



## Selected Narrative Responses from the Student Surveys

These represent *typical* and/or *frequent narrative responses* provided by the 841 responding students to specific survey questions. Some responses have been edited for clarity.

### **Q1). What influenced your decision about which employers to apply to for screening interviews for a 2L summer 2014 job during fall 2013 interviewing?**

1. Type of law practiced/Reputation of specific practices/Firm practice areas (most frequent response)
2. Job attainability/GPA requirements (second most frequent response)
3. Salary/Compensation/Benefits (third most frequent response)

#### *Other responses:*

- Personal contacts at firms/knowing attorneys in the firms.
- Advice from boss during 1L summer.
- Relatively low attrition rate.
- Money, greed, and power.
- Presence at OCI was main factor.
- Only 2 employers came so my decision was based on desperation.
- OCI Bid Statistics.
- Cold offer rates, firm health, aggressive expansion (mergers) — viewed this as negative.
- They are all the same.
- Wikipedia.
- Above the Law.
- Independent online research into firm's culture and business.
- They were there, and I needed a job.
- Applied to all.

**Q3). In general, at your screening interviews, which employer representatives did you find most effective?**

- I felt that a partner or senior attorney gave you a good feel for the firm.
- While it's nice to have an alum from my law school, I found interviews with people who were not alums just as enjoyable.
- Generally an associate alum was the best. Often there seemed to be a disconnect between what I wanted to learn and what a more senior attorney could speak to.
- Associates seem more in tune with where we are in our careers. Partners are pretty far removed from job searching law students.
- Associates are less likely to paint a rosy picture and more likely to be realistic when talking to you about the firm. This is true at the callback stage, at least.
- I found that associates in hospitality suites were extremely helpful treasure troves of information.
- Partners had a stronger grasp on all that goes on in their firms.
- Recruitment people have no place at OCI aside from organizing logistics for the attorneys.
- The personality of the individual mattered much more than their specific background.
- There was a natural conversation topic when the attorney was someone from my school, whether or not he or she was a partner or associate. I believe that the associates and partners both had valuable input, and I appreciated when there was a mix. It was uncomfortable and awkward when a recruiting professional sat in on the screener.
- I had the best rapport and most productive interviews with alumni and mid-level associates.
- Associates were most effective because they were closer to the experience I was going through (OCI) than junior or senior partners, and therefore could draw closer connections between their law firm experience so far and the interviewing process.
- I generally had an easier time chatting with senior associates, and they generally gave me more detailed information about the firm.
- It was much easier to have a more natural conversation with an alumnus because we had at least our law school in common.
- During screening interviews, my conversations tended to be more relaxed and comfortable with alumni.
- There was a huge difference between the employer representatives that came. More often than not, recruiting professionals were a nuisance.
- Partners or senior attorneys were generally too distant from the ground-level work at the firm to provide a helpful perspective on what working there would be like.
- The most professional interviewer and the one that was most knowledgeable about the firm was generally the most senior person.
- They were all cordial, but none seemed overly interested in the process.

- The recruiting professionals were useless and only looked at your numbers. The partners were helpful, if they wanted to be there, but often had diffuse hiring power. So many of the people from the firms were laterals who couldn't speak to starting out with the firm, or who it looked like got the short end of the stick in being stuck in recruiting.
- Associates didn't seem to have the ability to properly formulate probing questions and instead relied on asking formulaic questions. They were also less informative on firm atmosphere as their responses were basically, "Yeah this firm is great."
- Looking back now, I probably couldn't tell without thinking hard whether I interviewed with a partner or an associate at each firm. Meeting attorneys and hearing about their experience was important, but I was more concerned with finding a job than "the perfect fit."
- Young associates alone were the least effective, which is most likely because they have little experience as an interviewer. A partner with an associate was the most effective. Having a partner come from the firm revealed the seriousness of the firm's commitment to hiring from the school.
- Really what it came down to was personality. The firms I ended up choosing had fun and outgoing people that were very easy to talk to. Fortunately, all my interviews were conversational. A behavioral interview or behavioral questions would have been a huge turn-off for me because that is not how I would personally choose to interview people at all and was not the culture I was looking for.
- Every person at every firm had the exact same story (i.e., great work/life balance, interesting clients, our culture sets us apart).
- I made a great connection with an alum and I felt he was personally vested in my potential success at the firm.
- OCI is a joke.
- If by "effective" we mean best at conveying information about the firm and putting me at ease as an interviewee, then the recruiters were generally the best.
- No one actually was interested in hiring from my crap law school. Each interviewer was equally unimpressed.
- Regardless of the level of the attorney within the firm, the most effective representatives were those that were in a practice area I was interested in. Because I was heavily focused on transactional work, a representative of a firm who only did litigation was not as effective as those that did transactional work.
- It was easier to discuss academics and things on my resume with someone who had also attended my school.
- It was particularly helpful if the interviewer has recently been a summer associate at the same firm.

- In general, the associates seemed to be able to provide a better sense of what it was like to enter and work at the firm in question as an associate.
- Partners just talk the whole time; associates are more likely to have a conversation with you since they generally haven't transformed into a complete egomaniac yet.
- Partners could speak about the strategy and make educated comparisons of different firms.
- I generally felt put off by all the people I met at screening interviews.
- The most effective representative was one who had gone through the OCI process and been a summer associate for that particular firm, and even more effective if he or she had done so from my school and been at the firm for 2+ years. Laterals and first-year associates were the least effective.
- They all seemed pretty robotic, indifferent, and distant, as if they were just going through the motions and didn't care about me.
- There was not much difference. Some associates were lousy at communicating information about the firm and not very friendly. Some partners were also lousy and not very friendly at all. It seems to come down to the personalities of the individuals that the firms chose to send to OCI. If the person conducting the interview came across as hostile and unfriendly, it reflected very badly on the firm, suggesting a poor firm culture.
- Partners, senior attorneys, and recruiters are trained to give me filtered answers. I liked associates who both gave unfiltered verbal responses and who provided me with a representation of the type of individuals that are hired. The worst thing an employer can do is to send an unpleasant partner as the interviewer. In such cases, I am left to wonder, "If this is the face of the firm, who then is left hiding in the dark recesses of the firm?"
- Hospitality suites helped me get a feel for the firm.
- It is very much a buyer's market, and I was looking for a position anywhere in my area of interest; who the firm sent was irrelevant.
- It is difficult to select one answer. The attorneys and the associates can attest to different information about the firm. The best screening interviews were ones that included both a senior attorney/partner and an associate.
- Though associates were able to comment more about the workload or social aspect of being a young member of a firm, getting insight from partners about the firm was most helpful. Moreover, I found conversations with partners to be more substantive. I think partner interviews give students more of a peek into a firm's culture because this is a man or woman who has been successful at the firm and dictates culture.
- One firm sent a first-year associate who had no clue what he was doing. I found it insulting and a waste of my time.
- The attorneys (whether associate or partner) on the hiring committees just knew how to interview. Attorneys not on the hiring committee seemed to have random, useless questions

- (i.e., if you were a Wizard of Oz character, who would you be? Seriously? What kind of hide the balls question is that?).
- I found recruiting professionals to be the least effective. They put little effort into connecting and having a conversation. Partners seemed most interested. Associates often (but not universally) seemed like they would rather be elsewhere.
  - I think the best interviewers were senior associates. They are recent enough graduates to be able to relate to law school in today's day and age, yet experienced enough to actually have input on their day-to-day work.

**Q 6). If you accepted more than one callback interview, how did you decide in which order to schedule them?**

- I tried to just schedule them all as quickly as possible.
- I always took the soonest date they had available.
- How likely I believed I could get an offer from the firm.
- The callbacks came in waves. Most people suggest scheduling the callbacks as soon as possible. Because our OCI is later than others, some firms did not have slots open for a couple weeks after screener. For all 8 of my callbacks, I just picked the earliest date available that I did not have another callback scheduled.
- When I got a callback interview, I took their first available time slot.
- As soon as possible.
- I always opted for as soon as the employer could schedule me to come visit. So my order was based on what the employers had available.
- I took every callback I got in the order they were received, and scheduled them around the firm's availability.
- My first interview was the only firm I interviewed with that offered Saturday callbacks. More firms should offer weekend callbacks, as it greatly increases scheduling possibilities.
- I really only considered level of interest and order of callback invitation when scheduling.
- For some of the firms that I had callbacks with, I had a very short interview window. I could not necessarily do a callback earlier with the firm I liked the best, although I would have wanted to do so.
- I scheduled each callback almost immediately and for the next available date on my calendar. I did not want to wait and let the employer offer positions to others before I even had a chance to complete the callback.
- Ensuring I would have an offer from a firm I ranked high prior to conducting a callback with a firm I ranked lower. I wanted to end the process as soon as possible and if one of my top three firms offered, I would likely accept that offer before conducting another callback.

- I scheduled firms I didn't care as much about first to get some callback practice in, while still trying to get priority firms' callbacks early in the process while more spots were available.

**Q8). If you declined one or more callback invitation(s), why did you decline it/them?**

- I had an offer prior to OCI, so I declined callback invitations at firms I would not accept offers from over the offer I already had.
- I had already accepted an offer for summer employment.
- Date conflict: the firm required first-half only and I already accepted an offer for first-half.
- Even if I would not have had an offer, I had already scheduled enough callbacks that I was excited for.
- I didn't accept them all when it was a firm I was less interested in.
- Even after receiving offers from firms that I preferred, I still attended all callbacks since I had already scheduled them to be safe.
- Stories of cold offers.
- Financial stability of the firm.
- Conflict with work from previous firm.

**Q10). If you received multiple offers for a summer associate position, what most influenced your decision on which offer to accept?**

1. Firm culture (most frequent response)
2. Work/life balance (second most frequent response)
3. Opportunities for training and professional development (third most frequent response)

*Other responses:*

- Personal experience with the firm previously.
- The speed of the firm making the offer.
- An indistinguishable combination of all of the above, except that financials/compensation weighed somewhat less heavily.
- I worked as a paralegal at the firm where I accepted an offer.
- I accepted the first offer I received and withdrew from my remaining callbacks.
- One firm turned me off because they gave me an ultimatum (accept us now or not at all, basically) before the decision deadline.
- Rate of clerk to hire.
- Acquaintances already employed at firm.
- Conversations with current and former attorneys at the firm.
- Prospects for making partner quickly.

- Past experience with the firm from prior employment.
- People met at pre-callback dinner.
- Good friend who had worked there and loved it.
- Pressure to accept offer.
- Teacher advice.
- The people at the firm I talked to after receiving the offers.
- Not distracted by growing/mega-mergers (conservatively managed).
- Ability to make partner.
- Available data on firm culture, and my feeling of potential for growth at the firm.
- Availability of work in area of practice I was interested in (appellate).
- IP prosecution over litigation.