

A Gen Y Guide to Getting—and Keeping—a Legal Job

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With top tier firms shedding associates and in-house legal departments tightening their belts, it's a tough time for young attorneys to enter the workforce. But there are ways to stand out from the pack. Here, experts offer their tips for making an impression and snagging—and keeping—your dream legal job.

- **Be a yes man:** Especially in a rough economy, it's critical for young attorneys to fulfill their bosses' requests with enthusiasm, says Ann-Marie Neville, a managing director in MLA's New York office. "You have to step up in this market, because guess what—if you don't, [your manager] is going to turn to somebody else," she says.
- **Keep your eyes open:** It's important for young lawyers not only to complete assigned tasks but also anticipate what clients and co-workers need from them, says Neda Khatamee, a managing director in Major Lindsey & Africa's New York office. "Be available, but also really be able to dance to everyone's tune, from your partners to associates in your own class," she says. Adds Neville, "Always be prepared to be the best possible associate who's ready to be in front of the partner's best client."
- **Network:** Your law school drinking buddies may one day turn out to be your best asset, Khatamee says. Building your network of both colleagues and clients early is one of the keys to growing and advancing as an attorney.
- **Respect your elders:** While it's great to bring new ideas to the work place, pause to learn why tradition dictates certain practices in your office, says Cam Marston, president and founder of the consulting firm Generational Insights. "No one's going to care how you want to change it until you prove you know why it's there in the first place," he says.
- **Stick it out:** "Patience is a virtue you can never have too much of," says Vanessa Vidal, president of ESQ Recruiting. Though it may be tempting to bolt for another firm with flashier perks, she says a resumé dotted with too many jobs in too few years is a red flag to future employers. Though career moves may eventually be necessary to advance, make a commitment to the firm or department you start with until you encounter an opportunity too good to pass up. When your ideal job appears, a track record of loyalty will position you well to sail through the hiring process.