

## INTERNSHIPS, CLERKSHIPS, SUMMER ASSOCIATE, AND JUNIOR ATTORNEY POSITIONS: HOW TO MAKE YOURS STAND OUT

Does the following sound familiar?

- Performed legal research and drafted memoranda
- Assisted attorneys with trial preparation
- Wrote client correspondence
- Observed and summarized depositions
- Conducted and responded to written discovery
- Assisted in courtroom proceedings
- Worked with judge to prepare court orders and opinions
- Observed trials and hearings

The duties and responsibilities associated with legal internships, clerkships, summer associate, and junior attorney positions tend to be very similar. The practice areas you were exposed to and the types of cases you assisted with might have been different, but for the most part, pre-bar legal jobs consist of a lot of research, drafting, and observing. As a new graduate, how do you set yourself apart?

Here are some questions and examples to get you thinking outside the “researched and drafted” box.

### Was your position competitive?

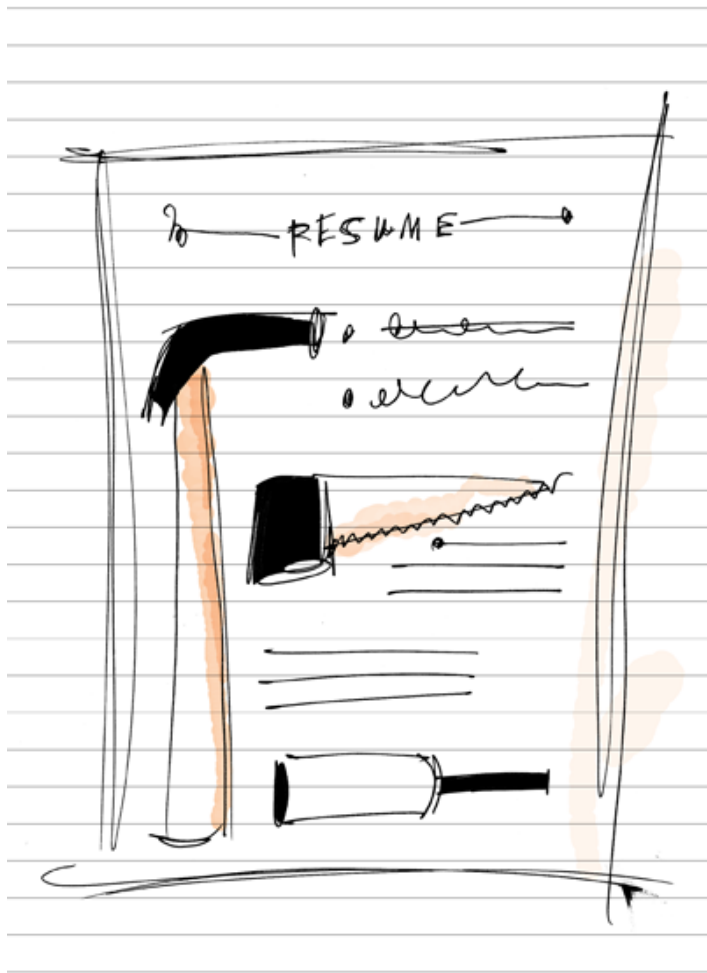
There's a difference between working for your mom's friend's law firm because no one else would hire you and being chosen as only one of 300 applicants for a coveted internship. If your particular position was difficult to obtain, let it be known.

### What did you do specifically?

The more details you can give about what you've done, the more real your experience becomes to employers. When you give generalized statements such as “assisted with cases,” you don't impress anyone. How did you assist? Did you bring coffee to the attorneys who stayed up late toiling over the case, or did you find a key issue that helped them win?

Also, the work you did had a purpose. You weren't simply drafting or researching things for your health. What was your work used for?

Here are some examples of useful specifics:



# ATTORNEY RESUME

*Drafted memoranda that were utilized by judges and law clerks to aid in their decision making regarding the future of pending cases*

*Aided government attorneys in trial preparation for bankruptcy and labor law cases involving companies and unions attempting to avoid labor judgments*

*Monitored pending legislative bills to ensure that the firm and its clients had the most up-to-date information available when attending committee meetings*

**In addition, if you worked in a specific practice area that you want to continue working in as an attorney, the more buzzwords you can include, the better.**

It's also a good idea to quantify your achievements. There's a big difference between drafting 2 memoranda and 22.

What did you accomplish? How did your work contribute to the overall success of the case/resolution of the issue?

An accomplishment doesn't need to be major to be worth mentioning. The main questions to ask yourself are these: What did you do that made the company/firm better for having hired you? What did you do in your position that others in the same position might not have?

## **What did you learn?**

Maybe you've wracked your brain and you still don't feel like you accomplished anything at all. At the very least, you had to have learned something during those 12-hour days. Describe what it was!

In addition to playing up accomplishments, you want to downplay the administrative aspects of your work. Clerical duties, such as mail sorting, telephone answering, errand running, coffee making, and supply ordering should NOT be listed on your resume, unless you are looking for another clerical position. Why? Because they make you look like a clerical worker. Plus, these responsibilities aren't going to impress anyone. You're capable of looking at a piece of mail, seeing whose name is on it, and handing it to that person? Wow! What a great lawyer you'll make!

Sarcasm aside, if you want to be taken seriously and given real responsibilities, you will need to convey a certain level of prestige through your resume, even if your jobs weren't very prestigious. Most people would say that the functions of their jobs are divided between those things that they enjoy doing, which reflect ability, responsibility, and intelligence, and those things (sometimes a larger percentage) that constitute "grunt work" and are not particularly interesting or challenging. If this grunt work is something that you hope to never do again, highlighting it on your resume is not a good idea.