



## MY OPINION

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# Young Lawyer Marketing: Putting Your Best Foot Forward

I have met several young lawyers who recently passed the bar exam, but who still do not have a job, or who were recently laid off after a few years of practice. In this economy, the way you market yourself can set you apart from your colleagues. Below are just a few tips for putting your best foot forward.

### Polish up your resume.

Print a copy of your resume and have a trusted mentor read over it. Make sure that someone reading your resume can see a likely connection between you and the position for which you are applying. You should set yourself apart from other people applying for the same position, while keeping your resume clean and professional. Also, keep it short. Despite having an interesting and detailed past, at this level, employers do not want to know what you did in high school. Finally, research the firm or company and what type of work they do. If you know someone who is employed with the company or have a way to get in touch with someone who works there, call them to find out what the climate is like. It will help in preparing your resume and ensure your resume highlights the important components relevant to the job opportunity.

### Celebrate your accomplishments.

Be sure to highlight more than just your past work experience. Your achievements and involvement also show what

kind of work you would likely produce and that you will be a well-rounded employee. Employers are interested in seeing what else you balanced while in law school or during your first few years of practice. But everything in moderation — don't make your list of achievements and involvements longer than your relevant experience so that it is more of a distraction than an interesting commentary on your work-life balance.

### Prepare for the negatives.

We often focus on the positives of our resume and experience. When questions such as “Why did you leave your last firm?” or “What are your weaknesses?” come up, we often are not prepared to answer. Have an answer prepared that shows you are realistic about your situation, but also that you can turn negative experiences into positive lessons learned.

### Get involved in bar activities.

You have probably been told many times that it is all about who you know. For many attorneys, marketing begins by getting involved in activities within their local bar. Speaking at CLEs and participating in bar activities ensures that you build a reputation in your practice area and can help build your network. At the very least, you will meet some amazing and inspiring people.

### Gain experience.

Until you land your dream job, you

may consider working as a contract attorney, a law clerk for a sole practitioner or small firm, or even doing a volunteer internship with a local company or agency. You will need experience in order to land a job and this may be the way to do it. This fall, the Texas Young Lawyers Association plans to produce a tip sheet for experienced attorneys who would like to utilize a young lawyer in their office without breaking the bank. This project was the brainchild of Tammy Fisher, a Texas Tech law student who serves as the law school liaison to the TYLA board. Fisher says, “Newly licensed attorneys should seek of counsel or law clerk jobs. Experienced attorneys will often hire you on a project-by-project basis or as a part-time legal clerk.”

Finally, utilize the resources available from TYLA. Check out *Ten Minute Mentor Goes to Law School* or *Office in a Flash* (both available at [www.tyla.org](http://www.tyla.org)) for tips on starting your own firm, office sharing, or even technology that can help you develop a client base.

Best of luck to you in your job search. Until you find that perfect position, continue to market yourself using the tips listed above. At TYLA, we always welcome your ideas on how to help other young lawyers. If you have some tips on other ways that young lawyers can put their best foot forward, please send them our way at [tyla@texasbar.com](mailto:tyla@texasbar.com). ★