

list of those firms that you want to know more about, and do some basic research. From a recruiters point of view there is nothing more frustrating than students turning up and asking questions such as 'what do you do' or 'do you specialise in criminal law' when you are a corporate law firm. Do your research and ask intelligent, well thought out questions, demonstrate that you are genuinely interested and want to find out more.

Engage with the university careers service, they are there to help! The careers service will hold large volumes of information and law guides that you can take away and read. It is also worth signing up to any mailing lists that the careers service have relating to legal events that are happening at your university.

Find out which law firms are coming onto campus. Many law firms usually run skills sessions related to your career, like commercial awareness, advocacy, and negotiation skills. These are a great way of learning essential skills and finding out more about the kind of work that a commercial lawyer does. There are also a number of social events that law firms do on campus. This gives you the opportunity to find out more about the firm in a relaxed setting. Baker & McKenzie invite students to dinners off campus, usually at a local hotel, giving students a chance to get to know the firm informally over a relaxed dinner.

Most universities will have an active student law society which you should consider joining as they will work very closely with City law firms, who will come on campus to run workshops, seminars and social events. Attending informal networking and vocational skills events will provide a fantastic opportunity to meet a range of firms and learn more about a career as a commercial lawyer, the recruitment process and the people who work at the firm. You may also be able to take away some useful skills to use at assessment centres!

Inevitably, the more that you know about a firm and the personal experiences that you have of meeting and engaging with people who work there will stand you in good stead when going through the recruitment process.

Depending on where you are in your legal career, there are always extra things that you can be doing to make yourself more employable – why not take a look at Baker & McKenzie's guide2law. This interactive tool will ask you to select where you are in your academic career and walk you through the steps you need to take in securing a training contract www.guide2law.com



Rebecca Ryalls is graduate recruitment officer at Baker & McKenzie (www.bakermckenzie.com) @bakermckenzie «

Research and preparation

- Create a shortlist of target law firms.
- Research the city law firms' web sites, Twitter feeds, Facebook pages and firm LinkedIn profiles.
- Follow target employers on LinkedIn.
- Research the values of target firms and write down how you demonstrate them.
- Research the changing legal market.
- Look at the LETR website and consider how you demonstrate the new skills for the changing legal profession.
- Review what *Chambers and Legal 500* say about your target law firms and practice groups.
- Join LinkedIn groups and connect with experienced lawyers – ask them questions.
- Follow successful city lawyers on Twitter.
- Look at the award winning law firms e.g. the FT Innovative lawyer awards.
- Research different practice groups and be clear about which ones appeal and why and why they should choose you.

How to get there

1. Define your own learning goals and create a plan to achieve them using best practice 'informal learning'.
2. Build your own self-awareness about what motivates you, what your values are and your best strengths.
3. Do pro bono projects and get involved in projects that show that you possess the emerging skills that law firms want; innovative thinking, customer relationship management etc.
4. Follow blogs of respected figures and opinion formers in the legal profession e.g. Stephen Mayson, Richard Susskind, Mitch Kowalski to keep abreast of a fast changing market.
5. Create your CV as if in 2 years' time.
6. Define your personal brand – what makes you unique.
7. Create a covering letter using the structure AIDA; Attention, Interest, Desire, Action.
8. Put yourself in the shoes of your target employer and see yourself through their eyes.
9. Ask the advice of young lawyers with one to two years post qualification experience (PQE) to gain expediently from their learning curve.
10. Look at various career blogs for advice, like liberateyourtalent.wordpress.com



Rachel Brushfield is a career, talent and learning & development strategist and coach. Follow her on Twitter @talentliberator (careers) @energiselegal (legal profession) www.energiselegal.com «