

Law Student Resumes: Include Your Passions and Interests.

By Vanessa Vidal

This is a particularly difficult legal market for the junior end of the legal profession, and especially for those trying to get hired for the first time. If you are a first year law student or a graduating law student trying to land a position, whether it's a student internship, a law student clerkship, a legal staff job, or an attorney position, you need to be armed with well-written professional legal resume. But what if your law student resume is thin on practical experience or skills? What do you do?

Why Your Law Student Resume Should Include Passions and Interests?

Today, most entry-level legal positions require the type practical experience and skills that law students or recent graduates generally do not have. Most law students spend the majority of their time focusing on their legal studies and academic performance. Law school is demanding and leaves little time to hold any kind of job, part-time or otherwise. While academic performance is very important, especially for law students looking to become associates at large law firms, it sometimes leaves little room on a legal resume for the type of practical experience needed to be competitive for entry-level positions.

When applying to entry-level position, law students may be tempted to focus primarily on the legal skills they have in order to meet some of the requirements of the position. While a law student resume should certainly highlight the technical skills and experience acquired that should not be the sole focus of the law student resume. When experience and skills are thin, a law student resume should also include one's true passions and interests. Showing a potential employer a commitment to your passion and interest can sometimes offset technical shortcomings on a law student resume.

How Do You Highlight Your Passions and Interests?

Passions and interests tend to be reflected in the academic programs, volunteering experience, political activities, and other extracurricular activities that focus on one area. For example, if you are interested in intellectual property, you need to highlight the courses you have taken in this field, what it is you enjoy about this subject, how you were challenged or engaged in the class etc. Your law student resume should also detail the activities you have engaged in that relate to that interest – whether or not they were work-related, academic, or extracurricular.

Have you joined organizations that focus on your passions and interest? If not, you should. Reach out to organizations, association, and clubs that focus on your interest. Do these organizations need volunteers, assistance with fund raising, or help with legislative work or research? The key to a successful law student resume

is to make your passions and interests come alive, and that requires making yourself available to opportunities outside of the classroom.

If you have joined organization that focus on your passions and interests, your law student resume should discuss your involvement in these organizations and the activities you were involved in. The key is to be an active participant, whether through volunteering, fundraising, event planning, or just networking. Your law student resume will be more compelling if it can demonstrate a commitment to a practice area or issue you truly care about.

What Are the Benefits of Committing To Organizations?

Joining an organization, society, or club that focuses on your interest, will not only help improve the content of your law student resume, but it can also help you develop other attributes that legal employers may determine to be as important, if not more important, than technical skills. You will likely have gained leadership, team building, cooperation, organization, and collaboration experience as a function of your involvement in these organizations. In the course of following your passion and interest, you will also find yourself building relationships with peers, academics, and professionals who could assist you with networking efforts, references, and perhaps even land a position in your area of interest.

Conclusion.

In this competitive market, it takes more than skills and experience to land a job. It also takes passion. Your law student resume needs to effectively convey your passion and interest to potential employers, as these can sometimes offset a limited set of technical skills and experiences. Your law student resume needs to detail the growth and learning experiences you have culled from following those passions and interests. These experiences can then be translated into skills and attributes that will interest potential employers. Before you start drafting your legal resume, take the time to figure out what your passions and interests are, get involved, and let your law student resume reflect that commitment.