



## Rise Above It All: Tips for Succeeding in a Competitive Job Market

By Mandy Willingham

Whether you have just completed law school or are an experienced attorney looking to make a transition in your legal career, there's no denying that finding the right opportunity can be challenging. In addition, the search for the best position can become even more difficult in an increasingly competitive job market.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics ([www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)), employment for lawyers is expected to grow through 2014. Competition for legal job openings is also projected to be strong due to the significant numbers of students graduating from law school annually.

Despite the growing competition, it is possible to find the legal job you want. Here are some tips for becoming an outstanding candidate in an increasingly crowded field:

### **Emphasize your unique strengths.**

One essential key to standing out from the job-search competition is marketing your unique or desirable skills and experience to prospective employers. Perhaps you have an advanced degree in a specialized area like patent or tax law or valuable experience in a growing practice area like immigration or environmental law. You may also have the ability to relocate, which the U.S. Department of Labor lists as an increasingly important criterion for lawyers seeking new employment. Don't hesitate to highlight any exceptional qualities that will help you stand out from other candidates!

### **Be prepared.**

One of the most important factors in the job-search process is having a flawless resume and outstanding cover letter. Research indicates that employers spend an average of 20 seconds looking at each resume they receive. And since most top-name firms and companies are inundated with documents from countless candidates, it's important that your materials do more than just list your qualifications. Your cover letter and resume need to work for you! They need to effectively market your unique experience and career goals.

Undoubtedly, your cover letter and resume are among the most important documents of your career. Yet preparing these crucial materials doesn't need to be stressful and time-consuming. Professional services like [Legal Authority](#) can help you create a first-rate resume and premium, customized cover letters designed to get you noticed.

### **Take time to research.**

As competition in the legal job market grows, it's especially important for candidates to be as knowledgeable as possible about prospective employers. Many firms provide detailed information about their histories, practice areas, offices, and employment opportunities on their websites. In addition, industry-related publications and



online sites with blogs and message boards like [JD2B](#) and [Judged](#) can provide you with insights into specifics like salary ranges, hiring practices, and job satisfaction.

Employers appreciate well-informed candidates who have invested the time to learn about their firms or companies. Having a good understanding of the employer and the position you're applying for can also benefit you throughout the job-search process. The more you know, the better prepared you will be to answer and ask the right questions during your job interview.