with her interviews thus far. When you conduct a mock interview with Jessica, you notice that she does not make very much eye contact with you. She tends to sit in her chair with her shoulders hunched forward. Her voice is high-pitched, to the point where she can sound very young, and she has a tendency to speak with an upward inflection. Jessica tells you that she does not like bragging about herself, and her answers tend to be very short. Prior to law school, she worked as a researcher in various scientific fields, and gained some leadership experience in that field before switching to law.



Suggested Strategies for Scenario #2:

- Explain purpose of job interview – to determine fit for both student/employer
- Pretend she is a consultant – a collaboration where she is figuring out if working together makes sense. Her job is to find out as much info as possible about the firm, work, and if she can fill firm's needs – and vice versa.
- Draw out "Pride Stories" – 5 to 7 examples of times where she was "in the zone"
- "3 Es" and "Rule of 3s" to structure answers
- Use STAR approach in crafting answers to questions about her experiences in order to draw out more details and lengthen answers
- Breathing and vocal exercises to improve resonance of her voice
- "Sentence coaching" to work on upward inflection
- Reverse mock interview – mirror her body language; ask her **how** it made her feel and **why**
- Eye contact is for others, not only for her
- "Power Pose":
 - www.ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_shapes_who_you_are?language=en
- Tell employers about her biggest challenge – having to overcome biases and perceptions that she is immature and inexperienced because of her high-pitched voice, or not a strong leader because of her reserved nature – but that her work experience demonstrates that she has been a leader before

SCENARIO #3

Robert is a 3rd year student interviewing for post-graduation positions at law firms. While his grades are low, he has gained substantial practical experience through clinical programs and public interest organizations, and has worked a number of non-legal jobs. When you conduct his mock interview, you notice that Robert has a tendency to be "too honest" in his answers – he is modest to the point of over-self-deprecation, and rarely highlights his accomplishments, instead saying "oh, that wasn't that big a deal". Robert identifies as LGBT and would like to be open in the workplace, though he has no LGBT community involvement on his resume, and is wondering how to determine the inclusiveness of the firm environment in his interview.

Suggested strategies for Scenario #3:

- Explain purpose of law firm interview – positive self-presentation
- Develop self-awareness of (and experiences highlighting) strengths, skills, qualities, and knowledge that are **energizing** for student
- Identify skills and strengths required for job, and highlight transferable skills obtained from non-legal employment
- Discuss methods to demonstrate enthusiasm for job (eye contact, body language, active listening)
- The employer thinks Robert is qualified – they wouldn't have invited him in for an interview if they didn't
- Grades – worst case scenario? Prepare answer using STAR approach to questions about grades
- Determining LGBT-inclusiveness – mentioning a significant other to determine reaction of firm; asking about lawyers' families and firm/personal community involvement