

HOW TO FIND THE PERFECT LAW LIBRARY JOB FOR YOU

At nearly 40 years old, I never thought I would find myself changing careers. I spent my twenties working technical support for Fortune 500 companies and law firms, first in Philadelphia then Cleveland. In my thirties I went back to school for my MLIS and landed a position working in an academic law library. As my fortieth birthday loomed on the horizon an unexpected opportunity came my way, and I found myself starting a new role in an all-new environment. I accepted a role as a law librarian with the Cleveland based law firm BakerHostetler.



Thomas Moore once said, "Finding the right work is like discovering your own soul in the world."

I was as surprised as anyone to find my joy at a large law firm library. Finding my perfect job was a three-fold process.

NETWORKING

I would never have heard about this job if I had not cultivated a network through my involvement in the [Ohio Regional Association of Law Libraries](#) (ORALL) and [Mid-America Association of Law Libraries](#) (MAALL) chapters. I served on a variety of committees and met many new people. It was challenging but rewarding to work on special projects through my committee work, and having this network helped put me in contact with the team at BakerHostetler.

Now that I am an AALL member, I have found that the networking and opportunities are limited only by time and imagination. The more I engage with other member within the profession the more confidence I have in myself and my ability to contribute.

PREPARATION

"Winging" a job interview rarely turns out well. Before my job interview, I had done mock interviews and my local community college and practiced with friends and family.

I made sure to memorize some quotes to reinforce my points, such as the importance of customer service, I love Maya Angelou's quote: "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you make them feel."

Reframe your past job experiences to highlight the valuable skills you learned in roles that at first glance appear to be unrelated to the role you really want. This can bridge experience gaps and help reinforce that the skills are what matter.

EMOTIONAL IQ

Learning to read the mood and emotions of the interviewers is one of the most important skills you can develop. Ask yourself, do they seem over stressed or unhappy, or are they warm and welcoming and curious to know more about you? These are the people you will be working with, hopefully, until retirement, or at least for the foreseeable future. When interviewing for other positions I focused on finding a job where I could honestly say: "I always say I'm not going to work; I'm going to play with my friends" to quite Brian Tyree Henry.

I like to ask questions about the perks of the job, but also about the challenges employees face. Pose questions to learn why the position you are interviewing for is open—did someone quit or get promoted? Don't be afraid to ask follow-up questions when you have them. Some of my favorites include:

- "What is your favorite part of working at [insert company name]" and "What has been the toughest thing about working for [insert company name]?"
- Why is this position open?
 - Did someone quit, or were they promoted, or retired, or is it a new position?
 - If someone quit, asking a follow-up about turnover is a great way to find out if this will be a good fit for you.

Long story short: If you network and build relationships, prepare yourself, and build your emotional IQ, making a huge career change is not only possible, but could turn out to be the best decision you have ever made.

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