
§ 3.7**The Job Interview**

Sell Yourself. Not Your Skills.

CHECKLIST

The start with, an important checklist:

- Dress appropriately.** You want to look professional.
- Arrive early.** Five or ten minutes, but not more.
- Try to **smile** when first addressing office staff and attorneys.
- Don't chit-chat** while waiting. Respond if spoken to, but the attorney needs to view you as a professional, not a staff member.
- During the interview, **relax.** Just getting the interview is an accomplishment.
- Learn** from this experience.
- Try to **determine what the attorney is looking for**, so that you can better position yourself not only as the interview progresses but also for future interviews.

Take writing samples with you to the interview or even your completed client file folder. The trial brief or interoffice memorandum you will create for assignments in this book will make the kind of professional impression you seek. Do not take a graded paper. You may be proud of the A, but this is not school. Another trend in interviewing is to ask the applicant to perform some task, such as drafting a legal document or researching an issue in the law library. Looking up a court rule is also a common request, so make sure you are familiar with the process of researching within the *Rules of Court*. The assignments in these books should prepare you for any task you might be asked to perform in the course of an interview.

Most applicants are not turned away because they lack skills or experience. Positions are filled because the applicant made a positive personal impression on the interviewer. The impression may have been one of confidence or competence. It may have been one of professionalism. The applicant may simply have come across as a likeable person. The attorney is going to have to spend more waking hours with the paralegal than with his or her spouse and children! Be pleasant. Smile! Don't be afraid to laugh (especially if the lawyer makes a joke). The interview is more about personal interaction than anything else.