



The Future of Legal Workplace Advisory Group

Innovative Ideas for Students on Career-Building Strategies: How to Develop and Maintain Your Professional Identity in a Hybrid Environment

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*This resource is provided on behalf of the Future of the Legal Workplace Advisory Group and
the Law Student Professional Development Section*

Tips to Develop and Maintain Relationships in the Legal Field

- Identify contacts already in your network and see where you can expand. Remember to use your virtual resources to learn about the employer and find practitioners within your chosen field (e.g., the NALP's Directory of Legal Employers, LinkedIn, Westlaw, and Martindale).
- Be aware of what is going on within the law school. Career Centers and student organizations sponsor many events with practitioners who are specifically interested in connecting with law students.
- Be prepared when meeting practitioners! Prepare a list of questions asking for advice, practice-area specific information, and referrals for other lawyers in the field so that you can make use of your time.
- At virtual events, use break-out rooms as an opportunity to connect. Don't be afraid to speak up! Lawyers who devote their time to presenting are not only subject matter experts, they also enjoy engaging with others about their practice area. Being an active participant shows initiative and that you are passionate about the subject matter.
- Many practitioners actually prefer meeting virtually as it is easier to fit it into their schedules. Meeting virtually also allows you to expand your search geographically.
- Know how formal the meeting or networking event will be. While virtual events can be less formal, you should still dress professionally and "match" the style the practitioners are likely to wear.
- Send a thank you email! If the event is virtual, take a minute to write down the names of the practitioners at the beginning of the event so that you can easily find their contact information to follow up. This is also a great time to send a LinkedIn invitation.

- Make a virtual rolodex. Create an excel sheet or use LinkedIn notes to keep track of the contacts you have made and the advice, information, and referrals you gather.
- Set a calendar reminder to check back with your contacts every couple of months. As a law student, you can use your activities and internships in the academic semesters as a reason to update your contacts and check in.

Tips to Develop Practical Legal Skills and Subject Matter Expertise

- It can be difficult to get hands-on experience in a hybrid or fully virtual environment. You need to be proactive! Make your colleagues and supervisors aware of the work that you want to do.
- Use the relationships you already have in the office to keep apprised of the type of projects going on. Keep a list of these projects — as well as projects and subject areas you are interested in working on — as this will help you be proactive when new projects are being assigned.
- Even if practitioners are not in the office full-time, most employers require that their employees come in at least once a week. Notice trends in attendance so that you can be in the office at those times.
- Make sure you take the time while you are in the position (whether internship or permanent) to continue making connections and meeting with your colleagues to learn about the work they are doing, the things that they are interested in, and the reasons behind their career decisions.
- During virtual work meetings, actively listen and use the chat feature to quickly volunteer for projects.
- Be aware of what mentorship or training opportunities employers and law schools offer both within the organization and outside. Some fund outside opportunities!
- Make sure to sign up for (and read!) newsletters to stay on top of events and developments happening in your chosen practice area.
- Join professional organizations such as the ABA, state and local bar associations and practice specific organizations. Students usually get either free or discounted membership and are always welcome at events. Not many students take advantage of these opportunities, so going can make you stand out.

Tips for Etiquette in the Hybrid and Virtual Legal Workplace

- Turn your camera on. Even if you are not speaking in the meeting, being on camera shows that you are engaged with the discussion and helps people get to know you.

- Always dress appropriately for any virtual meetings. You never know when you will be asked to turn your camera on. It is fine to be casual while working, but ensure you have something on hand if you have any meetings scheduled during the day.
- Make sure your home office is clean and organized. People will notice your background.
- Practice basic Zoom etiquette (e.g., turning your mic off when not speaking).
- Come prepared and be on time.