



How to Market Yourself as a New Lawyer: Standing Out in a Competitive Field

Landing your first legal job can feel like trying to argue a case without any evidence—daunting and overwhelming. As a law student or recent graduate, you're entering a field where experience often trumps everything else, yet you're starting with little to none. The good news? You have more to offer than you think, and with the right marketing strategy, you can position yourself as a compelling candidate who firms want to hire.

Start Building Your Professional Brand Early

Your professional brand isn't just what you put on your resume—it's the complete picture of who you are as a future attorney. Start crafting this narrative while you're still in law school, not after you graduate. This means being intentional about the classes you take, the internships you pursue, and the extracurricular activities you join.

Think about what kind of lawyer you want to become. Are you drawn to corporate law, public interest work, or litigation? Once you have a sense of direction, align your choices accordingly. If you're interested in environmental law, take relevant courses, join the environmental law society, and seek internships with organizations that focus on environmental issues. This creates a coherent story that employers can easily understand and remember.

Your online presence matters more than ever. Clean up your social media profiles and consider creating a professional LinkedIn account if you haven't already. Share thoughtful articles about legal developments in your areas of interest, engage with posts from legal professionals, and showcase your involvement in law school activities. Remember, recruiters and hiring managers will Google you, so make sure what they find reinforces your professional image.

Leverage Your Unique Background and Experiences

One of the biggest mistakes new lawyers make is trying to hide their pre-law school experiences or treating them as irrelevant. Your background before law school is actually one of your greatest assets—it's what differentiates you from hundreds of other candidates with similar GPAs and law review credentials.



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Did you work in marketing before law school? That experience could be invaluable to a firm's business development efforts or for intellectual property work. Were you a teacher? Those communication and presentation skills are exactly what litigation teams need. Even if your previous experience seems completely unrelated to law, there are transferable skills that make you valuable.

The key is learning how to articulate these connections clearly and confidently. Practice explaining how your unique background enhances your legal capabilities rather than apologizing for not having traditional legal experience. Employers aren't just hiring lawyers—they're hiring problem-solvers, communicators, and strategic thinkers.

Master the Art of Networking (Yes, Really)

Networking gets a bad rap, especially among law students who see it as schmoozing or being fake. But effective networking isn't about collecting business cards or making superficial connections—it's about building genuine relationships with people in the legal community.

Start with your law school's alumni network. Reach out to graduates who work in areas that interest you and ask for informational interviews. Most lawyers are willing to spend 15-20 minutes talking about their career path and offering advice to law students. Come prepared with thoughtful questions about their practice area, their firm's culture, and trends they're seeing in the field.

Don't limit yourself to formal networking events. Join bar association committees, attend CLEs (continuing legal education) programs, and participate in professional organizations related to your interests. These settings provide more natural opportunities to connect with practicing attorneys and learn about potential job opportunities.

Remember that networking is a two-way street. Look for ways to add value to the people you meet. Share relevant articles, make introductions between contacts who might benefit from knowing each other, or volunteer for organizations where you can work alongside practicing attorneys.

Develop Practical Skills That Set You Apart

While law school teaches you to think like a lawyer, it doesn't always prepare you for the practical realities of legal practice. Take initiative to develop skills that will make you valuable from day one.

Learn the technology that law firms actually use. Familiarize yourself with document review platforms, case management software, and legal research tools beyond Westlaw and Lexis. Many of these platforms offer free training or student versions.

Hone your writing skills beyond the typical law school memo format. Practice drafting client emails, demand letters, and other documents you'll actually use in practice. Seek feedback from professors, practicing attorneys, or career services staff. Consider pursuing additional certifications or training that complement your legal education. Project management





certification might be valuable for corporate lawyers, while mediation training could set you apart if you're interested in family law or employment disputes.

Show, Don't Just Tell

Generic cover letters and one-size-fits-all resumes won't cut it in today's competitive market. Every application should be customized to the specific position and firm. Research the organization thoroughly—understand their practice areas, recent deals or cases, and firm culture. Reference specific aspects of the firm that appeal to you and explain why you'd be a good fit.

Your cover letter is your opportunity to tell your story in a compelling way. Don't just repeat what's on your resume—use it to connect the dots between your experiences and explain

why you're passionate about this particular area of law. Show enthusiasm for the work itself, not just for landing any legal job.

When describing your experiences, focus on results and impact rather than just duties. Instead of saying “researched legal issues,” say “conducted comprehensive research on trademark infringement that contributed to successful motion for summary judgment.” Quantify your accomplishments whenever possible.

Perfect Your Elevator Pitch

You need to be able to articulate who you are and what you offer in about 30 seconds. Your elevator pitch should include your background, your legal interests, and what makes you unique. Practice it until it feels natural, but avoid sounding rehearsed.

Here's a framework: “I'm a third-year law student at [School] with a background in [relevant experience]. I'm particularly interested in [practice area] because [brief reason tied to your story]. I'm looking for opportunities to work with [type of clients or legal issues] where I can apply my [relevant skills or knowledge].”

Embrace the Long Game

Marketing yourself as a new lawyer isn't just about landing your first job—it's about building a sustainable career. The relationships you develop, the reputation you build, and the skills you cultivate now will serve you throughout your career. Be patient with the process. The legal job market can be unpredictable, and rejection is part of the experience for most new lawyers. Use each interview as a learning opportunity, seek feedback when possible, and continue refining your approach. Remember that your first legal job probably won't be your last. Focus on finding opportunities that will help you develop the skills and experience you need for your long-term career goals, even if they're not perfect fits initially.





The legal profession is changing rapidly, and firms are looking for candidates who can adapt and grow with these changes. By developing a strong professional brand, leveraging your unique background, building genuine relationships, and continuously developing your skills, you'll position yourself not just as another new lawyer, but as someone who can contribute meaningfully from the start.

Your law degree opens doors, but how you market yourself determines which ones you'll walk through. Start early, be authentic, and remember that what makes you different is often what makes you valuable.

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