

Searching Your Connections

The most obvious and commonly used method of searching connections on LinkedIn is the search bar at the top of the LinkedIn page. If you have not yet done so, check out the advanced search option, where you can search by a number of different categories, including location, industry, and school. You also can choose to limit your search to a specified degree of relationship, such as only your 1st degree connections. I love this feature, and use it often when looking for mentors to connect students to or identifying people to meet with when traveling.

Although the toolbar search does not allow you to search for people based on their tags, there is a more obscure LinkedIn tool that allows you to do just this. Directly below the search bar, you will see a Connections tab. If you click on this and select “Keep in Touch,” LinkedIn will bring up all your connections and allow you to filter them based on a number of different criteria, including your tags! Once you filter your connections, you can select all or some of them to send an email to.

Adding New Connections

A final note: How often do you discover that you have a stack of business cards that you have collected from people, but have failed to add to your contacts or send a LinkedIn invitation to? Thankfully, there are a number of apps that automatically create a new contact and give you the option of sending a LinkedIn invitation whenever you take a picture of a person’s business card with your phone or tablet. My personal favorite is Scannable, which is owned by Evernote. The text recognition is surprisingly accurate, and if the person whose business card you scanned has a LinkedIn account, you can view their profile and send a request to connect with one click. It does not get any easier than this! ■

“Tell Me About a Time...” Behavioral Interviewing for Judicial Clerkships

by Janet Siegel Brown

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The judicial clerkship interview can be unpredictable. Judges may explore the candidate’s résumé, engage the candidate in a substantive legal discussion, or ask get-to-know-you questions in search of the elusive “fit.” As career counselors, we prepare candidates for commonly asked questions, as well as the unexpected questions that have surprised our students and alumni in the past.

But as judges increasingly seek law clerks with a proven professional skill set, some are posing behavioral questions in the clerkship interview. These questions inquire about past experience as a way to assess a candidate’s likely future performance. Behavioral questions often open with, “Tell me about a time when...” or “Describe a situation when you were faced with...” Compared to many questions that require only a descriptive answer, a behavioral question asks interviewees to be self-reflective about their past successes and failures in order to demonstrate that they can do the job. These questions can stump clerkship candidates, who may struggle to identify an on-point example and present it in a persuasive fashion.

How can we best equip clerkship seekers to recognize and respond to behavioral questions in a thoughtful, responsive, and compelling way? Because behavioral questions ask the interviewee to explain by example, the ideal answer should:

1. Describe a situation the candidate faced;
2. Explain the action he or she took and why; and
3. Identify the outcome or resolution.

To prepare clerkship candidates to answer behavioral questions, the starting point must be identifying the skills and attributes a judge typically seeks in a law clerk. Only then can candidates brainstorm examples from their past experience that illustrate those skills and attributes, and prepare to discuss them in the format noted above. Career counselors should encourage candidates to identify two examples from their prior experience that illustrate their capabilities in each major category in which a judge is likely to assess potential law clerks. Examples may include past successes in a work, volunteer, or school setting. They may also be past challenges or mistakes that were handled in a manner that demonstrates desired qualities such as candor, maturity, and resourcefulness.

Some typical areas of inquiry and sample questions include:

- **Analytical Thinking.** These questions gauge ability to spot legal issues and factual questions and use critical thinking skills to analyze them. Sample question: Tell me about the assignment or project from law school that you believe best demonstrates your critical thinking abilities.
- **Self-Sufficiency/Adaptability.** These questions assess capacity to adapt to new situations and complete unfamiliar tasks with minimal guidance. Sample question: Describe a time when you were asked to complete a task that was outside your area of knowledge or expertise.

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- **Work/Time Management.** These questions test skill in prioritizing and completing complex tasks under time pressures. Sample question: Give me an example of a situation in which you were required to juggle multiple projects at once and describe how you handled it.
- **Communication.** These questions evaluate ability to cogently and concisely articulate a legal question, analysis, and conclusion, whether orally or in writing. Sample question: Describe a situation in which you conveyed a complex legal issue in a concise and understandable fashion.
- **Professionalism.** These questions size up attitude and ability to interact respectfully with colleagues and the public. Sample question: Tell me about a time you were criticized and how you responded to it.

Candidates also must be attuned to the potential pitfalls of behavioral interviewing so they can avoid them:

- **Behavioral questions in disguise.** “Tell me about a time you were criticized and how you responded to it” could also be phrased as “How do you respond to criticism?” While the first question forces you to respond with an example, the second question invites a general, non-illustrative statement. Encourage candidates to look for these behavioral questions in disguise and provide a behavioral answer that demonstrates they have the desired quality.
- **Oversharing.** Candidates should be truthful, but that does not compel them to offer up their most embarrassing blunder when asked, “Tell me about a mistake you’ve

made.” They should be strategic by selecting an interview-appropriate misstep that allows them to demonstrate their ability to admit fault, take responsibility, problem solve, and learn from the experience.

- **Talking too much.** Because behavioral answers involve talking about past experience, lengthy responses may lean toward being boastful. The best answers are responsive but concise. If a judge wants to know more, he or she will ask a follow-up question.

Clerkship candidates who understand what judges want in a law clerk, and have practiced recounting examples of instances in which they have demonstrated those capabilities, will be ready to respond if faced with a behavioral interview. ■

