

law school strategy



Resume Building *Bootcamp* for Law Students

A Law School Strategy Workbook

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You did it!

Stop!

Welcome! This is the companion workbook to the Resume Building Bootcamp for Law Students.

3 How to use the workbook

4 **Print.** Print the pages and grab your favorite pen... time to dig in!

5 **Digital.** Open this PDF inside your PDF reader app of choice. You can then type
6 inside the boxes or above the solid lines to
7 log your responses.
8

9 -----

10 **Here's how it works.** In this bootcamp,
11 we'll cover 8 practical strategies you can
12 immediately implement to build your
resume and professional brand. But
knowledge alone isn't enough—you need
to take action! That's why we created this
editable workbook for you to copy,
download and/or print and fill in the
blanks, so you know exactly what steps to
take to build your resume and professional
brand.

We designed this workbook to follow along with the lessons in the bootcamp. If you find yourself getting stuck, go back to the bootcamp and see if one of our videos can help you out.

If you still need help, check out our [Law School Strategy Community](#) on Facebook. This is a community full of current and future law students, recent grads, and young lawyers just like you, and we encourage you to ask questions and get involved in the conversation.

Set Your Goal!

Set your goal

Before you get too deep into resume and brand building, it's important to know why you're participating in this bootcamp. This will help shape your outcomes. Which of the following best describes you and your goals?

- I don't have any legal experience (yet!) -- *The #1 reason!*
- I have started gaining some legal experience, but don't know how to capture it on a resume
- I need some new ideas, fresh approaches to take when it comes to building my brand (and my resume)
- I don't have a solid resume and I definitely don't have an established professional brand
- Other

Notes (especially if "Other"):

Choose your starting point

Which of these best describes you? (Check all that apply.)

- I have a standard resume (thanks, school career office!) and have attended one or two networking events
- I already have a well-fleshed out resume, solid legal experience, and a well-established professional brand
- I'm brand new to this. I have no idea what I'm doing
- Other

Notes (especially if "Other"):

#1 Leadership

Leadership can be more than just serving as a president or secretary of a student organization. Examples of creative leadership opportunities that can be included on a resume are:

- ❑ Organizing a law student or young lawyer event for your local area (it's easy to gather a few practicing attorneys into a panel!) Some examples include:
 - Lunch and learns with local attorneys on a specific legal topic or general career development
 - Speed networking or table events
 - Off site visits (field trips!) to local law firms, legal organizations, or companies to gather in their conference room and hear from their legal teams
- ❑ Taking the lead on a project for a legal organization
 - Membership and/or fundraising drives
 - Annual fundraising event (join the planning committee)
 - Coordinating a legal clinic, hotline, or other pro bono event
- ❑ Research Projects
 - There are plenty of research projects requests that circulate within committees and groups of bar associations. If you simply join the email lists, you'll start seeing opportunities to volunteer and demonstrate leadership capabilities.

If you have student activities listed under the "Education" section of your resume, you can expand on those points by highlighting the additional activities in which you took a leadership role. Don't forget to include the accomplishments you achieved during your time as a leader. Phrases such as "Organized [legal topic] legal clinic with [X] number of attorneys providing legal services to [X number] of attendees." Get creative in how you show (not just tell) that you were a leader!

Brainstorming Activity

List at least one way in which you can demonstrate leadership within the next:

30 days: _____
_____;

90 days: _____
_____;

180 days: _____
_____.

#2 Pro Bono Work

Have you been volunteering or doing community service? Resumes from law students and young lawyers are commonly missing details about how the applicant has given back to the community. In my conversations with people, I find that it's not necessarily a lack of participating in these types of activities, but rather a failure to simply put them on their resumes!

[ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct Rule 6.1](#) calls for attorneys to contribute at least 50 hours of pro bono work per year. Yikes! Your future law firm recruiter or employer is going to want an associate or employee that is actively involved in the community and giving back. In addition to the valuable benefit to those in need, pro bono work is a great marketing tool for a business and it only helps both you and your future employer look good! **More importantly, pro bono work can give you critical legal experience and talking points for interviews and networking opportunities with other attorneys.**

❑ Legal clinics

- I have found that young legal professionals often lack the confidence or understanding about how legal clinics operate. If you are a law student or young lawyer, it's perfectly acceptable (if not a requirement!) that you will be paired with another attorney at the clinic event to jointly provide guidance and advice to a client.

Take Action!

Find one upcoming legal clinic in your area and fill in the information below when you register.

Organization: _____

When: _____

Where: _____

Focus: _____

❑ Legal Aid Society & pro bono committees

- Reach out to your local legal aid society for opportunities that may be available
- Local, national and regional or subject-matter specific bar associations often have pro bono committees or action groups that provide resources to legal professionals looking to serve in a pro bono capacity

❑ Working with individuals

- If you are a law student, you can work with individuals under the guidance of a practicing attorney or professor, or as part of school program. This option may be more difficult than volunteering for a one-off clinic.
- As a young lawyer, it's a chance to work directly with a client that may be outside of your normal practice area and help you in slowly growing into a new practice area through low-risk opportunities (subject, of course, to your professional and ethical duties to the client!). Local non profit organizations and legal aid societies are a great way to take on individual case assignments that are limited in scope.

❑ Public education events and workshops

- Host a legal education event in connection with a non-profit or school

#3 *Interests & Hobbies*

I've seen so many resumes that do not include anything personal or interesting about the person. We all have hobbies or activities we enjoy doing to fill our free time. Do you volunteer as a judge at the local mock trial competition? Attend concerts and shows every weekend? Share the number of mock trials or shows you attended over the last year. Do you have a photography portfolio that makes you proud? Share a link to your work! Hiking? Running? Share a specific hiking location or running PR from the last year. Let your interests and hobbies add to the overall story that you are trying to tell through your resume.

Doing this requires you to find the space for an "interests & hobbies" section. Adjust your margins and tighten your line spacing if you are short on room. Overall, don't be afraid to be specific and put yourself out there because you never know with what might stand out to someone reviewing your resume.

Pro Tip: Use this section to highlight an interest or hobby that ties in with the job posting. Perhaps you have a hobby that is relevant to the industry in which you would be working? Maybe you attended a conference, or displayed an interest in the area of law that is relevant to the opening? Use this section of the resume to drive home the ways you are the candidate perfect for the role!

Think about it this way: someone reviewing your resume likely doesn't know anything about you beyond what's on the page in front of them. Will they have time to review your Instagram or LinkedIn feeds? Likely not! When you go in for an interview, give the person an easy ice breaker. The best way to do this is to include an "Interests & Hobbies" section. It gives them an easy section to start with and ask you a softball question for starting the conversation.

Brainstorming Activity

Describe a hobby you have in a few words: _____.

List an area of law you find interesting: _____. Now, find an upcoming conference you can attend related to that area of law: _____.

Name and describe a recent non-legal accomplishment you've achieved or award you've received: _____.

Use one, or all, of the above to craft your "Interests & Hobbies" section!

#4 Involvement

Nothing indicates a stale resume more than a lack of involvement. You will hear me frequently say to law students, “Get out of the classroom!” I strongly believe that a large portion of your practical understanding of the law comes through an active involvement in legal organizations.

The American Bar Association (“ABA”) is FREE for [law students](#) and [first-year attorneys](#)! There is literally *no excuse* as to why you should not become a member. First year attorneys, make sure you utilize the Young Lawyer Division (“YLD”) once you join for free after passing at least one bar.

Involvement can be as simple as joining and listing a practice-specific committee from your local bar association. Many offer monthly meetings that you can attend both as a networking and learning opportunity. Make sure that if you list them on your resume, you at least try and regularly attend the meetings, monthly calls, or volunteer for a project within the committee. The [ABA Groups](#) are an easy way to start if you aren’t sure of where to look first. The Law Student Division and Young Lawyers Division are both free, and you are automatically enrolled in each depending upon your membership type. Again, you can easily join committees (and list them on your resume) to show interest in particular areas of the law, especially if you’re trying to target an area of law for a job. Just remember: be an *active* member of any committees or orgs you list.

Listing your involvement on a resume provides the person interviewing you with an easy source of questions during an interview. Additionally, you can easily point to specific involvement activities when you are asked common interview questions (such as, “Tell me about a time you did...” or “What experience can you bring to this role?”).

I mentioned ABA Rule 6.1 under the pro bono section above. In addition to this call for action with pro bono work from the ABA, I like to highlight subsection (b)(3) of Rule 6.1 which states “participation in activities for improving the law, the legal system or the legal profession.” Comment 8 explicitly states this includes involvement in ABA or bar association committees and related activities! That 50 hours per year doesn’t sound so far off, does it? Keep track of your involvement during the year, and submit this to your local bar association and law school legal aid society. Many offer annual awards for achieving minimum hours of pro bono work each year.

Take Action!

List a local bar association you will join: _____.

List a Group of the ABA you will join: _____. Now, list a committee within that ABA group you will join: _____. Lastly, list the name and contact information of a leader of that committee you will contact about involvement opportunities: _____. **I recommend reaching out to the leadership because they may know about immediate opportunities.*

#5 Publications

Adding a “Publications” section on a resume can elevate your experience level, as well as provide indications of expertise or experience within specific areas of law. If you currently have little to no publication experience on your resume, you should work on getting an article or blog post published. Publishing opportunities are actually obtained more easily than you think! Entry-level writing opportunities can be found through the ABA, local bar (even if it's just a newsletter!), or co-authoring one with an attorney.

Reaching out to attorneys with ideas is a great “baby step” towards gaining the experience and exposure to writing an article.

*Don't just ask an attorney for something...
turn it around and give them something!*

The biggest mistake law students and young lawyers can make is straight-up asking about internship or job opportunities when first meeting someone. Jumping straight into the internship or job openings discussion is a *major* fail. It is for sure a conversation killer and likely to result in a negative association with you going forward. Instead, try talking about a recent development in an area of law that interests you (and is also relevant to the attorney with which you are networking) and see if you can send an email proposal to write an article with them.

Brainstorming Activity

List an area of law that interests you: _____. Find a recent development in that area of law: _____. Search Google News, as well as Twitter and LinkedIn feeds for topic inspiration.

Name a publication or monthly newsletter for which you can write an article or recent development summary: _____. List the name and contact information for the editor or main point of contact for idea submissions: _____.

Now, write the name of an attorney in your network with whom you can follow-up about an opportunity to co-write and/or research: _____.

Interested in self-publishing? Check out my two-part blog series “[An Introduction to Legal Blogging](#)”!

#6 Summary Statement

Your goal in utilizing a summary statement is to capture a hiring manager's focused time and attention on how you are able to meet all of the employer's needs and qualifications for the opening. If you are underqualified (1L vs 2L vs 3L, grades/class rank, specific courses/experience, etc.), outside of the geographic region for the posting, or have no other connections to the employer, you'll need to include a summary statement at the top of your resume that clearly and convincingly conveys your intentions within 1-2 sentences. Ideally, you would place this section directly under your name and contact details header. A summary statement is also a great option for use as an "elevator pitch". Imagine if you found yourself in the elevator with a hiring partner and you have 30-seconds to convince this person why they should hire you. What would you say?

Not having any data points on your resume that relate to the job posting details (qualifications, location, etc.) make it easy for the person reviewing your application to simply toss it out as they move onto the next 200 applicants. A summary statement is necessary, more than ever, when applying for internship or job opportunities outside of your local area. What does local area mean? If an opportunity is not in the same (or neighboring) city as your law school or "home" region, you will need to include some type of statement at the top that explains in 1-2 sentences about your intentions and any details about the connections between where you are currently located and the location of the place to which you are applying. Already have housing and transportation arrangements? Financial security? Great! Let them know. It may even be an option to include the specific address of where you will be staying at the top of your header if you are 100% certain those details are locked down. Never mislead a potential employer, but it's perfectly acceptable to have variations of your resume based upon confirmed variations of your personal life!

Summary statements should be highly customized for each opening to which you are applying! It takes work and organization to ensure you are crafting your summary statement to truly meet the needs of each position. Organization is key. Ensure you properly track versions of your resume so that you don't inadvertently send the wrong version out. Statements are also a useful opportunity to highlight key areas of a resume for young lawyers that may be looking to lateral and have limited experience in an area of law into which they are looking to expand.

Brainstorming Activity

Are you open to internship and/or job opportunities that would require you to temporarily relocate and/or move? _____. *Try to answer this question thoughtfully and truthfully if you have never given it serious thought. Dig deep! Talk to significant others, family, and friends about this possibility to understand whether it is something you are honestly open to considering.*

Identify four to six qualities, skills, or achievements that you could highlight in a summary statement: _____

#7 *Compelling Verbs*

“Drafted”, “researched”, and “assisted” are all commonly (over)used verbs seen on legal resumes to describe an applicant’s experience. Not just once, but often multiple times. Let’s try to expand beyond these basic, borderline boring, verbs! Add some color, excitement and energy to your resume with powerful verbs such as “analyzed”, “instituted”, “facilitated” or “collaborated”.

Pro Tip: One way to brainstorm verbs is to dive deep into some current job postings. You can search job openings for your target positions, ideal employers, or desired industry to find how employers are describing the skills and experience for which they are seeking candidates. You can easily mirror the verbs used within these job opening descriptions in your own resume. Additionally, the incorporation of common keywords or phrases to match your own experience assists with SEO on your LinkedIn profile and applicant tracking systems.

Brainstorming Activity!

Get a highlighter (or use the Word highlighter tool) and highlight all of the verbs currently in use on your resume. How many repeat? _____. How many are “drafted” or “researched” or “assisted”? _____.

List all of the verbs currently on your resume in the left-hand column:

<i>Current Verb</i>	<i>Powerful Verb</i>

Utilize this "[Action Verbs for Resumes](#)" resource to compile power verb alternatives in the right-hand column above. Stuck? Find current job postings to gather some powerful verbs and phrases currently being used in the industry!

#8 Quantifiers

Quantification of a resume takes vague claims of accomplishments and turns them into proof. I highly recommend quantifying your achievements as a useful strategy to maximize an area of resumes that is most commonly trivialized by bland, bullet point sentences. Examples of phrases that can be used in place of common bullet points include:

- i. "primary drafter"
- ii. "took the lead on preparing and sending 'X' number of agreements to clients at [firm name]..."
- iii. "led half-a-dozen employee trainings at [company name]"
- iv. "X" number of blog articles while you were working at a non-profit
- v. "resulting in a settlement of \$X million" or "Obtained judgment award of \$X for client"
- vi. "automated X% of administrative legal tasks saving X hours per month"

If you are a transactional attorney, one strategic "bullet point" to quantify is the number of contracts you reviewed, drafted, negotiated, or with which you otherwise assisted. If you are a litigation attorney, estimate the number of matters you handled concurrently, each month/quarter/year, or how many times you appeared in court, or volume of e-discovery you managed.

Retroactive Quantification of your resume can be difficult, especially if you no longer have access to the data needed to generate the quantifiers. As an alternative, use percentages and estimated numbers (ethically, of course!). You may also be able to include links to publicly available articles, guidebooks or other resources you may have put together for a firm or a non-profit. Although these are not a quantification of information on your resume, they achieve the same end result of showing (instead of telling) about your achievements.

Brainstorming Activity

How many quantifiers do you currently have on your resume? _____

Identify at least three bullet points currently included on your resume that can be transformed through quantification:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Identify at least two recent or upcoming achievements that can be quantified:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____



You did it!

It's time to put your plan into action and start building your resume and professional brand.

Once you've built a solid background of legal experience and started building your brand, the work doesn't stop there. You should continually be working and improving your experience, staying relevant in the profession. You can easily cycle back through this workbook multiple times as a way of continual investment in your professional career.

Want to learn more about building your law school strategy? See our other courses to get up and running on your building a law school strategy in no time.